

Progress and challenges in implementing the commitments made in the Brussels Conference 2019 by the Government of Jordan and the International Community

EDUCATION

WHAT WAS COMMITTED

The GoJ committed to enrol 130,000 Syrian refugee children in formal education at all levels by the end of 2019 under the Jordan Compact.

The International Community pledged to provide predictable, multi-year financial and technical support to address the needs of the MoE.

The GoJ committed to increasing access to quality education opportunities and improving the safety of the learning environment for all children.

The GoJ committed to providing universal education to increase inclusion for children with disabilities and improving access to educational services in public and private schools.

CHALLENGES

The GoJ has not extended its documentation enrolment waiver to the 2019-2020 school year. Even when in place, some schools did not respect the waiver and rejected Syrian students' enrolment due to a lack of documentation.



More than half of all Syrian children aged 15 years and older are not enrolled in school. Net attendance rates among Syrian refugees are 47 percent less than Jordanians at the secondary level and 10 percent less at the primary level.

While unintentional, double-shift schools have created inequalities in educational opportunities and outcomes, with Syrian students attending afternoon sessions receiving 221 fewer teaching hours than the national average over the course of a school year (EU Findings of the Education Quarterly Survey for 30 Centers and Schools, Dec. 2018 -Jan. 2019). The separation of afternoon and morning sessions based on nationality also creates barriers to social cohesion.



Students in formal schools in refugee camps receive 121 hours less than their counterparts enrolled in afternoon sessions in double shift schools. The precarious nature of teacher contracts in the camp schools coupled with poor basic facilities create further challenges.

Children with disabilities make up approximately 10 percent of all school age children in Jordan, but almost 80 percent do not receive any form of education (Dept. of Statistics 2019).

The closure of schools due to coronavirus is expected to have a negative impact on school enrolment as vulnerable students struggle to access online learning platforms and/or face increased pressure to enter the workforce due to reduced household incomes.



PROGRESS

136,437 Syrian children were enrolled in formal schools, representing a 2 percent increase in enrolment for Syrian children, including an 8 percent increase in camp schools compared to the first semester of 2018, which exceeds the enrollment target in the Jordan Compact (ISWG 2019).



The GoJ extended its documentation enrolment waiver to the 2018-2019 school year, enabling Syrian refugee children to attend school regardless of their documentation status.



The GoJ took significant steps in 2019 to revise curricula and textbooks and introduce standardised tests. In addition, the Early Grade Reading and Mathematics Project has been supporting improvements to early grade education since 2014.

WHAT WE RECOMMEND

Reinstate the documentation enrolment waiver and establish a clear complaints and referral mechanism for cases of Syrian refugee children rejected from enrolment in schools.

Increase contact hours for afternoon sessions in double-shift schools, while continuing to promote integrated schools as a long-term solution to improved education in Jordan (see below).

Improve the collection of enrolment data and invest in school transport to optimize existing enrolment capacity of integrated schools.

Invest in teacher trainings and professional development and review teaching methodologies to improve the quality of teaching. This should include the integration of crisis-sensitive education skills, psychosocial support, and nonviolent disciplinary approaches for staff.

Increase contact hours in schools in camps, place teachers on more predictable contracts, and adapt curriculum and methods to better address the additional needs of students living in camps.

Enhance current non-formal education pathways to support the re-integration of OOS children and youth in formal schools and include in national plans.

Disaggregate monitoring and reporting across school levels and by age to track barriers to education with consideration for how coronavirus has impacted children's education and protection needs.

LIVELIHOODS

WHAT WAS COMMITTED

The GoJ has pledged to continue to reform the labour market to remove barriers to accessing work in the formal labour force and providing job opportunities for Syrian refugees without competing with Jordanian jobs. In particular, the GoJ has committed to providing approximately 200,000 jobs to Syrian refugees.

The IC pledged to increase livelihood support and skill-matching programmes for Syrian refugees and host communities in Jordan.

The International Community and the Jordanian MoL committed to increasing efforts to improve women's empowerment, economic inclusion, and participation in the labour market, such as through expanding the sectors that women can work in.

The GoJ pledged to remove barriers on Syrian refugees establishing and formalizing businesses.

The EU committed to revising preferential rules of origin (RoO) and providing support to Jordan to benefit from the scheme to open access to EU markets.

The GoJ pledged alongside the International Community to improve the business environment and encourage investment by following a predictable path of business reforms.

CHALLENGES

In 2019, the GoJ issued a new list of 15 occupations closed to non-Jordanians and 13 restricted categories, further limiting opportunities to enter into formal employment.



Evidence shows that work permits have done little to strengthen decent work protections, while the type of occupations they cover are typically low paid and involve poor working conditions.

Over the past decade, the share of workers who are informally employed has increased to now represent almost 60 percent of all workers. Refugees are disproportionately represented among those informally employed, especially as nationality quotas act as a disincentive for employers to either hire non-Jordanians or formalize their employment.

Despite improved registration arrangements, Syrians are only permitted to operate HBBs in food processing, handicrafts, and tailoring outside of camps, while elevated financial vulnerability and regulatory hurdles meant only 22 of the 919 HBBs registered in 2019 were operated by Syrians.



A mismatch between training programs and market demand, as well as minimal follow-up to support finding work, often weakens vocational training programs.

The loss of access to livelihoods, disrupted local economies, and increased competition for jobs due to the pandemic will increase economic vulnerability and reliance on negative coping mechanisms, as well as protection concerns, with women and youth particularly vulnerable (B4C Building Blocks 2020).

Deep structural labor market constraints create a challenging operating environment for livelihoods actors. 34 percent of the working age population in Jordan were employed in 2019. Economic inactivity is disproportionately evident among women: the overall percentage of economically active women in Jordan fell from 16.3 percent in 2017 to 14.4 percent in 2019. The figure for Syrians is much lower, and stood at 7 percent in 2018.



PROGRESS

The GoJ issued 47,766 work permits to Syrian refugees in 2019, an increase of 4.6 percent over 2018. The percentage issued to women remains low, but rose from 4.5 percent to 5.8 percent (Independent Monitor's Assessment Report 2020).



Fee waivers for work permits were renewed for 2020, exempting Syrians from substantial costs to issue or renew work permits. Additional measures to facilitate the inclusion of Syrian refugees included issuing flexible work permits in agriculture and construction, allowing work permit portability to different sectors, excluding Syrian refugees from a planned 25 percent reduction of migrants in manufacturing, and permitting the issuance of short-term work permits.*

The number of home-based businesses (HBBs) increased by 95 percent in 2019 compared to June 2018 largely due to the expansion of job centers and new registration arrangements.



A total of 14,292 people have been employed through job-matching programs, which include 5,056 Syrian refugees following the establishment of thirteen employment centers through the ILO and MoL.

Foreign ownership laws were amended to add 22 additional services and activities to the list of businesses that can be 100 percent foreign owned.



The Rules of Origin (RoO) scheme to lower entry barriers for Jordanian companies exporting to the EU was extended to 2030 and the geographic restrictions for manufactured products were lifted.

Jordan's Labour Law was amended making it compulsory for employers to offer child care facilities if their employees collectively have 15 or more children under five years of age.



WHAT WE RECOMMEND

Expand formal labor market access for non-Jordanians by broadening work permits to other economic sectors, including high growth and professional sectors, as well as reviewing the policy of nationality quotas.

Put decent work at the heart of livelihood engagements, including support for a more robust regime encompassing workplace inspections, enforcement and an effective complaints mechanism, as well as improved access to legal support services. In addition to decent work standards, inspections should also target the prevention of child labour and sexual harassment.

Prioritize female labour force participation by incentivizing employers to provide safe transportation to the workplace and increasing public investment in early childhood education. Invest in policies and programming that highlight the role that Syrian women can play as resilience and livelihood actors.

Strengthen vocational training by targeting skills that are in demand, for example by developing programs that involve collaboration with the private sector, extending the period of trainings where necessary, and providing longer-term support when it comes to looking for work.

Ensure refugees and other vulnerable populations are included in national response plans, compensation schemes, and economic recovery packages in the wake of COVID19.

Prioritize interventions following the pandemic that keep workers, especially women, economically active and that prevent a further increase in unemployment among the working age population.

*Recent developments related to the work permit regime for Syrian refugees indicate it will become possible to change jobs in an authorised sector without having to pay fees, which will also be accompanied by greater worker protections to prevent mistreatment by employers (World Bank Economic Opportunities for Jordanians and Syrian Refugees PforR 2020).

PROTECTION

WHAT WAS COMMITTED

The GoJ has committed to expanding registration and regularization of status for Syrian refugees to achieve comprehensive registration.

The GoJ and the IC are committed to voluntary, dignified, safe and sustainable returns to Syria in accordance with international human rights law.

The GoJ has pledged to reduce the vulnerability and insecurity of Syrian refugees through programming that addresses basic needs, negative coping strategies, and food insecurity.

The GoJ has committed to reducing GBV and prioritizing women's empowerment.

CHALLENGES

The end of the rectification process left thousands of Syrians unable to regularize their status, which includes a significant number of Refugee Registration Procedures (RRP) that have been left pending. As a result, they cannot access essential services, register life events, obtain work permits, and they face the threat of detention.



There are several thousand undocumented or under documented refugees in Jordan, including those who fled Syria without identity documents and Syrians born in Jordan whose parents cannot register their births if they do not have a marriage certificate.

Refugees in camps are not free to move without obtaining leave or work permits. At the time of writing, both permits were suspended in response to COVID19 even as lockdown measures are eased throughout the country. In addition, the movement of refugees residing in Azraq V5 remain fully restricted.



The October 2019 legal aid bylaw has yet to be implemented and remains restricted to criminal cases only. While a positive first step, Jordan currently does not have a comprehensive national legal aid system that offers refugees and vulnerable Jordanians legal advice.

Child marriage and GBV amongst Syrian refugees remain significant social problems.



The socio-economic impact of the pandemic, coupled with longstanding refugee vulnerabilities, are expected to exacerbate protection concerns related to GBV, increase evictions for those unable to pay rent and/or utilities, and contribute to a deterioration in work rights and entitlements.

PROGRESS

The rectification of status process was extended for an additional year to March 2019, enabling approximately 24,000 Syrians to obtain updated Asylum Seeker Certificates for host communities and to register with the GoJ to obtain legal residency cards (Mol service cards) that regularized their status and provided access to basic services and humanitarian and development assistance.



There were modest increases to cash assistance programs supporting Syrian refugees, leading to an increase in beneficiaries receiving support ranging from 5.4 to 6.4 percent depending on the program.

Jordan has established a National Online Case Management System to deal with all cases of GBV and Violence against Children (VAC) of all nationalities.



The GoJ introduced a legal aid bylaw in 2019 that establishes a national legal aid system covering criminal cases that will be managed by the Ministry of Justice Legal Aid Unit.

WHAT WE RECOMMEND

Re-open registration for asylum seekers of all nationalities so that it is no longer time bound, enabling them to obtain or renew their international protection and legal residency documents.

Introduce more flexible procedures for registering and ratifying marriages to better facilitate the registration of vital life events, especially births.

Provide Syrians living in camps with greater freedom to leave the camps permanently, reside in host communities, and access essential services.

Ensure legal safety for those who are willing to return to Syria by issuing key legal and civil documents to prove nationality, identity, and family lineage.

Introduce more flexible procedures for registering and ratifying marriages to better facilitate the registration of vital life events, especially births.

Develop needs based vulnerability assessments and programming across all populations to ensure social protections are extended to all in need.

Prioritize SGBV prevention and responses and ensure case management agencies are considered life-saving to facilitate access permits in case of further COVID19 restrictions.

HEALTH

WHAT WAS COMMITTED

The GoJ committed to creating health policy that provides universal and affordable access to healthcare, as well as expanding access to the use of primary and secondary public healthcare.

The Jordanian Department of Health has stated that the protocols for treatment of Syrians will be the same as for Jordanians during the current coronavirus crisis.

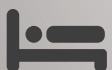
The GoJ has worked alongside development partners to improve access to Ministry of Health services. In particular, a multi-donor account entitled the Jordan Health Fund for Refugees was committed to and supported by multilateral institutions and international donors.

CHALLENGES

The previous cut in healthcare subsidies has had a lasting impact on vulnerable Syrians as high medical-surgical costs have resulted in a surge in household debt.



Awareness of the policy reversal has been slow to be disseminated and it is estimated that less than 50 percent of Syrians are aware of the change.



Secondary and tertiary medical services are only partially covered for Syrian refugees in Jordan. Additionally, the maternity lab exams are also not fully covered for Syrian refugee women.

The advent of COVID-19 will put severe strains on the public healthcare system and could shift protocols for treatment, impeding equal access to healthcare services for Syrians.



PROGRESS

In March 2019, the GoJ reversed the decision requiring Syrians to pay 80 percent of the non-Jordanians' rate, which returned to the previous policy providing highly subsidised healthcare services to Syrian refugees.



UNHCR has provided comprehensive primary, secondary, and tertiary healthcare services free of charge for refugees in Azraq and Zaatar camps and for vulnerable Syrians in urban areas.

It is estimated that 100 percent of births were assisted by skilled attendants from 2017 to 2018 and mortality for infants and children under the age of five has been halved during this time period.



Syrian refugees continue to be exempted from fees for primary, maternity, and child health services, including vaccines, at the Ministry of Health maternity and childhood centers.

WHAT WE RECOMMEND

Ensure equal access to quality health services for Syrians, especially in camp settings where refugees would be exceptionally vulnerable to the spread and impact of the pandemic.

Continue to support targeted awareness campaigns to clarify the policy reversal to ensure Syrian refugees are aware of their ability to access treatment and services.

Engage with the GoJ and donors to support the provision of healthcare services throughout the pandemic and to ensure that Syrian refugees receive equal medical treatment as Jordanians, as well as awareness campaigns for prevention.

Review and update the lists of vulnerable refugees in urban areas in order to support and improve their access to health services.

Empowerment and Role of Women

The empowerment and role of women should be integrated as a cross-cutting theme throughout interventions in the aforementioned sectors. The protection and personal rights of refugee women and girls remain a priority to address gender-based discrimination and violence, particularly in the wake of coronavirus that has exacerbated an already precarious protection situation. The curfew and restrictions on movement have resulted in fewer people seeking assistance, as evidenced by a 68% decrease of reported SGBV cases over the first weeks of the lockdown. In addition, the livelihoods and well-being of Syrian refugee women are also of critical importance to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on unemployment and wages, as well as to promote paid job opportunities as only 5.8% of work permits that were issued in 2019 were for Syrian women.

Lastly, the educational challenges women and girls face with enrolment and retention must be highlighted, especially with regards to protection concerns in schools or training facilities, civil documentation issues, and limited access to information on enrolment or scholarship opportunities.

Localisation

An additional cross-cutting theme is localisation, which must be advanced throughout interventions in protection, education, livelihoods, and health. The localisation agenda must be strengthened through support to national stakeholders in the transition to the humanitarian-development nexus agenda, and on improved and long-term planning for a refugee-centered response in host communities.

Actors must continue to work towards localisation and fulfilling the Grand Bargain commitments to ensure sustainable ownership at the community level, which was recognised in the JRP through linkages to the SDGs and prioritising consultations with civil society.

However, we also recommend the development of an indicator to monitor progress on localisation in order to track direct funding to national NGOs and platforms for greater engagement and participation in Jordan.