

INTRODUCTION

Nine years into the crisis, over 650'000 registered Syrian refugees remain in Jordan, the majority of whom reside in host communities and approximately 124'000 in camps. The Jordan Response Plan (JRP) has been the primary instrument in managing the in-country response to the Syrian crisis, for both refugees and vulnerable Jordanians, while the Jordan Compact and subsequent follow-up conferences in Brussels has maintained a framework for international cooperation between the Jordanian government and the international community. Under the JRP for 2019, approximately \$966.9 million of funding was granted for support to refugees and host communities, according to figures from the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation figures.¹ The updated JRP for 2020 – 2022 was released in February of this year.

The below is a result of civil society consultations and inputs from actors responding to the needs of Syrian refugees and vulnerable Jordanians in The Kingdom of Jordan, across the themes of Education, Protection and Livelihoods. It tracks key achievements against commitments made, remaining challenges and suggested recommendations as identified by civil society organisations (CSOs) pertaining to the asylum space in the Kingdom in advance of the Brussels IV conference

This year's consultation process took place during the strict lockdown imposed by the authorities to prevent further spread of the COVID-19 virus. The effects of this were two-fold: first, in terms of process, it was impossible to organise the same level of meetings and consultations among CSOs to hold in-depth discussions and provide input in-person. Second, in terms of capacity, CSO resources were severely strained in dealing with a rapidly evolving context, as they worked to continue providing essential aid and services, transition other services to remote modalities and navigate bureaucratic and operational constraints. As such, it was decided to solicit input from CSO colleagues remotely.

To ensure continuity of monitoring and to allow for the consultations to accurately follow the progress of achievements and evolution of challenges, remote consultations were conducted on the basis of updating the 2019 civil society consultation paper, with the addition of particular COVID-19 related issues under each thematic area. This process was co-facilitated by the Jordan International NGO Forum (JIF) and the Jordanian National NGO Forum (JONAF) who solicited feedback from their respective member organisations. Across these two fora, a wide spectrum of organisations responding across the thematic areas of Protection, Livelihoods and Education were represented. The consultations have sought to demonstrate how development and humanitarian actors operating in Jordan have perceived and witnessed achievements and remaining challenges and recommendations in order to improve the response to the Syrian refugee crisis.

An initial call for inputs was shared with members in mid-April 2020. Following this, feedback was incorporated, and technical points were clarified with specific originations. A final draft was shared for red-line comments from members on 22 May and allowed until 31 May for sign-off. Although the Building Blocks methodology shared by EU colleagues in mid-May was welcomed, the JIF and JONAF had already begun the consultation process in mid-April and were thus not able to re-adjust the methodology to strictly follow this.

¹ [Jordan times: 2020 Jordan Response Plan to be announced this month – Planning Ministry](#)

EDUCATION

ACHIEVEMENTS

COVID-19 | REMOTE LEARNING

- ✓ The Government of Jordan (GoJ) established dedicated TV channels with Ministry of Education teachers to offer alternative, remote learning modalities for learners affected by the lockdown.
- ✓ Several vocational training institutes have started implementing distance learning for specific vocations, and the Ministry of Labour has begun developing distance learning for technical vocational training.

POLICY

- ✓ Announcement by the Ministry of Higher Education that Syrian students can use their MoI card, instead of their passport, for admission, registration and graduation purposes in Jordanian universities.²
- ✓ Extension of the grace period of the 2018 – 2019 school year, which enabled Syrian refugee children to enrol in school, regardless of their documentation status.
- ✓ Finalization of the National Education Plan.

INFRASTRUCTURE

- ✓ MoE has established the double-shift system for Syrian refugee children across 209 schools.³

ENROLMENT AND QUALITY

- ✓ 136,437 Syrian children enrolled in schools, exceeding the GoJ's commitment to enrol 130'000 Syrian children by the end of 2019.⁴ This represents a 2% increase in enrolment of Syrian refugee children in schools when compared to the first semester of 2019 and an 8% increase in camp schools.⁵
- ✓ Trends in education quality show gradual but steady improvement in learning outcomes for '15-year-olds in science, mathematics and reading' after initially declining trends.⁶
- ✓ Education Management Information System (EMIS) reinforced

REMAINING CHALLENGES & RECOMMENDATIONS

COVID-19 | ACCESS INEQUALITY & REMOTE MODALITIES

- Inequality of access to high-speed internet, smartphones and computers has been identified as a major barrier to continuing remote education for vulnerable Jordanian and refugee families.
- Large family sizes in small accommodations place further constraints on the learning environment for children and young people attempting to keep up with their education remotely. Challenges include difficulty focusing

² [Roya News: Syrian students can use IDs issued by Interior to study in Jordanian universities](#)

³ Independent Monitor's Assessment Report - Jordan Compact and Brussels meetings, Report 3 2020, Agulhas Applied Knowledge

⁴ Education WG dashboard

⁵ Independent Monitor's Assessment Report - Jordan Compact and Brussels meetings

⁶ OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), [2018 results](#).

due to distractions, lack of an appropriate space for learning in the home and the absence of teachers/supervision to encourage disciplined learning.

- The above factors will make it difficult for learners to maintain their progress in education pathways. Large numbers of children will be at risk of missing important milestones and not achieving key learning outcomes, placing them at a significant disadvantage when schools reopen.
- This will likely create additional barriers to returning to formal education for population groups with already elevated drop-out rates. Coupled with increased financial pressure on households due to loss of employment under the curfew, more children could be pushed into child labour to supplement household income.

POLICY

- At the beginning of the 2019-2020 scholastic year, the MoE did not reinstate the documentation enrolment waiver, which allowed all Syrian refugee children to enrol in school, regardless of their documentation status. This new requirement excluded a group of children from accessing education.
- The policy implementation for school enrolment remains inconsistent. CSOs have flagged cases of principals not respecting the grace period and refusing enrolment of Syrian refugee children, and a small number of cases where schools cited issues with children's documentation.
- As noted during the Jordan Response Plan (JRP) revision process, the MoE no longer approves of informal learning support services that are still in need for at-risk out of school children and adolescents as a pathway to formal education.

RECOMMENDATIONS | POLICY

- Reinstate the documentation enrolment waiver for Syrian refugee children, allowing registration regardless of documentation status as mentioned in the outcomes paper following Brussels II in 2018.⁷
- Establish a clear complaints and referral mechanism to flag and follow up on cases of Syrian refugee children rejected from enrolment in schools.
- During the transitional phase of the humanitarian/development nexus, a framework must be developed with key stakeholders to achieve national-level education goals, without leaving behind vulnerable groups, especially out of school children and youth.
- Ensure that appropriate activities linked to the JRP are also reflected in the Education Strategic Plan (ESP).

CONDITIONS & ACCESS

The quality of education and issues with the learning environment continue to be a deterrent to enrolment and retention in formal education pathways, for both Syrian refugees and Jordanian learners.

- Overcrowding and a lack of basic pedagogical equipment in many schools decrease the quality of the learning environment and act as a deterrent to enrolment and retention. Education outcomes remain low by international standards, on average 15% lower than the OECD average as measured by the PISA assessment.⁸
- CSOs further noted poorly maintained schools, a lack of clean drinking water and appropriate sanitation facilities as other significant issues.
- While the construction of additional schools is welcomed, the investment (time and monetary) required to build new schools is significant and is not recommended as a blanket solution in addressing improvements in the learning environment within existing schools.

⁷ Supporting the future of Syria and the Region; Brussels II Conference – Jordan partnership paper conference document, April 2018.

⁸ OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), [2018 results](#).

- Syrian learners, particularly those in camps, continue to perform far below the national education average.
- Schools are often inaccessible for disabled students due to a lack of appropriate transportation, inaccessible school buildings and limited capacity of teachers trained to work with students with specific needs. Figures from the Jordanian Department of Statistics indicate that 79% of the total number of persons with disabilities of school age 'do not receive any form of education'. Although inclusive education is incorporated in the JRP, funding to scale up remains inadequate.
- Transportation issues have been reported as an additional key barrier to accessing schools by refugees in host communities; there are limited buses, families often cannot afford the fees for transport, or children have to walk dangerous routes to school unaccompanied.
- The MoE is in the process of finalising a training plan to address a clear gap in pre-service teacher training. Although there was a willingness to address this in 2019, it is not yet clear how this plan will be operationalised in practice. Further, although teachers' training is a key domain within the National Education Sector Plan (NESP), pedagogy is not specifically spelt out as a priority.

RECOMMENDATIONS | CONDITIONS & ACCESS

- Continue the expansion and rehabilitation of school facilities, in areas most in need, with consideration for appropriate hygiene and sanitation facilities, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Establish a referral mechanism to enable the transfer of children to schools in closer districts, recognizing that transportation to school remains a major barrier to access.
- Scale-up funding to implement accessible and inclusive education programming as articulated in the JRP and support the MoE in the operationalisation of inclusive programming.
- Support the development of comprehensive pre-service and in-service trainings as planned in the NESP,⁹ with a particular focus on building and strengthening pedagogy-related skills.

DOUBLE-SHIFT SCHOOLS

While double-shift schools have allowed for the absorption of a large number of Syrian refugees, it has also contributed to reducing the quality of education overall.

- The afternoon school session especially, mainly attended by Syrian children, provides a lower quality learning environment, including fewer teaching hours and less experienced teachers. Those who attend the afternoon sessions receive, on average, 220 fewer hours per year of contact time as compared with the national average.¹⁰
- Learners in camp schools are further disadvantaged. They receive approximately 120 fewer contact hours across the school year than Syrian learners who attended the afternoon shift in double-shift schools in host communities.¹¹
- Those in double-shift schools do not receive additional support to compensate for gaps and needs, negatively affecting students' learning outcomes to a greater extent.
- The current modality of dividing by nationality further risks undermining the potential for social cohesion between Jordanian and Syrian refugee communities.

⁹ "Domain 5, Human Resource strategic Objective: To provide, develop and sustain qualified human resources for the educational system" National Education Sector Plan (MoE, 2018), p85.

¹⁰ Findings of the Education Quality Survey for 30 Centres and Schools, December 2018-January 2019 – European Union, January 2019

¹¹ Ibid.

- Alternative solutions to double-shift schools must be put in place. In the short term, school time should be increased to cover gaps in contact hours.
- Education actors should enforce quality assurance for the afternoon sessions by reinforcing teacher training for second shifts and by ensuring access to all facilities in the afternoon.
- Train teachers in alternative pedagogies and support educators through tailored teacher development plans to counter high turnover rates and low levels of motivation. Adequate quality monitoring and supervision should be implemented to use limited time productively and enhance learning outcomes.
- In the long term, put together a comprehensive plan and risk analysis to gradually phase out of the double-shift system in consultation with all partners and stakeholders including education actors, MoE, professional associations, other civil society actors and beneficiaries.

OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN AND YOUTH

In 2018, the UN estimated that there are close to 84'000 Syrian school-aged refugee children out of school in Jordan.¹² The number has steadily increased from 32'000 in December 2015 and the enrolment rate for Syrian refugees decreases dramatically at the secondary level across the region.¹³ There remain significant gaps in understanding the needs of out of school children, as well as young people not in education, employment or training, and the continued barriers to accessing these.

Economic vulnerability, the need to supplement household income, and cultural and social norms surrounding the perception and value of education are widely cited as issues that affect dropout and retention rates of Syrian students.

- Interventions aimed at out of school children and young people not in education, employment or training are not strongly reflected in any plan (including the Education Sector Plan) and appropriate measures are not yet in place.
- The six Non-Formal Education programs established by the MoE to support school-aged children and adolescents in resuming their education are a welcomed initiative. However, these programs are not sufficient in addressing the multitude of needs and issues faced by out of school children and young people.
- Attendance in schools among Syrian children and young people falls below the average for Jordanian learners across age groups. Net attendance ratios for Syrians are '47 percentage points lower' than Jordanians at the secondary level, and 10 percentage points lower at the primary level.¹⁴
- Attendance levels drop significantly between primary and secondary level education. This decline is especially concerning for Syrian children and adolescents. At the primary education level, the net attendance ratio for Syrian households is 87%; however, at the secondary level, it decreases to only 30%. For Jordanian-headed households, the attendance ratio is 97% at the primary level and approximately 75% at the secondary level.¹⁵

¹² [No Lost Generation, Investing in the Future, Protection and Learning for all Syrian children and youth, March 2019.](#) Note that School-age Syrian refugee children' refers to children aged 5-17 either registered with UNHCR or the host country.

¹³ [No lost Generation, Brussels Conference Education Report, April 2017.](#)

¹⁴ Independent Monitor's Assessment Report - Jordan Compact and Brussels meetings, pg. 10

¹⁵ [Jordan Population and Family and Health Survey, 2017-18](#)

- This remains a contentious area for further research and there are numerous hurdles to conducting robust data collection to understand the reasons for dropping out, as well as the needs of ‘out of school’ children and young people not in education, employment or training.

RECOMMENDATIONS | OUT OF SCHOOL

- A robust mapping exercise should be conducted to understand barriers to education for out of school children, reasons for dropping out, as well as the present needs of these groups, including young people not in education, employment or training. This can inform a strengthened response plan and the development of a targeted strategy.
- Monitoring and reporting should be consistently disaggregated across primary, secondary and tertiary levels, as well as by nationality, given that attendance levels and barriers to retention differ significantly across these categories.
- There are multiple formal education options for young people after the primary level, including online learning, vocational training and apprenticeships. These activities should be coordinated across stakeholders, including the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Higher Education, vocational training centres through the Ministry of Labour, CSOs, non-formal education actors and the private sector to ensure all children and young people can access learning pathways in line with their learning needs.

VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

*Violence in schools is a major concern, and it is multifaceted and perpetuated both by children and school staff. It affects school children across ages, gender and nationality. Figures from an MoE online survey show a reduction in physical and verbal violence against children in camps, but an increase in instances of violence was cited in host community schools.*¹⁶

- Violence in school and bullying were consistently pointed out as a major push factor for dropouts, across genders and nationalities.
- CSOs have reported instances of sexual violence, particularly in bathrooms due to a lack of supervision, as a key concern raised through surveys and consultations.
- Violence is notably exacerbated by social cohesion issues, harassment and bullying between Jordanian and Syrian students. The double-shift system perpetuates a divide between Jordanian and Syrian refugee communities through de-facto segregation by nationality.

RECOMMENDATIONS | VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

- Continue nationwide campaigns to stop violence at school, with comprehensive targeting including children, parents, and also school staff.
- Recruit, train and support school counsellors and ensure an effective mechanism to identify, report, manage, refer and monitor cases of violence in schools.
- Integrate crisis-sensitive education skills, psychosocial support (including post-trauma management), and nonviolent disciplinary approaches in the formal training for all school staff.
- Proactively encourage school management to mix nationalities in the double-shift schools to foster social cohesion.

¹⁶ Independent Monitor’s Assessment Report - Jordan Compact and Brussels meetings, pg. 10

PROTECTION

ACHIEVEMENTS

POLICY

- ✓ Launch and extension of the Rectification of Status Process, allowing over 24'000 people to be issued updated Asylum Seeker Certificates for host communities and over 23'000 people to be issued with MOI cards. This process was finalised in March 2019 and allowed certain categories of refugees living outside of camps informally to regularise their status with the GoJ and obtain a Ministry of Interior service card to access basic services and work permits.
- ✓ Pardon Law adopted in February 2019, allowing Syrian couples who married informally prior to December 2018 to be exempted from fines or criminal charges.

RETURNS

- ✓ A conducive asylum environment for Syrian refugees has generally prevailed, preserving the asylum space in Jordan with authorities affirming that conditions in Syria have not been met for safe, dignified and voluntary returns.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

- ✓ Increased stability in regulations surrounding the asylum space in Jordan has been noted. Changes at the legislative level have been less frequent and there is improved clarity as to the legal framework governing the interactions between refugees and the authorities.
- ✓ Specialised legal services for refugees are in place, allowing access to documentation and the broader judicial system in Jordan, including a new division for refugees within the Sharia court for litigation established in 2019. These will require further capacity and support given the protracted nature of the displacement crisis and continued legal needs of the refugee population.
- ✓ Significant outreach efforts have contributed to enhanced awareness among refugees of available legal services in camps and the importance of registering changes in personal status.

REMAINING CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

COVID 19 | LOCKDOWN & SEXUAL & GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (SGBV)

The conditions under the COVID-19 lockdown have had a significant impact on the occurrence of SGBV and the ability of survivors to seek life-saving assistance.

- Over 2019, the majority of SGBV cases were perpetrated by intimate partners/spouses.¹⁷ With the onset of the curfew many survivors were forced into a situation of close proximity with perpetrators, putting them at greater risk in a context of additional stressors.
- Given the inequality of access to mobile phones (especially in camp households, where males usually possess phones), survivors would normally approach protection actors in person for assistance. This option was largely eliminated during the curfew, given restrictions on movement.
- The lack of awareness surrounding SGBV hotlines has further resulted in fewer people seeking assistance, evidenced by a 68% decrease of reported SGBV cases over the first weeks of the lockdown.¹⁸
- Humanitarian shelters for survivors of SGBV in urban areas faced barriers in obtaining movement and access permits. Although CSOs have reported welcomed support from the police and family protection units for transporting survivors, movement permits for case management agencies would have allowed increased capacity to assist.
- Given the likelihood of increased dependency on service provision for the most vulnerable communities, limited mobility and reduced presence of humanitarian staff during periods of lockdown, there is a generally heightened risk of corruption and misconduct.

RECOMMENDATIONS | LOCKDOWN & SGBV

- Donors should maintain funding levels for SGBV interventions and case management during the COVID-19 pandemic when risks are increased and barriers to reporting are higher.
- Ensure case management agencies and SGBV interventions are considered 'life-saving' and facilitate access to GoJ movement and access permits in case of further curfews.
- Ensure beneficiary feedback, and complaint and accountability mechanisms remain operational during subsequent periods of lockdown and continue to raise awareness on the reporting pathways for misconduct by humanitarian and other actors.

COVID-19 | MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHO-SOCIAL SUPPORT (MHPSS)

- Children's well-being has been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 crisis and associated lockdown and curfew measures. Civil society organisations have noted an increase in signs of distress as a result of family tensions as well as violence against children in the context of confinement in crowded accommodation and additional stressors.
- Early needs assessments conducted by CSOs have noted increased levels of anxiety and stress in Syrian refugee and Jordanian communities related to both health and economic concerns as a result of the pandemic. Given the curfew, there is also reduced access to 'safe spaces' where people could previously seek MHPSS. Further, service providers and health workers are particularly at risk of experiencing mental health issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS | COVID-19 MHPSS

- Facilitate access to safe spaces and continue to provide mental health & psycho-social support and case management services through remote modalities, especially during subsequent periods of lockdown.

DOCUMENTATION

- Suspension of the rectification campaign in March 2019 has shut down an important avenue for Syrian refugees to legalise their status in Jordan and obtain essential documentation, which allows them to access key government and humanitarian/development services, as well as register births, deaths and marriages.

¹⁷ SGBV Sub-Working Group

¹⁸ Ibid

- Prior to 2019, a number of Syrian refugees did not fit in the criteria for the rectification of status process. Without valid registration, they continue to face major barriers to legally remain in their place of residence, move freely, access public services and humanitarian assistance or register life events and changes in personal status. This vulnerable legal status will create a cascade of additional barriers in accessing other key documents for refugees and their children.
- CSOs have noted bureaucratic impediments to accessing public services, as Syrian refugees can normally only access public services in the area they are registered in.

RECOMMENDATIONS | DOCUMENTATION

- Re-establish the rectification process and revise the current criteria of rectification to include more Syrians, in consultation with protection and legal partners.
- Consider alternatives to forced relocation to camps where refugees are caught with irregular or invalid papers or lack proper documentation.
- Review the current MoI cards conditions to delink registration and validity from being limited to the place of residence and instead extend its coverage nationwide.
- Consider alternatives to the registration of key life events and changes in personal status for refugees without an MOI card.
- Expand specialized legal support for Syrian refugees to facilitate the issuance of civil documentation and the registration or correction of changes in personal status for complex cases, as well as continue to support alternate pathways to verify paternity, identity and key life events that occurred inside Syria.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

- Given the protracted nature of the displacement crisis, refugees' need for legal support in Jordan will likely increase over the long term. Addressing these needs will be challenging given the limited resources of legal aid providers and other protection actors.
- In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, changes in legislation, Defence Orders and other additional regulations related to reducing the spread of the virus, there will likely be significant confusion among refugee and host communities as to how to adapt to the challenging circumstances of the pandemic, whilst also abiding by evolving laws and regulations.

DURABLE SOLUTIONS

Actors generally agree that the conditions in Syria are not yet conducive for safe, dignified and voluntary returns. While the situation in Jordan is not alarming, advocacy to preserve the asylum space and support for programming should be maintained. Approximately 31'000 refugees returned to Syria over 2019, compared to an average of between 7'000 and 8'000 returns over 2016, 2017 and 2018.

- Despite a generally conducive asylum environment, there remain several push factors to return for Syrian refugees in Jordan. This includes restrictions on freedom of movement, loss of livelihoods as a result of the state of emergency in response to the threat of COVID-19, and policies that restrict Syrian refugees' access to essential services such as health and education, as well the labour market.
- Information gaps remain for those who expressed their intention to return.
 - However, the consistent provision of information in this regard remains challenging; actors risk providing inaccurate information given the unpredictable conflict dynamics and legal ambiguity of new legislation introduced.
 - Further, the provision of returns-related information could create concern among the refugee community and spread false information that returns are being facilitated, which may prompt premature returns.

- Refugees who intend to return to Syria are often underprepared from a legal-safety standpoint with regards to legal and civil documentation, proper registration of changes in personal status, births and deaths, and education documentation to allow for re-entry into the Syrian schooling system and closing their legal status in Jordan prior to departure.
- Despite a drastic global decline in numbers, resettlement to third countries remains an important pathway to durable solutions for some of the most vulnerable refugees. In 2019, only 5'000 refugees were resettled from Jordan (compared with 32'400 cases in 2016). UNHCR has determined that approximately 70'000 refugees are in need of resettlement, although less than 1% of those will have resettlement opportunities.

DURABLE SOLUTIONS | RECOMMENDATIONS

POLICY & FUNDING:

- Encourage the GoJ to maintain its position on returns, publicly acknowledging that conditions have not been met for safe returns and that refugees can remain in Jordan.
- Maintain funding for programming in Jordan to ensure that a decline in services does not act as a push factor to return and maintain the voluntary nature of the decision to return.

PUSH FACTORS:

- Address push factors related to restrictions on freedom of movement and loss of livelihoods resulting from Jordan's state of emergency in response to the threat of COVID-19.
- Support the revision of policies that restrict Syrian refugees' access to essential services (education, livelihood, health) and allow for the realisation of basic rights.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION & DO NO HARM

- Facilitate access to updated, returns-related information for those who express their intention to return.
- Ensure the provision of information related to returns is done with a strict do-no-harm approach, targeted at refugees who are in the process of returns only and coordinate returns messaging across actors to ensure that preparedness plans do not encourage premature returns.

APPROPRIATE PREPAREDNESS

- Encourage preparedness programming to prepare and equip refugees who have expressed their intention to return, in terms of their legal and administrative safety.
- Ensure that any preparedness programming does not incentivise returns, or act as a push / pull factor when conditions remain unsuitable for safe return.

RESETTLEMENT

- Support from the international community should be expanded to revive resettlement as a viable durable solution to displacement for especially vulnerable refugees.

FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

- The situation in Village 5 continues to be of major concern for CSOs. Save for exceptional circumstances, Village 5 residents cannot move freely to access other areas of Azraq camp, access services or take up employment or study outside of camps.
- Forced relocation to camps from host communities and to Village 5 are still ongoing, reportedly for security reasons, with no access to due process or judicial review of the decision.
- Returns to Syria from Village 5 have been recorded; however, the sustainability and voluntariness of these returns should be carefully assessed given the inherent push factors of being housed in a closed camp and uncertainty as to future prospects for continued asylum.
- Residents of *Informal Tented Settlements* remain particularly vulnerable to eviction. The nomadic nature of their lifestyle is impeded by the current legislation surrounding the MoI card, which attaches registration to a certain place of habitual residence. This also further complicates access to basic services for an already marginalised group.

FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT: RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensure a due process mechanism for forced relocations to camps, including minimum standards related to procedural safeguards such as access to UNHCR counselling and the possibility of appeal.
- Allow Village 5 residents' status to be reviewed periodically by a screening process and include humanitarian/vulnerability criteria within the screening and clearance procedures. (See recommendations on the Mol card above)

CHILD MARRIAGE

- Issues of child marriage and 'early marriage' were frequently highlighted by CSOs as a major protection concern and further raised in education consultations, highlighting the interconnection between these two issues.
- The drivers and practice of child marriage existed prior to the Syrian refugee crisis, but protracted displacement has exacerbated the issue. High levels of poverty and economic vulnerability, social and cultural norms and limited education and livelihood options, combined with the permissible legal framework, create a worrying environment and foster push factors for child marriage, especially among Syrian families.
- The informality of child marriage also seriously impacts refugees' documentation status and the ability to register key life events.

CHILD MARRIAGE: RECOMMENDATIONS

- Address the root causes of child marriage and child labour, such as education retention (see education section), and increase families' economic resilience (see livelihood section) both for host and refugee communities.
- Develop comprehensive awareness, prevention and assistance support strategies to change the behaviour of key actors (girls and boys, parents and caregivers, sheikhs, community leaders, courts/judicial staff, education and health professionals) and support children engaged in child marriage.
- Abolish the exception to Article 10 of Civil Status Law, which allows marriage for girls aged 15 under certain conditions.

CHILD LABOUR

- Child labour remains a significant concern and was very much echoed in the consultations with CBOs in the north of the country. The link with education actors is clear, as child labour is frequently cited as a reason for children being out of school, or for dropping out.
- For a Syrian refugee family, children's engagement in labour contributes to cover the household's income-expenditure gap. This is accentuated when the caregiver is not able to work or unable to secure a work permit, but also further exacerbated when the quality of education and school environment are not considered decent enough to balance the cost of not bringing in additional income.

CHILD LABOUR: RECOMMENDATIONS

- Reinforce collaboration between the Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Education to tackle and implement the national framework to prevent child labour, as well as to operate an effective referral management system regarding child labour.
- Address the roots of child labour, such as education retention (see education section) and increase families' economic resilience (see livelihood section) both for host and refugee communities.

LIVELIHOODS

ACHIEVEMENTS

COVID 19 | CASH ASSISTANCE

- ✓ A mechanism to distribute cash to vulnerable Jordanians affected by the COVID-19 crisis is being executed through the National Aid Fund. Cash support for daily labourers will also be distributed.

HOME-BASED BUSINESSES

- ✓ Authorization of home-based businesses (HBB) for Syrian refugees outside of camps has been obtained in certain sectors.
- ✓ Updated registration requirements now incorporate a reduced property tax burden for home-based businesses.

WORK PERMITS

While work permits do not systematically translate into formal jobs and revenue generation, they offer a layer of protection and formalization for workers (to varying degrees depending on the nature of the permits). These workers would otherwise work in the informal sector. Close to 48'000 work permits were issued to Syrian refugees in 2019.¹⁹

- ✓ Additional flexibility in work permits, including the ability to transfer to different sectors, as well as flexible work permits in agriculture and construction.
- ✓ The fee waiver for work permits for Syrian refugees was renewed for 2020, exempting them from substantial fees to issue or renew work permits in Jordan. The waiver is valid for one year.
- ✓ Syrian refugees were exempted from the 25% reduction of migrants under the National Empowerment and Employment Programme in the manufacturing sector.
- ✓ Regulation of cash for work opportunities are under Jordanian labour code with short term permits issued for 6 months and less (in certain sectors).
- ✓ The Ministry of Labour has committed to producing and disseminating a directive on cash for work permits to all labour directorates to clarify procedures.

¹⁹ Independent Monitor's Assessment Report - Jordan Compact and Brussels meetings, pg. 5

REMAINING CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Labour force participation remains low in Jordan, especially for women. There is a mismatch between available jobs and the skills and ambitions of Jordan's young workforce, mainly because of an oversupply of skilled labour and an increasing demand for low-skilled labour within the country.

COVID-19 | LOSS OF INCOME & INCREASED ECONOMIC VULNERABILITY

- The State of Emergency, imposed on 21 March 2020, with a gradual easing of restrictions beginning in the first week of May, include(d) strict limitations preventing all but essential movement and brought economic activity across the Kingdom to a sudden standstill.
- Loss of household income has impacted Syrian and non-Syrian refugees particularly hard, a high proportion of whom work in the informal sector. A dramatic increase in economic vulnerability and new poverty will, in turn, create further protection concerns.
- Loss of access to livelihoods and limited savings will create further dependence on humanitarian assistance, especially during periods of lockdown, where vulnerable households do not have sufficient cash fluidity to bridge the gap and cover basic needs.
- Although thousands of additional Syrian refugee beneficiaries have been identified for targeted cash assistance as part of the COVID-19 Response Task Force, there is currently limited funding to support this group.
- The ongoing crisis will likely result in funding gaps for CSOs, as well as reduced capacity to deliver assistance should there be additional barriers to accessing movement permits during subsequent periods of lockdown.

HOME-BASED BUSINESSES (HBB)

- Syrian refugees are only permitted to operate HBBs in limited economic sectors and activities; online/remote working opportunities are also restricted in practice.
- Municipalities lack the capacity to oversee this modality, and CSOs have reported inconsistent understanding and implementation of the registration and licensing regulations for HBBs.
- Very few Syrian HBBs have been registered; only 22 of the 919 new HBBs registered in 2019 were Syrian operated. This is partly due to elevated financial vulnerability and lower levels of home ownership among Syrian refugees, but also linked to regulatory hurdles in navigating the complex procedures involved in registering HBBs.

HOME-BASED BUSINESSES | RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consider expanding the sectors and activities permitted for Syrian HBBs.
- Ensure smooth application of the new policy on Home Based Business for Syrian refugees across Jordan by raising awareness and engaging CSOs to continue capacity building work at the municipality level.

WORK PERMITS

- CSOs reiterated that restricted professional sectors exclude refugees from high-skilled employment and semi-skilled labour unless case by case exceptions are obtained from the MoL. Additionally, mandatory sector-quotas for non-Jordanians prevents employers from formalizing the majority of their Syrian staff, such as when an employer fails to find Jordanian workers.
- Updated labour law regulations issued in 2019 expanded the number of professional sectors considered 'closed' or restricted to non-Jordanian employees.
- The issuance of work permits does not necessarily translate to an increase in livelihood opportunities. There is no reporting available as to the portion of Syrian refugees who were issued permits that are currently employed, and large numbers of Syrian refugees continue to work informally.

- Following the temporary suspension in issuing work permits for Syrians in early 2020, the circular approving the extension of the grace period for Syrian workers was announced on 22 January 2020. This delay has generated a backlog and applications not registered will have to be resubmitted. Cash for work programmes with pending or denied application were temporarily put on hold during that period.
- The directive on cash for work permits, which was to be disseminated to labour directorates in order to clarify procedures and implementations, has not yet been issued at the time of writing.

DECENT WORK

- CSOs report continued cases of abuse in the workforce, especially towards foreigners, including arbitrary remuneration, low wages and refusal to pay overtime, and child labour. These perpetuate the economy's reliance on low-wage and low-skill labour and ultimately is a deterrent for workers, especially women and Jordanians.
- There is no effective enforcement mechanism for the 2018 Cabinet Decision²⁰ allowing flexible working hours, despite the fact that it was a significant step forward in ensuring greater participation of women in the workforce. Further, the policy has been inconsistently applied across employers.
- The sectors open to Syrian refugees may present riskier conditions for occupational safety and health. However, social security is not mandatory for either the construction or agriculture sectors. If workers are exposed to work injuries (ranging from minor injuries to partial or full disability) and do not have social security benefits, their injuries are not covered by the employer.

DECENT WORK | RECOMMENDATIONS

- Achieving job creation and employment potential require changes that make the formal market more attractive for employers to engage in, as well as for domestic and foreign workers.
- Addressing poor conditions at work would improve retention of workers (migrants and refugees) and avoid workers sliding back into the informal market.
- Enhance labour rights awareness for workers, including refugees, employers, cooperatives and access to legal services for workers.
- Make decent work a priority through capacity building with the MoL and ensure that impartial inspections scrutinize labour conditions and focus on labour rights, safe working environments for women and men, and the prevention of child labour and sexual harassment in the workplace.
- Enhance awareness of social security benefits for refugees for both employees and employers.

FAIR COMPETITION

- Restrictions on business ownership (other than HBBs) remain present, whereby Syrians cannot register or license a business unless it is part of a joint venture with a Jordanian partner.
- CSOs pointed at the risk of perceived competition and unfair treatment between Syrian refugees and Jordanians, which can fuel social tensions. CBOs in the north mentioned that cash/humanitarian assistance to Syrians could be perceived as a contributing factor to unfair competition, as it would allow Syrians to accept lower wages
- The current minimum wage level of 220 JD/month for Jordanians and 150 JD/month for foreign workers is insufficient and should be carefully raised in close dialogue with employers and workers' associations.

²⁰ <https://www.ammanchamber.org.jo/Uplaoded/PRFiles/1868.pdf>

- Review quotas and sectors restricted to non-Jordanians, based on available skills from both the Jordanian and foreign workforce, as well as within sectors with growth potential.
- Support technical vocational education and training for Jordanians to revitalise vocational work and training.
- Facilitate a credential process that recognizes and certifies training and prior skills to harness the experience of Syrian refugees.
- Step up outreach and awareness campaigns in host communities surrounding the mechanism of humanitarian assistance, including the needs-based approach, and the mechanism of cash assistance to Syrian refugees.
- Follow the revisions completed by the tripartite committee on national minimum wage levels. Minimum wages in Jordan have proven to be an effective benchmarking tool to set wage levels among low-skilled Syrian and Jordanian workers. Minimum wage standards should further be applied across sectors and for all nationalities.

FEMALE LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION

- Persistent challenges remain in the area of female labour force participation for both Jordanian and Syrian women.
- Syrian refugee women's participation in the workforce remains disproportionately low; only 5.8% of work permits issued to Syrians were issued to women in 2019.
- There is a disproportionate burden of unpaid care work for Syrian and Jordanian women. As a result of prevailing social norms, their domestic responsibilities, which include childcare and support to elderly, disabled or sick relatives, are not often perceived as a shared responsibility.
- Women face further barriers, including the lack of transportation to access training and work, low wages, poor working conditions, fear of harassment, and a mismatch between the skills they have acquired in training and education and those required in the workplace.

FEMALE LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION | RECOMMENDATIONS

- Increase awareness-raising campaigns to deconstruct social or familial barriers to women working.
- Increase public investment in early childhood education for all children, which include the expansion of daycare centres, the provision of incentives for employers to apply the labour code and set up child care support, and financial contributions to external child care costs, including for Syrian women.
- Vote for an amendment of the labour code on paternity and parental leave for fathers, and encourage care leave insurance schemes.
- Increase public awareness on flexible work amongst employers and workers, both for women and men and expand this measure to Syrian refugees.
- Incentivize employers to provide for reliable and safe transportation to the workplace and encourage public investment in affordable and safe public transportation, especially for women.
- Undertake gender analyses, collect gender-disaggregated data for indicators and baselines and how to subsequently reflect identified needs in budget allocations and track the impact.
- Further develop a comprehensive framework for financial inclusion to boost Micro and Small enterprises, prioritizing women, youth and refugee population, with an emphasis on financial education.

LOCALISATION

Localisation efforts remain a cross-cutting theme and the localisation agenda should be strengthened and moved forward across interventions in protection, education and livelihoods.

- Actors should continue work towards localisation and the fulfilment of the Grand Bargain commitments to ensure improved impact and sustainable ownership at community level.
- Support to national stakeholders should also be provided in the transition to the nexus agenda, and on improved, long-term planning for a refugee-centred response in host communities.