



Policy brief

Barriers to Economic Participation for Young People in Jordan: A Gendered Analysis

By Ragui Assaad,¹ Caroline Krafft,²
and Maia Sieverding³

With Layla Al-Hajj,³ Ruby Cheung,²
and Ilhaan Omar²

¹ University of Minnesota.
² St. Catherine University.
³ American University of Beirut.

November 2021

Key Messages

- Young people aged 16-30 in Jordan have high unemployment rates (45 per cent of those who are in the labour force are unemployed) and low employment rates (26 per cent of the population).
- A large percentage of young people aged 16 to 30 (39 per cent) are not in education, employment, or training (NEET), meaning that they are either seeking work, are discouraged workers, or are out of the labour force, for reasons not related to schooling or training.
- The NEET rate is substantially higher for women than for men (51 per cent for women versus 24 per cent for men among Jordanians, and 70 per cent for women versus 36 per cent for men among Syrians).
- About 27 per cent of Jordanian women and 16 per cent of Syrian women participate in the labour force, but the vast majority of women in the labour force (79 per cent of Jordanian women and 82 per cent of young Syrian women) are unemployed and seeking work rather than working.
- Young Jordanians' preferred jobs are in the public sector due to its job security, shorter working hours, and a perception of greater safety. For women, teaching jobs were preferred and, for men, employment in the military (security services and armed forces). Yet only a small percentage of young people were able to obtain such jobs.
- Young women are subject to what are known as high "reservation working conditions" due to a variety of social constraints, including care work responsibilities for those who are married, and social norms about what jobs and working conditions are acceptable for women.
- Unemployed young people reported that the primary reason they were not working was because there were no jobs. Young people generally viewed the economic situation in Jordan as weak, offering few opportunities.
- A quarter of unemployed young people said that they would accept wages slightly below Jordan's official minimum wage of 260 JD per month. Three quarters of the unemployed would accept a job in the public sector if it paid 350 JD per month, or a job in the private sector if it paid 400 JD per month.
- Young people who are in employment are often underemployed. Forty-four per cent worked in jobs that required a lower level of educational attainment than they had achieved.
- One way to address the fact that labour market opportunities in Jordan often do not meet young people's aspirations for employment is for policymakers to strive to extend formality and social protection to all jobs in Jordan. This could be achieved by expanding mandatory social insurance coverage to all kinds of employment, simplifying administrative processes to acquire coverage, and providing incentives, subsidies, and other non-standard mechanisms to ensure coverage of irregular workers and hard-to-insure groups.

- Addressing the barriers to employment facing women will require additional actions, such as offering incentives to employers to accommodate more flexible working hours, direct provision of childcare or childcare subsidies, provision of early childhood education that is more compatible with the schedules of working mothers, and the provision of safe public transportation.
- Continued efforts are also needed to combat persistently inequitable gender norms, including efforts through the education system as well as community campaigns to help shift attitudes. These should address in particular the victim-blaming culture around harassment.
- There is a need to open a wider array of employment and livelihood opportunities for young Syrians by expanding their eligibility to more sectors of work.

Objectives and overview

Jordan's population is relatively young, with nearly a third of the country's population aged between 16 and 30 years old. This policy brief relies on new data – both nationally representative quantitative (survey) data and qualitative (focus group discussion) data – to better understand the aspirations of young people and the challenges they face in terms of economic participation. The policy brief focuses on gendered dimensions of economic participation, as well as the differences in the experiences of Jordanians and Syrians in Jordan.

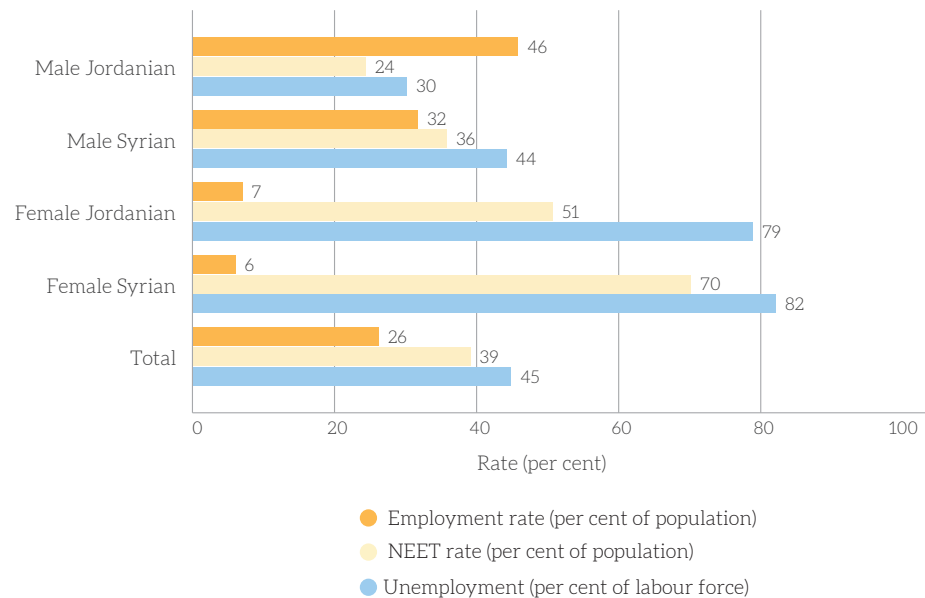
Low rates of youth economic participation and high rates of unemployment

Young people in Jordan have some of the lowest employment rates in the world.⁴ Among Jordanians and Syrians aged 16–30, a new survey, the Survey of Young People in Jordan (SYPJ) 2020/21, found that only 26 per cent of young people were employed. Employment rates are particularly low for young women (Figure 1). Whereas 46 per cent of young Jordanian men and 32 per cent of young Syrian men were employed, these figures drop to 7 per cent for young female Jordanians and 6 per cent for young female Syrians.

⁴ Assaad, Krafft and Keo, 2019.

Figure 1: **Employment rate (percentage of the population), NEET (not in employment, education, or training) rate (percentage of the population) and unemployment rate (percentage of the labour force), by gender and nationality**

Source: Authors' calculation based on SYPJ.



Young women also experience higher unemployment rates. According to SYPJ, unemployment rates, as a share of the labour force (the employed plus the unemployed), are high for young people (45 per cent).⁵ The majority of young women in the labour force are unemployed (79 per cent unemployment rate for young Jordanian women, and 82 per cent for young Syrian women). This suggests that women want to work but face a number of barriers to obtaining jobs. In comparison, young Jordanian men have an unemployment rate of 30 per cent, and young Syrian men have an unemployment rate 44 per cent.

⁵ Our results are consistent with official statistics from the Department of Statistics (Jordan), 2021, which found the highest unemployment rates nationally were for those aged 15–19 (62 per cent) and 20–24 years old (48 per cent) in the fourth quarter of 2020. We find an unemployment rate of 54 per cent for 16–19-year-olds and 46 per cent for 20–24-year-olds.

Furthermore, according to SYPJ, 39 per cent of young people were not in education, employment, or training (NEET). NEET rates were highest among female Syrians (70 per cent), followed by female Jordanians (51 per cent), although it is important to note that NEET young women were often engaged in care work activities.⁶ Among young men, 24 per cent of Jordanians and 36 per cent of Syrians were NEET.

These figures demonstrate that young people struggle with economic inclusion in Jordan; the potential of Jordan's large generation of young people is not being met, which is a challenge for both national development and young people's

⁶ Assaad, Krafft, and Sieverding, 2021.

individual life trajectories. This policy brief explores the roots of economic exclusion and discusses the barriers to economic participation. It investigates policy and programmatic options to dismantle the barriers to decent work for young people.

Economic opportunities depend on educational attainment

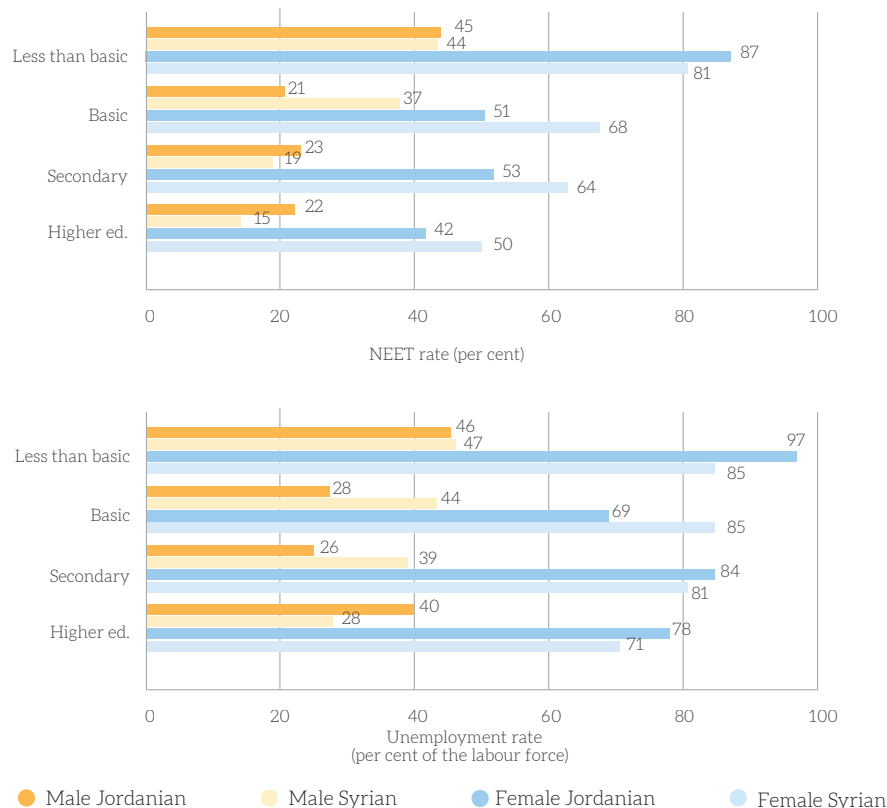
Economic opportunities for young people depend on their level of educational attainment. Figure 2 shows NEET and unemployment rates by education level, gender, and nationality for Jordanians and Syrians in Jordan aged between 16–30. NEET rates are highest for those with less than a basic education (44–45 per cent for young men, and 81–87 per cent for young women). NEET rates decrease with education, but even for young people with higher education, almost half of young women are NEET (42 per cent of young female Jordanians, and 50 per cent of young female Syrians with higher education). Furthermore, 22 per cent of young male Jordanians and 15 per cent of young male Syrians with higher education are NEET. At all education levels, NEET

rates were considerably higher (in most cases around double) for women as compared to their male peers. Even when they attain higher education, young people struggle to transition into work, and this is particularly true for young women.

Unemployment figures only include individuals who are not working but actively seeking work, and exhibit a slightly different relationship with education that varies by gender and nationality group. As shown in Figure 2, unemployment rates (as a share of the labour force) for male Jordanians are highest among the least educated (less than basic education); unemployment rates decline for basic and secondary education categories, and rise again for those with higher education. For female Jordanians, they are also highest among the least educated, followed by those with secondary education and then those with higher education. For male and female Syrians, unemployment rates generally decline with educational attainment.

Figure 2: **NEET (not in employment, education, or training) rate (percentage of the population) and unemployment rate (percentage of the labour force), by gender, nationality, and education level**

Source: Authors' calculation based on SYPJ.

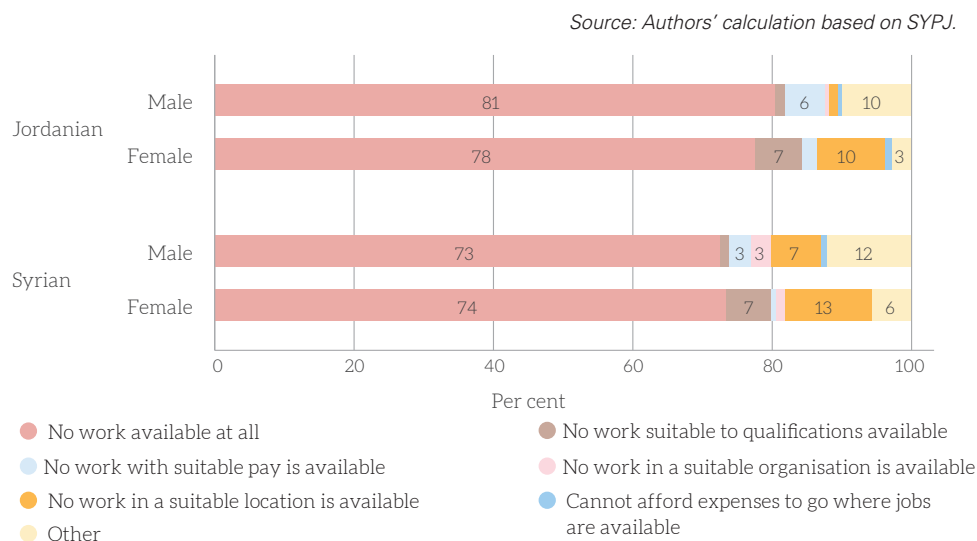


Are young people unemployed because of a shortage of jobs or just a shortage of suitable jobs?

Unemployed young people were asked why they were not working, and they primarily responded by reporting that there was no work available (Figure 3). A small fraction of women (7 per cent) noted that no work suitable to their qualifications was available. For female Jordanians (10 per cent), male Syrians (7 per cent) and female Syrians (13 per cent), no work in a suitable location was mentioned as the reason for

unemployment. Male Jordanians were also the most likely to report that no work with suitable pay was available (6 per cent). Nonetheless, it is likely that in some cases when young people say that there are no jobs are available, they mean that there are no jobs available that they would be willing to engage in given their reservation wages (the minimum wage they are willing to accept) and their reservation working conditions (the minimum non-wage working conditions they are willing to accept).

Figure 3: Reasons for not working (percentage of the unemployed), by gender and nationality



Note: Labels less than three per cent suppressed.

Young people who participated in the focus group discussions (FGDs) similarly attributed the high level of youth unemployment, and the difficulty young people faced in obtaining good jobs, to the weak economic situation of the country. They also noted that there was competition in some fields that are highly desired by young people and their families, such as medicine and engineering, due to a large number of graduates in these fields and due to the fact that jobs are often obtained based on *wasta* (connections) rather than qualifications. Finally, they noted that entering the labour market is challenging because private sector employers in particular look for candidates with job experience that many young people do not have. They also said that young people often do not have accurate information about the types of jobs that are demanded in the economy, or the later career prospects for the university majors that they choose.

"In our 10th year of school, our academic or vocational pathway is decided, and according to this choice, our university specialty is decided. Sometimes they give us trainings on the labor market, and there is this website which tells you what specialties are available and which are not. This might help us but still, in my opinion, there needs to be more awareness regarding the labor market and the challenges we might face." - Young Jordanian woman, aged between 25-28

"If you get into an Uber, five or six times, you will only find one of them [drivers] who has not completed their B.S., the rest would be an engineer, one who has finished their PhD, an accountant... I once called an Uber, and the driver, who was 29 years old, had finished his masters in accounting, and until now has not found a good job." - Young Jordanian man, aged between 18-19

Young people have specific ideal and acceptable types of employment

Young people were asked what the ideal occupation was for a man and for a woman. For both Syrians and Jordanians, white-collar work was clearly the ideal, with only a small fraction considering a blue-collar career ideal. Across gender and nationality, the majority noted teaching was the ideal job for women, followed by being a health professional (Figure 4). FGD participants explained that teaching in particular is a job that is socially acceptable for women, given the shorter working hours and the fact that it doesn't entail too much mobility. For Jordanians, jobs in the military (security services and armed forces) were seen as ideal jobs for men (41 to 42 per cent), followed by health professionals and other professionals. The security services and armed forces were seen as advantageous career routes due to their generous compensation packages and associated benefits.

"A teacher [is a good job for women] since her working hours are fixed, she goes out in the morning at 8, the same time her children would be going to school, and she would come back early. This is better for her since she would be coming home early and not late, and her job would not require a lot of mobility, so a teacher is the best job for her."
– Young Jordanian woman, aged between 16–23

In general, young people expressed a preference for employment in the public sector due to its stability, pension and health benefits, and favourable working conditions. Young people who worked in the public sector were substantially

more satisfied than others; among the employed, 88 per cent of those in the public sector were satisfied with their work, compared to 75 per cent of those in non-wage work, 74 per cent of those in private formal wage work, 65 per cent of those in private informal wage work inside fixed establishments, and 62 per cent of those in private informal wage work outside fixed establishments. However, only 26 per cent of employed Jordanian young people had public sector positions, which are virtually inaccessible for young Syrians. Given the limited availability of public sector jobs, the majority of young people must consider less-preferred options in the private sector.

Although young people expressed a clear preference for jobs in teaching and healthcare – and, among Jordanians, for public sector jobs – unemployed young people were willing to accept a wide variety of jobs (Figure 5). Public sector work, as well as white-collar jobs such as human resources or being an administrative assistant, were generally more acceptable to young people. The majority of unemployed men were willing to work in industry or delivery. Somewhat less than the majority of Jordanian men were willing to work as a waiter, in agriculture, or as a teacher. Women were more selective in the jobs they would accept, as very few unemployed women would work as waiters, in agriculture, industry, delivery, or as drivers.

Unemployed young people were also asked what was the minimum wage that they would accept for public sector or private sector work. Half of unemployed young people would accept 300 JD or less per month, and 25 per cent would accept 250 JD or less per month. Moreover, 75

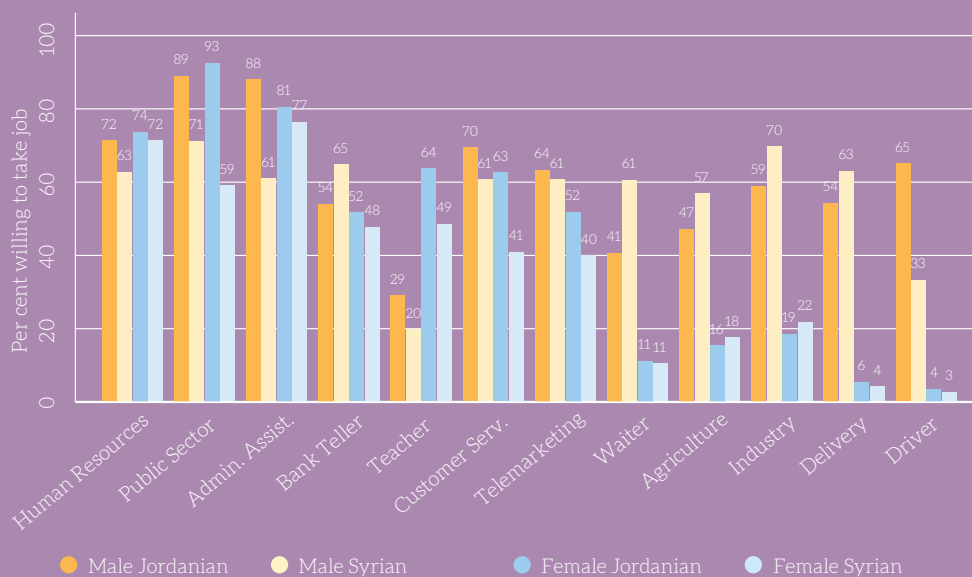
Figure 4: **Ideal occupation for a man and for a woman (percentage), by respondent gender and nationality**

Source: Authors' calculation based on SYPJ.



Figure 5: **Jobs acceptable to unemployed young people (percentage), by gender and nationality**

Source: Authors' calculations based on SYPJ.



per cent of unemployed young people would accept a job in the public sector if it paid 350 JD per month, and in the private sector if it paid 400 JD per month. As a point of comparison, the minimum wage in Jordan as of 1 January 2021 was 260 JD per month.⁷ However, most employed young people work informally and earn less than the minimum wage. Half of the young people in wage employment earned 250 JD per month or less, with 25 per cent earning 200 JD or less per month. The other half of young people in wage employment earned more than 250 JD per month.

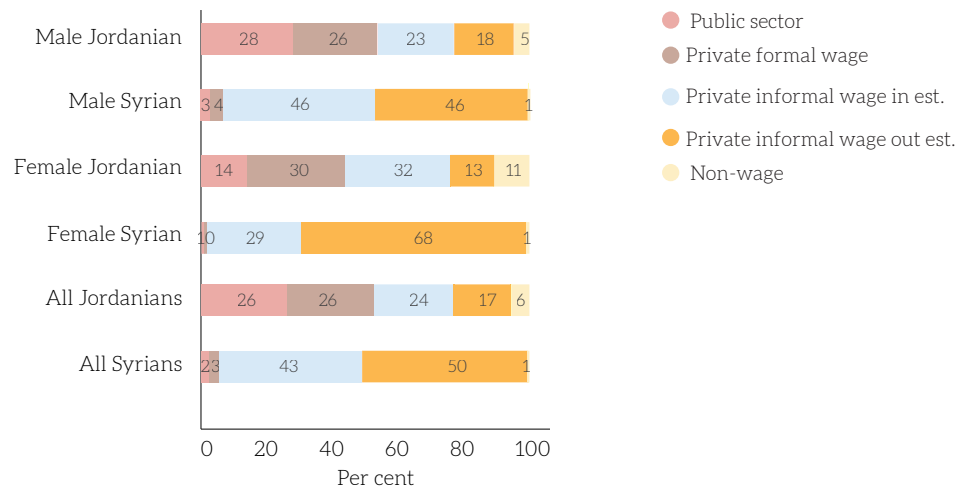
Types of work available to young people in Jordan

As mentioned above, young people have a strong preference for public sector jobs because of their stability, better working conditions, and associated benefits. Private sector jobs differ widely in the extent to which they offer such advantages. We classify jobs in the

private sector based on their employment status (waged and salaried versus non-waged, which includes self-employment and unpaid family work), their formality (whether they are covered by social insurance or not), and their location within or outside of fixed establishments. Jobs outside of fixed establishments (such as jobs on construction sites, on the street, in fields, or in private homes) are overwhelmingly informal and often precarious. As shown in Figure 6, employed young Jordanian men are fairly evenly distributed across the different types of employment, with between one fifth and one quarter of them in each type, except for non-waged work whose share is only 5 per cent. Compared to their male counterparts, young Jordanian women in employment have a somewhat lower chance to be in the most desired category – the public sector – and in the least desired category – informal waged employment outside of fixed establishments – which generally does not meet their reservation working conditions.

Figure 6: Type of youth employment, by gender and nationality (percentage)

Source: Authors' calculations based on SYPJ.



⁷ 'Minimum Wage to Go up to JD260 at Onset of 2021', Jordan Times, 25 February 2020.

They are therefore more likely to be employed in the intermediate categories of formal and informal waged employment inside fixed establishments. Young Syrians have almost no access to formal employment in Jordan, whether public or private.

Young women's high reservation working conditions

Unemployed young women's greater selectiveness in terms of the positions they were willing to accept is a reflection of the high "reservation working conditions"⁸ of young female Jordanians and Syrians. In other words, young women are only willing to accept jobs if they meet certain conditions, which are often not met in the Jordanian context, and this leads to low female employment rates. Young people were supportive of women working in the abstract. However, young women who participated in the FGDs noted that many conditions must be in place in order for women to be able to work in certain roles. They said that Jordanian society may negatively judge women who take on jobs that are seen as less suitable. Social norms⁹ and care work responsibilities¹⁰ also make it difficult for women to take on jobs that are very demanding, have long or late working hours, or that require longer commutes.

"There are some private companies who have long working hours which discourage women from applying since they cannot stay out late."
- Young Jordanian woman, aged between 22-30

Concerns about, and experiences of, harassment may also limit young women's participation in the labour market. About half of young people in the survey (54 per cent) said that it is dangerous for women to walk alone because of harassment, and about one third (38 per cent) said it is dangerous for women to take public transportation. Among Syrians, young people also expressed concerns about the risks of women mixing with the opposite sex or harassment in certain types of employment. In combination with the perceived unattainability of good quality jobs for Syrians in Jordan, and especially for Syrian women, this led to young Syrians regarding home-based economic activities as the most appropriate and feasible for Syrian refugee women.

"A woman in a gender-mixed job would be exposed to different issues at work... I think it would cause her harm. If a young woman works at a store, for example... There might be other young men who would bother her..." - Young Syrian man, aged between 20-27

Young people are often more educated than the level required for their jobs

For those young people who are in employment, they are quite often in jobs that require less education than the level they have attained (Figure 7). Overall, 45 per cent of working young people were working in a job that required less education than they had completed. For instance, 60 per cent of young men with a basic education are working in a job that requires less than a basic education. Among secondary graduates, 35 per cent of young men are working in jobs that require less than a basic education, and

⁸ Groh et al., 2014; Dougherty, 2014; Gauri, Rahman and Sen, 2019.

⁹ See the first policy brief in this series "The Transition to Adulthood in Jordan: Supporting Youth Aspirations" for further information on gendered norms around adulthood.

¹⁰ Economic Research Forum and UNWomen, 2020.

16 per cent in jobs that require only a basic education, compared to 46 per cent who are working in a job that requires secondary education. FGD participants noted that this type of mismatch between educational attainment and job requirements was common, particularly among young Syrian refugees who are forced to accept any jobs due to their difficult economic situation.

Female higher-education graduates tend to have a better match between their educational credentials and the jobs in which they work because, unlike their male counterparts, they can opt out of jobs with a poor match. Among them, 73 per cent work in jobs that match their credentials compared to only 54 per cent of men.

Policies to support work for young people

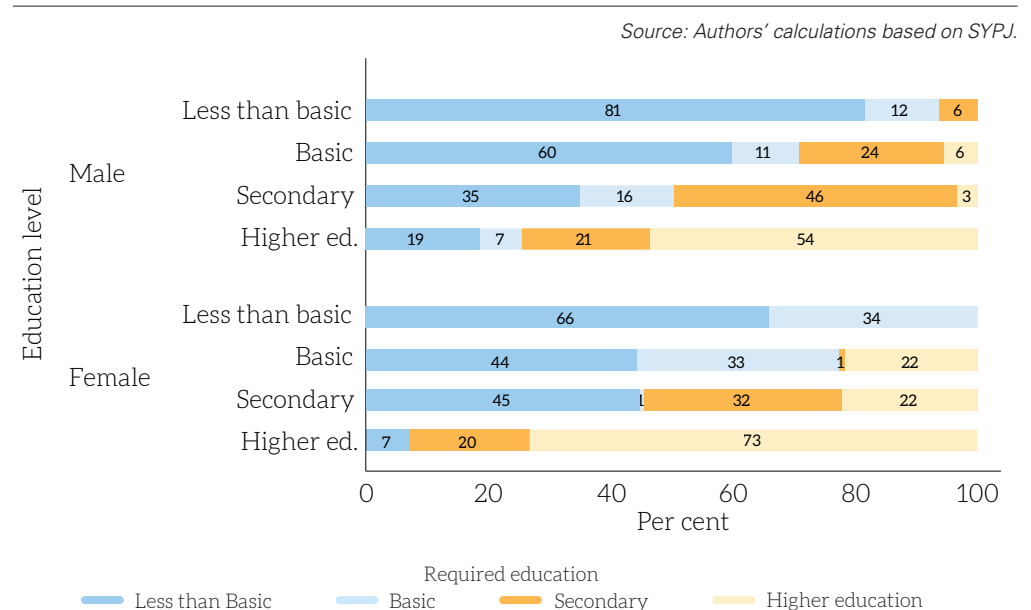
Young people’s aspirations for employment are not met by the reality of Jordan’s

labour market conditions. Although there are a variety of specific barriers that limit the economic engagement of young people in Jordan, the biggest barrier appears to be weak labour demand and weak job creation overall. In particular, the economy is not creating the types of jobs that Jordan’s educated young people aspire to.

Young people would like to work in the public sector and prefer white-collar jobs. However, unemployed youth primarily reported that they did not work because there are no jobs available, and unemployed young men would generally accept a variety of jobs. Although their reservation wages are often a bit higher than wages in existing jobs, half of young people would accept jobs in the public or private sectors for 300 JD per month, which is only slightly more than the minimum wage.

The preference for public sector jobs also reflects young Jordanians’ desire

Figure 7: Education requirements of young people’s jobs, by education level and gender (percentage)



for job security and social protection. While Jordan has done a relatively good job in extending social security coverage to micro and small establishments,¹¹ a large percentage of jobs in which young Jordanians engage (47 per cent) are not covered by social security. This informality further contributes to a reluctance to accept these jobs. One of the main pillars of Jordan's National Social Protection Strategy¹² is "opportunity" by which is meant that the government ensures that Jordanian families become self-sufficient through a just, private sector-led labour market that provides decent work covered by social security. The action plan under the strategy includes the implementation of mechanisms to expand social security coverage for temporary and part-time work, which could prove to be particularly beneficial for young people and women.¹³

A recent International Labour Organization report on possible ways to expand social security coverage in Jordan concluded that a large majority of the lack of social security coverage is due to gaps in enforcement and compliance rather than statutory exclusions.¹⁴ Thus, in addition to expanding mandatory coverage to all types of employment, the report suggests multiple policy approaches to improve compliance, such as simplifying administrative processes to acquire coverage, and providing incentives, subsidies, and other non-standard mechanisms to ensure coverage of irregular workers and hard-to-insure groups.¹⁵

Besides social security, young people aspire to jobs that provide improved

working conditions, such as reasonable working hours, paid vacations and sick leave, limits to employers' and managers' abuses of authority, safe and respectful workplaces, as well as associated benefits such as health insurance. With weak labour demand, it is unlikely that employers will upgrade working conditions of their own volition, and there are limits to what government regulations can do to improve working conditions in the private sector without imposing higher costs on employers than could weaken labour demand even further.

Active labour market programmes that strive to better prepare young people for the labour market, and to achieve a better match between job seekers and the available jobs, are likely to be of limited effectiveness if the size and pattern of labour demand is the binding constraint.¹⁶ By providing more complete information about existing employment opportunities, such programmes could help to better align young people's expectations, and ultimately, labour market-readiness efforts, with existing opportunities. Although we are not in a position to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of different types of training, our findings indicate that job-based training efforts, such as internships and apprenticeships, were more relevant to employability than other types of training programmes, such as skills training or training courses.¹⁷ Evidence from Jordan, the Middle East and North Africa, and wider global evidence, suggests that internships and apprenticeships tend to be more effective than other active labour market programmes.¹⁸

11 Assaad and Salemi, 2019.

12 Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, 2019.

13 Ibid.

14 Razzaz, Pellerano and Byrne, 2021.

15 Ibid.

16 McKenzie, 2017; Blattman and Ralston, 2015; Sumberg et al., 2021.

17 See the third policy brief in this series "Youth Entrepreneurial Readiness in Jordan: High Interest, Low Success Rates" and Assaad, Krafft, and Sieverding, 2021 for further information.

18 Bausch et al., 2017; Premand et al., 2016; Groh et al., 2015; eidem, 2012; Krafft, 2018; Monk, Sandefur and Teal, 2008; McKenzie, Assaf and

Young women face unique barriers to work

The strong preference for the public sector and, specifically, teaching jobs as ideal for women is related to the working conditions of these jobs. Other studies have also demonstrated that certain minimum (reservation) conditions must be met for women to be able to work.¹⁹ Hours must be reconcilable with marriage and family responsibilities, given women's disproportionate care burdens.²⁰ Reducing women's care burdens requires policies such as the direct provision of childcare or childcare subsidies.²¹ Current efforts to expand Kindergarten in Jordan are a promising step,²² but limited nursery care for younger children²³ and the difficulties of reconciling school and work schedules remain a challenge that may limit the effectiveness of such interventions in helping to increase women's employment rates.²⁴

Programmes are also needed to address gender norms, both in terms of views on the types of work that are appropriate for women and in terms of men's contribution to care work at home. Previous studies have shown that Jordanians tend to overestimate general social disapproval of women's work; campaigns to provide accurate information about community perceptions may therefore help to shift attitudes.²⁵ The education system can also be an important site for changing gender norms,²⁶ which remain persistently inequitable across generations.²⁷ While

Cusolito, 2016.

19 Gauri, Rahman and Sen, 2019.

20 Al-Hawarin et al., 2020.

21 Krafft and Assaad, 2015; Clark et al., 2019; Al-Hawarin et al., 2020.

22 Ministry of Education, Jordan, 2018.

23 Ghawi et al., 2018.

24 Krafft and Lassassi, 2020.

25 Gauri, Rahman and Sen, 2019.

26 Dhar, Jain and Jayachandran, 2018; Levy et al., 2020.

27 El Feki, Heilman and Barker, 2017.

young people often supported gender equity in areas such as women's leadership, they also generally agreed that when jobs are scarce, men should have the priority, reflecting the persistence of norms associated with a strong male breadwinner.

There is a need to ensure that workplaces and transportation are safe for women and perceived as such

Changing norms and behaviours around harassment is also critically important to reducing barriers to women's work. The reality and reputational risks of harassment contribute to women's preferences for engaging in gender-segregated work and in professions seen as more suitable. This was a particular concern among Syrian refugees, but substantial percentages of young people voiced concerns about women's safety when walking or taking public transportation. Efforts are needed to ensure that public transportation is safe for women, and further studies are needed to understand safety and perceptions of safety in specific types of employment outside the public sector. It is also important to change the victim-blaming culture around harassment.

Young Syrians face legal restrictions on their employment opportunities

Young Syrians are restricted to a limited number of sectors in their legal employment opportunities.²⁸ Low youth employment rates (32 per cent for male Syrians and 6 per cent for female Syrians) and high unemployment rates (44 per cent for male Syrians and 82 per cent for female Syrians) compound an already difficult

28 Razzaz, 2017.

economic situation. Opening a wider array of employment opportunities to Syrians could help support their economic inclusion. Syrian women, in particular, face extremely limited employment opportunities outside the home. Parallel policy and programmatic tracks trying to create more hospitable environments and opportunities for work outside the home, as well as supporting the home-based projects that are considered attainable, will be important for supporting Syrian women's livelihoods.

COVID-19 has created additional challenges for youth employment

Creating decent work for young people has become even more challenging in the COVID-19 era. Policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing economic challenges in Jordan focused on preventing lay-offs among those who were employed at the start of the pandemic. Employers were not allowed to lay off workers.²⁹ Although this approach appears to have limited job losses in the public and formal private sectors, young people employed in Jordan are disproportionately employed in the informal sector³⁰ and were thus at higher risk of being laid off and of loss of income.³¹ Moreover, young people entering the labour market,

especially those who are highly educated, are at risk of long-term losses in earnings.³² The challenging youth employment situation is illustrated in official statistics over time. In the fourth quarter of 2020, the unemployment rate for Jordan overall was 25 per cent,³³ 23 per cent for men and 33 per cent for women.³⁴ Although young people and women typically have higher unemployment rates than average, the pandemic has further exacerbated these challenges. For example, in 2019 (before the pandemic), Jordanians aged between 20–24 had a 39 per cent unemployment rate overall, and this is now 45 per cent; and Jordanian women aged 20–24 had a 60 per cent unemployment rate, which has now risen to 88 per cent.³⁵

The Jordanian government has instituted a number of programmes to provide additional assistance to both formal and informal workers who were temporarily or permanently laid off during the pandemic. These include:³⁶

- The Daily Wage Workers' programme of the National Aid Fund for workers without social insurance
- The Tadamon 1 programme for temporarily laid-off workers with at least 12 months of social security contributions

29 Ben Mimoune, 2020.

30 Assaad, Krafft, and Sieverding, 2021.

31 Krafft, Assaad and Marouani, 2021.

32 Cockx, 2016.

33 Department of Statistics (Jordan), 2021.

34 Our results are consistent with official statistics which found the highest unemployment rates nationally were for those aged 15–19 (62 per cent) and 20–24 (48 per cent) in the fourth quarter of 2020. We find an unemployment rate of 54 per cent for 16–19-year-olds and 46 per cent for 20–24-year-olds.

35 Department of Statistics (Jordan), 2019.

36 United Nations Children's Fund and Jordan Strategy Forum, 2020.

- The Tadamon 2 programme for workers with less than 12 months of contributions, including informal workers
- The Musanad 1, 2, and 3 programmes for temporarily or permanently laid-off workers and self-employed workers experiencing reduced income, registered with the social security corporation.

Despite the availability of these

programmes, a large number of affected workers were not reached.³⁷ Young people, in particular, face challenges because they are often informal and uncovered workers, or have never worked. Youth-targeted programmes, such as those designed to employ young people in COVID-19 related programmes in the March 2021 stimulus package,³⁸ are much needed.

³⁷ Krafft, Assaad and Marouani, 2021.
³⁸ International Monetary Fund, 2021.

References

- Al-Hawarin, Ibrahim, Nasma Berri, Irene Selwaness and Maia Sieverding. 'The Care Economy in Jordan: Towards Recognizing, Reducing, and Redistributing Unpaid Care Work', UN Women, 2020.
- Assaad, Ragui, Caroline Krafft and Caitlyn Keo. 'The Composition of Labor Supply and Its Evolution from 2010 to 2016 in Jordan', in *The Jordanian Labor Market: Between Fragility and Resilience*, edited by Caroline Krafft and Ragui Assaad, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2019.
- Assaad, Ragui, Caroline Krafft and Maia Sieverding. *Youth Transitions to Adulthood in Jordan: High Aspirations, Challenging Realities*. (with Layla Al-Hajj, Ruby Cheung, Adriana Cortes Mendosa, Amalea Jubara, Kai Tiede, and Sarah Wahby). Amman: UNICEF, 2021.
- Assaad, Ragui, and Colette Salemi. 'The Structure of Employment and Job Creation in Jordan: 2010-2016', in *The Jordanian Labor Market: Between Fragility and Resilience*, edited by Caroline Krafft and Ragui Assaad, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2019, pp. 27–51.
- Bausch, Jonas, Paul Dyer, Drew Gardiner, Jochen Kluge and Sonja Kovacevic. 'The Impact of Skills Training on Financial Behaviour, Employability, and Educational Choice of Youth: Evidence from a Randomized Controlled Trial in Morocco', in *ERF 23rd Annual Conference*, Amman, Jordan, 2017.
- Ben Mimoune, Nejla. 'Policy and Institutional Responses to COVID-19 in the Middle East and North Africa: Jordan', Brookings, 2020, <www.brookings.edu/research/policy-and-institutional-responses-to-covid-19-in-the-middle-east-and-north-africa-tunisia>, accessed 11 August 2021.
- Blattman, Christopher, and Laura Ralston. 'Generating Employment in Poor and Fragile States: Evidence from Labor Market and Entrepreneurship Programs', 2015, doi:10.2139/ssrn.2622220.
- Clark, Shelley, Caroline W. Kabiru, Sonia Laszlo and Stella Muthuri. 'The Impact of Childcare on Poor Urban Women's Economic Empowerment in Africa', *Demography*, vol. 56, 2019, pp. 1247–1272.
- Cockx, Bart. 'Do Youths Graduating in a Recession Incur Permanent Losses?' *IZA World of Labor*, vol. 281, 2016, pp. 1–11, doi:10.15185/izawol.281.
- Department of Statistics (Jordan). '24.7% Unemployment Rate during the Fourth Quarter of 2020', 2021, <http://dosweb.dos.gov.jo/unemp_q42020>, accessed 11 August 2021.
- . 'Table 2.6: Population Age 15+ Years by Economic Activity Status, Sex, Broad Age Groups & Nationality (Percentage Distribution)— 2019,' <www.dos.gov.jo/owa-user/owa/emp_unemp_y.show_tables1_y?lang=E&year1=2019&t_no=18>, accessed 11 August 2021.
- Dhar, Diva, Tarun Jain and Seema Jayachandran. 'Reshaping Adolescents' Gender Attitudes: Evidence from a School-Based Experiment in India', *NBER Working Paper Series*, 2018.
- Dougherty, Christopher. 'The Labour Market for Youth in Egypt: Evidence from the 2012 School to Work Transition

Survey,' *Silatech Working Paper*, Silatech, Doha, Qatar, 2014.

Economic Research Forum and UNWomen. 'Progress of Women in the Arab States 2020: The Role of the Care Economy in Promoting Gender Equality', UNWomen, Cairo, Egypt, 2020.

El Feki, Shereen, Brian Heilman and Gary Barker, eds. *Understanding Masculinities: Results from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) – Middle East and North Africa*, UNWomen and Promundo-US, 2017.

Gauri, Varun, Tasmia Rahman and Iman Sen. 'Measuring Social Norms About Female Labor Force Participation in Jordan.' *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper Series*, World Bank, Washington, D.C., 2019.

Ghawi, Ghalia, Sami Dahdah, Helena Pylvainen, Hala Hatamleh, Robert Palmer and Hala Sarabi. 'Nurseries in Jordan: Findings from the Queen Rania Foundation National Child Development Survey 2015', Queen Rania Foundation, Amman, Jordan, 2018.

Groh, Matthew, Nandini Krishnan, David McKenzie and Tara Vishwanath. 'Soft Skills or Hard Cash? The Impact of Training and Wage Subsidy Programs on Female Youth Employment in Jordan', *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper*, World Bank, Washington, D.C., 2012.

Groh, Matthew, David McKenzie, Nour Shammout and Tara Vishwanath. 'Testing the Importance of Search Frictions, Matching, and Reservation Prestige Through Randomized Experiments in Jordan', *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper*, World Bank, Washington, D.C., 2014.

———. 'Testing the Importance of Search Frictions and Matching through a Randomized Experiment in Jordan', *IZA Journal of Labor Economics*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2015, doi:10.1186/s40172-015-0022-8.

Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. 'National Social Protection Strategy 2019–2025', UNICEF, Amman, Jordan, 2019.

International Monetary Fund. 'Policy Responses to COVID-19: Policy Tracker', IMF, 2021.

Krafft, Caroline. 'Is School the Best Route to Skills? Returns to Vocational School and Vocational Skills in Egypt', *The Journal of Development Studies*, vol. 54, no. 7, 2018, pp. 1100–1120, doi:10.1080/00220388.2017.1329524.

Krafft, Caroline, and Ragui Assaad. 'Promoting Successful Transitions to Employment for Egyptian Youth', *Economic Research Forum Policy Perspective*, Economic Research Forum, . Cairo, Egypt, 2015.

Krafft, Caroline, Ragui Assaad and Mohamed Ali Marouani. 'The Impact of COVID-19 on Middle Eastern and North African Labor Markets: Glimmers of Progress but Persistent Problems for Vulnerable Workers a Year into the Pandemic', *Economic Research Forum Policy Brief*, Cairo, Egypt, 2021.

Krafft, Caroline, and Moundir Lassassi. 'Public Preschool and Maternal Labor Supply in Algeria: Evidence from a Natural Experiment', in *ERF 26th Annual Conference*, 2020.

Levy, Jessica K., Gary L. Darmstadt, Caitlin Ashby, Mary Quandt, Erika Halsey, Aishwarya Nagar and Margaret E. Greene. 'Characteristics of Successful Programmes Targeting Gender Inequality and Restrictive Gender Norms

for the Health and Wellbeing of Children, Adolescents, and Young Adults: A Systematic Review', *The Lancet Global Health*, vol. 8, no. 2, 2020, pp. e225–e236, doi:10.1016/S2214-109X(19)30495-4.

McKenzie, David. 'How Effective Are Active Labor Market Policies in Developing Countries? A Critical Review of Recent Evidence', *World Bank Research Observer*, vol. 32, no. 2, 2017, pp. 127–154, doi:10.1093/wbro/lkx001.

McKenzie, David, Nabila Assaf and Ana Paula Cusolito. 'The Demand for, and Impact of, Youth Internships: Evidence from a Randomized Experiment in Yemen', *IZA Journal of Labor and Development*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2016, pp. 1–15, doi:10.1186/s40175-016-0048-8.

'Minimum Wage to Go up to JD260 at Onset of 2021', *Jordan Times*, 25 February 2020.

Ministry of Education, Jordan. 'Ministry of Education: Strategic Plan 2018–2022', Amman, Jordan, 2018.

Monk, Courtney, Justin Sandefur and Francis Teal. 'Does Doing an Apprenticeship Pay Off? Evidence from Ghana', *CSAE Working Paper Series*, Oxford, 2008.

Premand, Patrick, Stefanie Brodmann, Rita Almeida, Rebekka Grun and Mahdi Barouni. 'Entrepreneurship Education and Entry into Self-Employment Among University Graduates', *World Development*, vol. 77, 2016, pp. 311–327, doi:10.1016/j.worlddev.2015.08.028.

Razzaz, Susan. 'A Challenging Market Becomes More Challenging: Jordanian Workers, Migrant Workers, and Refugees', International Labour Organization, Beirut, 2017.

Razzaz, Susan, Luca Pellerano and Meredith Byrne. 'Opportunities for Extending Social Security Coverage in Jordan', International Labour Organization, 2021.

Sumberg, James, Louise Fox, Justin Flynn, Philip Mader and Marjoke Oosterom. 'Africa's "Youth Employment" Crisis Is Actually a "Missing Jobs" Crisis', *Development Policy Review*, 2021, pp. 1–23, doi:10.1111/dpr.12528.

United Nations Children's Fund and Jordan Strategy Forum. 'Jordan's National Social Protection Response during COVID-19', UNICEF and Jordan Strategy Forum, 2020.



UNICEF Jordan
www.unicef.org/jordan
Office Tel: +962 6 5502400
P.O. Box 940043, Amman 11194,
Jordan

©UNICEF August 2021