

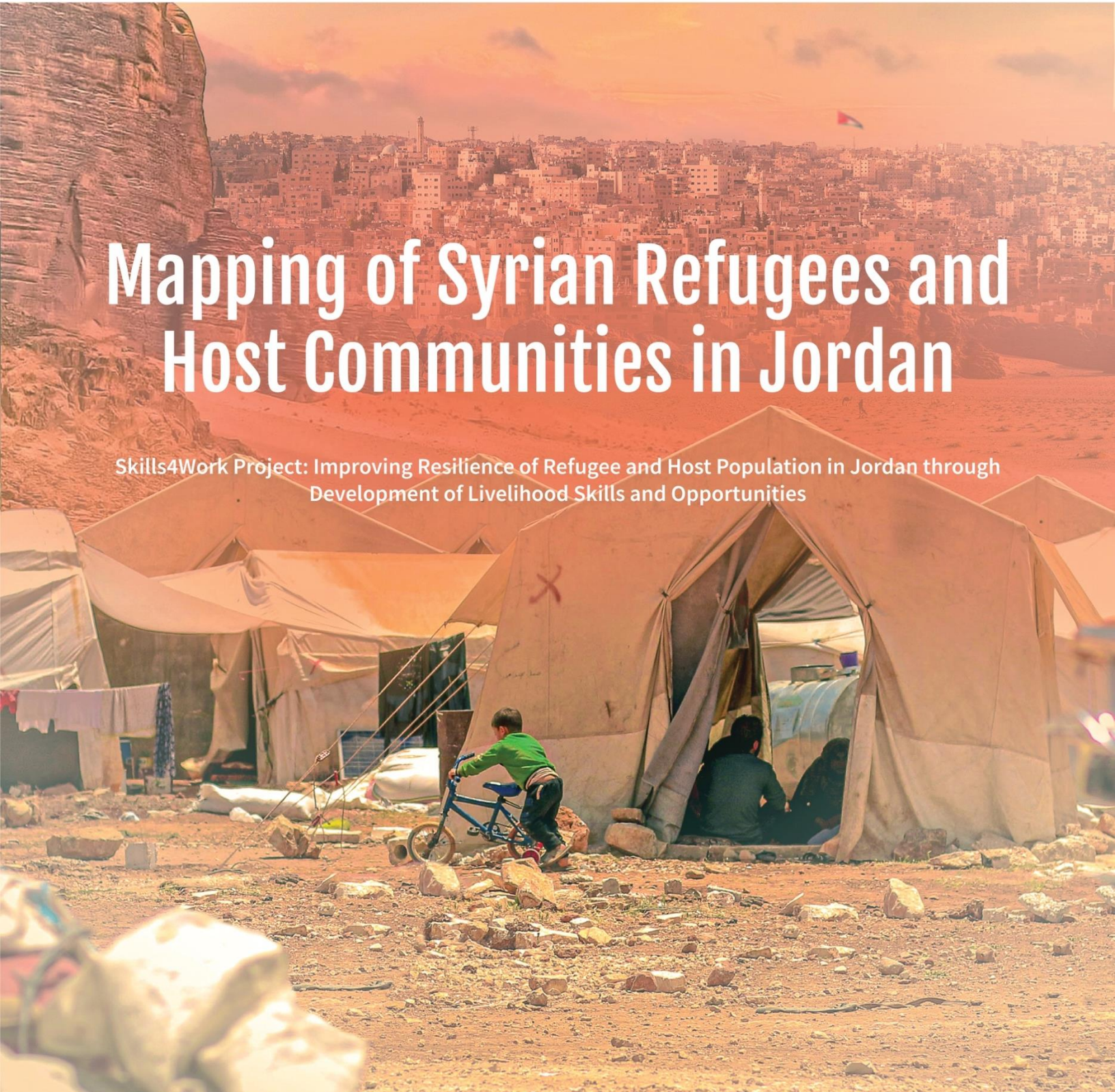


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Mapping of Syrian Refugees and Host Communities in Jordan

Skills4Work Project: Improving Resilience of Refugee and Host Population in Jordan through Development of Livelihood Skills and Opportunities





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Leaders International

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List of Acronyms

LI: Leaders International

ILO: International Labor Organization

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

WANA: West Asia North Africa

COVID-19: Coronavirus

ERF: Economic Research Forum

STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

TVET: Technical and Vocational Education and Training

Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

Due to its political stability in the region; Jordan has seen an influx of refugees in recent years; most dominantly Syrian refugees following the 2011 civil war. As a result, the Jordanian economy has been severely impacted by the changing political landscape—becoming increasingly dependent on international grants¹. Aside from the humanitarian and financial refugee crisis, Jordan experienced economic growth of 2 percent in 2019, a slight increase from 1.9 percent in 2018; signaling a small performance boost in the past year.

Although Jordan maintained a low COVID-19 outbreak at the beginning of the crisis in March 2020, it began recording dangerously high cases reaching 3,000 daily starting in October, as a result of lifting the mandated lockdown and reopening borders². With the current global crisis worsening, it becomes pertinent that Jordan directs its focus on offsetting the economic turmoil posed by the pandemic; even more so for vulnerable groups, like refugees and host communities that had already been under extreme strain prior to the crisis.

Leaders International (LI) for Economic Development's recent Skills4Work project aims at improving the resilience of refugees and host population in Jordan through development of livelihood skills and opportunities. The project works to improve and counteract several economic hurdles and labour market inclusion problems, namely the following: (1) reducing unemployment, (2) increasing labour market formalization, (3) refugee integration and work-permit acquisition, (4) women and youth integration, (5) promoting vocational training, (6) creating new job opportunities, and (7) supporting SME development in terms of growth and capacity development. The project will select 200 beneficiaries; split as equally as possible between Syrian refugees and Jordanian host communities, in order to provide the needed assistance.

As of 2020, Jordan has been one of the countries most affected by the Syrian refugee crisis, hosting the second highest share of refugees per capita in the world³. Currently, there are 658,028 Syrian refugees residing in Jordan; out of which 83 percent live in urban areas, while the remaining 16 percent settle in the following refugee camps: Zaatari, Azraq, and Mrajeeb Al Fhood. Accordingly, at this time, the refugee distribution within Jordan's governorates is as follows: 29.5 percent in Amman, 24.8 percent in Mafraq, 20.6 percent in

¹ N. The Economic Context of Jordan. October 2020.

² US Embassy. COVID-19 Information. November 2020.

³ UNHCR Jordan, Fact Sheet. February 2018.

Irbid, and 14.6 percent in Zarqa, with the remaining governorates encompassing less than 3 percent each⁴. Among the refugees; 48 percent are children, and 4.5 percent are elderly, which deems the remaining 47.5 per cent of refugees within the targeted working age for the project. Of the 47.5 per cent, 24.3 per cent are female; who comprise an essential priority for the project mandate.

Further data on the refugee composition shows that the majority, or 51 per cent of Syrian refugees arrived to Jordan in 2013, and 13 per cent arrived by 2014, partially due to the Jordanian government's closure of the northern border to asylum seekers in 2015⁵. Therefore, as of 2021, the vast majority of refugees have lived in Jordan for several years, and have in most cases, gained a general understanding of the local working environment, conditions, and opportunities. On the other hand, residing in Jordan for many years entails that refugees receive less donor support each year; since aid is typically provided most immensely upon arrival. For this reason, development initiatives like Skills4Work are even more important now that the refugees have resided in Jordan for several years, as it will provide them with long-term skills that will allow them to become more self-sufficient, and be able to harness these talents upon their return home.

In mid-2020, the unemployment rate in Jordan reached 23 percent; a stark increase from 19.2 percent in the previous year, and the highest recorded rate since 2005⁶. Much of this can be attributed to the COVID-19 crisis, with Jordan initially imposing some of the strictest lockdowns and closures globally. Although this situation impacted a vast majority of Jordan's population; marginalized communities like Syrian refugees and host Jordanian communities living nearby are more deeply affected by the repercussions of this crisis since they had already been vulnerable prior to the pandemic.

While international assistance has historically targeted refugee populations within Jordan, there has been a recent surge in assistance from humanitarian agencies like the UNDP towards host Jordanian communities that absorb growing numbers of refugees. The agencies aim to support employment opportunities and strengthen basic social services delivery in an effort to maintain stability in the most-affected communities⁷. Similarly, the Skills4Work project emphasizes upholding an equalized and balanced approach between both host communities and refugees.

⁴ UNHCR Jordan, Fact Sheet. May 2019.

⁵ UNHCR, Syrian Registration in Jordan, 2016

⁶ T. Jordan Unemployment Rate 2005-2020, July 2020.

⁷ UNDP Response to the Syria Crisis, Fast Facts, June 2013.

Ultimately, the current contextual factors stress the importance of kickstarting the project, as it will provide assistance in a time where it is most deeply valued, to groups that are in most dire need of it.

1.2 Mapping Focus and Objectives

The general objective of this mapping is to gather more accurate information of the situation on the ground to enable a more tailored implementation moving forward. Although the mapping examines specific aspects only relating to Syrian refugees (i.e. work permit acquisition), the data extracted first-hand has not been cross-tabulated and rather assumes that both Syrian and Jordanian communities have similar demographic factors (e.g. family structure), and parallel work experience (i.e. sector). This is at par with the project's aim for an equalized approach towards Jordanian and Syrian communities.

As for the mapping's main focus, the target is primarily on communities living in Amman, Irbid, Mafraq, and Zarqa, where the host-refugee population is the highest, paralleled with a high concentration of SMEs working in manufacturing. The study also covers the following dimensions:

- a) Refugee and host communities' demographic factors
- b) Labor force participation
- c) Difficulties with entering the workforce
- d) Required trainings
- e) Previous work experience and educational attainment
- f) Job security and safety
- g) Work expectations in terms of salary and environment
- h) Challenges pertaining specifically to vulnerable persons: refugees, women, persons with disabilities

Section 2: Methodology

2.1 Approach

LI's data collection approach captured quantitative and qualitative information from refugees and host communities in different Jordanian governorates. Secondary data was drawn from information extracted from labor market-related literature published by NGOs, which provided the study with a comprehensive outlook on the conditions affecting refugee-host populations as a whole. Meanwhile, primary information was deduced from the project team's survey provided to refugees and host communities, which enabled a more personal view taken directly from the groups whom are targeted by the project. Under the current climate restricted by COVID-19, and on par with social distancing guidelines, the survey was conducted online and distributed through social media platforms like Facebook. The Facebook post was boosted in targeted governorates; notably, in Amman, Irbid, Zarqa and Mafraq, where the refugee dispersion is the highest. For this reason, survey respondents were more heavily saturated in those specific areas; as reflected by answers to location-based questions. Therefore, the sample population was targeted through stratified sampling.

The refugee and host community sample size aimed to be as representative as possible in the selected locations, while taking into account a variety of constraints pertaining to this data collection method; more specifically with the limitations of conducting an electronic survey. Overall, the survey yielded 441 responses, which was consistent with LI's initial goal of targeting 400 respondents at minimum. The sample size targeted was based on the fact that the project would train 200 beneficiaries, and as such surveying double that number is considered a sufficient sample for setting the projects basis, and acquiring the general knowledge and indicators needed.

Survey questions were built on existing information gaps and issues specifically relevant to the project's mandate. Questions were further adjusted and weighed against existing information extracted from the literature review in order to prevent data duplication. The questions were designed to facilitate a better understanding of refugees and host communities, as well as identify their commitment and willingness as individuals to pursue employment. The survey question format included the following⁸:

- Basic "yes" or "no" questions
- Predetermined multiple choice questions
- Optional text, allowing slight elaboration from respondents for relevant questions

⁸ See Annex I for Questionnaire

Ultimately, this particular combination of questions was chosen in order to (1) probe the beneficiaries for nuance, and (2) receive the deepest understanding possible of their situation, in spite of the communication barriers posed by shifting the survey to online instead of in-person. The end goal of this survey is to not only receive a deeper understanding of the beneficiaries, but to enable a proper selection mechanism, alongside a more accurate determination of the required skills and assessments moving forward. The length of the survey was specifically designed to be sufficient enough to gather an adequate amount of information, while being mindful not make it excessively long. Further, although the survey's format was arranged in a manner that enables complete responses, there was a small percentage of respondents with incomplete answers. Lastly, in areas where respondent elaboration was not possible, information extracted from literature was used to fill in the gaps.

2.2 Quality Control

Sources used in the literature review were authenticated prior to use in order to ensure they were up-to-date and reliable. As for the survey, to minimize the risk of data bias, and prevent privacy concerns (specifically cyber-security concerns), the following steps were taken:

1. Survey was thoroughly reviewed prior to distribution to detect any spelling errors, grammar mistakes, or any vague/ambiguous language that would hinder the respondents' understanding of questions.
2. Survey was designed to ensure maximum user-friendliness, on both desktop and mobile sites, in order to ease user navigation (pertinent as many targeted respondents may not be tech-savvy).
3. Survey was tested prior to distribution to check skip logic, consistency in on-screen presentation, survey quotas, and survey error messages.

2.3 Compliance with Ethical Standards

Data that was extracted from the literature review is anonymous and cannot be traced back to any individual. Furthermore, all sources were used with permission. For the survey, certain safeguards were installed in order to protect the anonymity and privacy of respondents. For example, respondents were not asked to reveal their names or any personal information. Only general inquiries on demographic data and issues relating to employment were asked. Additionally, data protection principles like not using the survey information for purposes outside the report and not keeping the data for longer than

necessary were exercised. Lastly, no questions about potentially life-threatening matters like domestic violence within households were asked; although this information is essential, it is best approached by the proper channels and mechanisms beyond the project's scope.

Since the survey was held online, there is certainly a greater degree of privacy that the project team must protect, since respondents may feel exposed publishing their answers onto an online platform. However, respondents were assured via a disclaimer, that all data was treated in a non-attributable and anonymous way. On the other hand, it is believed that some respondents may have felt more comfortable answering the survey from their own homes, without the presence of unfamiliar enumerators asking personal questions, such as income level or source. For this reason, a certain degree of response bias was perhaps eliminated, as there is less pressure to answer falsely or inaccurately.

2.4 Methodology Limitations

Due to unprecedented circumstances imposed by the global pandemic during the time in which the study was conducted, combined with other pre-existing factors, the methodology was subject to the following limitations:

1. The online nature of the survey leaves more room for respondents to misunderstand what a question is asking since there are no enumerators present to clarify. Thus, some responses may not be fully accurate. However, questions were simplified as much as possible and posed in a "colloquial" Arabic format.
2. Since the survey was carried out online, there is little room for respondents to elaborate on their answers, thus, it prevents the project team from receiving valuable information. However, since 300 face-to-face interviews will be conducted at a later stage, it will allow the team to gain deeper insight on the target group.

Section 3: Literature Findings

The research below has been conducted to provide a holistic image on the background of refugee populations and host Jordanian communities alike, in the wider context of the Jordanian labor market. Further, the research also pinpoints obstacles related to the most vulnerable groups within the targeted communities; such as refugees and women. Lastly, the research focuses on the current climate under COVID-19 and its impact on labor. It is important to gain an understanding of this information as it provides a solid basis of the current situation on the ground, and acts as a guideline for which areas the project should focus on in future steps.

Of the 658,028 registered Syrian refugees residing in Jordan, 312,563 are of working age; which sets the targeted refugee group for the project accordingly. As for the Jordanian population as a whole, more than 70 per cent of the population are 30 years or under, which indicates that the Kingdom currently sits on the brink of a demographic opportunity, yet faces a challenge in creating sufficient employment and income-generating opportunities for the increasing youth population entering the working age; especially in such a way that caters to rising refugee populations. Therefore, the scope of the discussion centers around those who are within working age in Jordan, in order to identify exact issues faced in the realm of employment.

3.1 Reasons for Unemployment

For decades, the Jordanian labor market was reliant on the public sector, and it is where the highest concentration of workers lied; especially due to its benefits, working conditions, and job security. However, this has changed in recent year, and employment concentration has shifted towards the private sector, especially that of the services and financial industry. Meanwhile, the highest sectoral distribution for Syrian refugees is typically in the manufacturing and construction industries, since that is where work permit acquisition is easiest. However, the challenges caused by political and economic surges in the past decade undoubtedly had a negative effect on the labour market, and job creation dropped from 66,400 in 2016 to 54,000 in 2017, a 23 per cent decrease.

Due to the high national unemployment rate of 14.96 per cent, and the worrisome youth unemployment rate of 34.96 per cent⁹, it becomes important to examine the reasons why it is challenging to enter the workforce in Jordan. Data from an ILO survey¹⁰ demonstrates that both communities struggle with differing aspects when it comes to unemployment; for

⁹ Statista, Unemployment Rate in Jordan, 2020

¹⁰ ILO, Impact of Syrian Refugees on the Jordanian Labor Market, February 2015

Jordanians, the main issue being cited by 58 per cent of men and women is the lack of available jobs, whereas for 65 per cent of Syrians the primary reason lies in the additional challenges of obtaining a work permit; as it is considered too expensive and too difficult to obtain for some.

In both communities, there was a greater inclination amongst women to cite 'no jobs available in the area' as a reason for their unemployment. Studies¹¹ suggest that this is due to cultural attitudes that consider the distance from home permissible for a woman to travel for work shorter than it is for men. For this reason, women may be more likely to turn down a job if it does not fall within close distance to their homes. Therefore, women are discouraged from working under such circumstances since it is culturally frowned upon to live away from home. Additionally, because it is easiest in terms of work permit acquisition, most jobs worked by Syrians in particular are in the construction industry; which typically includes longer hours that may require workers to reside on the factory premises in order to start work early and on time. Such conditions emphasize the need for the project team to be mindful of the distance of vacant SME jobs away from urban communities heavily saturated with Syrian refugees when moving onto the match-making phase of the project.

Although the pre-existing unemployment rate in Jordan was already ranked high globally, the COVID-19 crisis has led to further lay-offs and barriers to job entry, which surged the unemployment rate even further; with some estimates warning that it could reach 30 per cent by the end of the year¹². Therefore, it is essential to assess the rapidly-changing implications of the virus and its restrictions on unemployment rates within Syrian and Jordanian host communities who are more vulnerable during such times. In May 2020, the ILO published a rapid assessment of COVID-19 implications on unemployment among Syrian refugees and Jordanian host communities¹³, whereby it was found that of the 1,580 survey respondents, one-third of Syrian workers in Jordan and 17 per cent of Jordanian host communities had lost their jobs permanently due to the crisis. Of the respondents who were still employed during the time of the survey in May 2020, almost half, or 48 per cent, anticipated that they may lose their jobs in the coming months, since Jordan had been under complete lockdown during that period of time.

After the economy slowly began re-opening beginning in June, it was expected that the effects of the shutdown would be offset, however, a later study in July found that the situation remained unchanged. Further, many job-creation initiatives for Syrian refugees and host communities in Jordan led by humanitarian agencies were put to an indefinite halt due to the crisis; with one Syrian woman reporting that her project, backed by several NGOs, was set to launch in April but was

¹¹ ILO, Impact of Syrian Refugees on the Jordanian Labor Market, February 2015

¹² Roya News, Expert warns unemployment rate could surpass 30% in Jordan amid COVID-19 crisis, 2020

¹³ ILO, Impact of COVID-19 on Syrian Refugees and Host Communities in Jordan and Lebanon, 2020

delayed until further notice due to the crisis¹⁴. Thus, the current circumstances imposed by the pandemic only exacerbate the pre-existing challenges to find employment, and further stress the importance of the Skills4Work project in order to combat the economic effects of rising unemployment, as well as the psychological effects on the target group's well-being at a time where the future looks grim.

Another contributing factor for unemployment among refugee populations and host communities can be attributed to unsuccessful job search methods. External data¹⁵ which surveyed unemployed Syrian refugees and Jordanian host communities revealed the most common method used to seek employment was through friends or relatives. This was especially true for Syrians living outside the refugee camps. Since the communities may struggle from a lack of knowledge on where to apply, how to apply, and which jobs are in highest demand, this emphasizes the need for the Skills4Work project to educate the group on market demand so it can ease their job search and provide them with a better strategy that leads them to a more fruitful search.

3.2 Work Permits

One of the project's key mandates focuses on supporting work permit acquisition for Syrian refugees, as it is a legal requirement for entering the workforce and finding official, formal employment in Jordan. Since work permit acquisition allows Syrian refugees to avoid informal employment—which is often exploitative and harmful, as will be discussed in further detail, it is important to evaluate the legal process to acquire permits for refugees in Jordan, alongside common challenges faced by the community which inhibit the acquisition rate.

As a general overview, employers of non-Jordanian workers are legally required to obtain a work permit from the local Labor Directorate of the Ministry of Labor.¹⁶ If all requirements are met, eligible Syrian refugees will be issued a one-year or short-term work permit authorizing their employment with the specific employer. The minimum age to obtain a work permit is 18; which has been specifically curated to prevent and protect minors from engaging in child labor practices. Subsequently, the legal age for work permit acquisition sets the basis for the minimum age of selected beneficiaries from the Syrian refugee group. According to the UNHCR, of all Syrian refugees within working age, only 36 per cent have obtained work permit as of 2020. In accordance with the laws and regulations issued by the Ministry of Labor, and in reference specifically to regulation #19 for the year 2019, any non-

¹⁴ Syria Direct, COVID-19 Impact on Syrian Refugees in Jordan, November 2020

¹⁵ ILO, Impact of Syrian Refugees on the Jordanian Labor Market, February 2015

¹⁶ BetterWork Jordan, Our Programme, 2020

Jordanian citizen – including Syrian refugees – can typically only work in certain domains; as a general rule of thumb, these domains are mainly within the private sector, industrial, and/or do not require a bachelor’s degree as a prerequisite. Accordingly, the available jobs opportunities, specifically for “blue collar” labor fall under the following main categories (1) Factory workers (packing, loading and unloading, labelling...etc.), (2) cleaning services, specifically within large complexes, (3) bakeries and similar entities, (4) agriculture, and (5) construction. Therefore, future steps of the project which focus on providing employment opportunities to selected refugees must fall into the above categories.

To examine the effects of work permit acquisition on the refugees directly, an ILO survey¹⁷ was utilized to extract the data. The survey results proved that 18 per cent of Syrian refugees within working age outside refugee camps report having applied for a permit for their current job, but only 40 per cent of them succeeded. Surveyed refugees mentioned obtaining their work permit for jobs in construction (32 per cent), services (30 per cent), restaurants (17 per cent), industry (17 per cent), and agriculture (4 per cent). When asked why permits for those particular industries were chosen, respondents answered that it was based on which permits were cheapest and believed to be the easiest to obtain. Similarly, 64 per cent of respondents who did not currently have a work permit cited them being too expensive, while 15 per cent stated it was because they were too difficult to get. This information corresponds with the project’s emphasis on finding employment opportunities in those particular sectors, as it is believed to significantly ease the process for Syrian refugees and will subsequently aid in their formalization within the Jordanian labor market.

Further, in the same ILO survey, Syrian refugees with work permits elaborated that 76 per cent of them had their employers complete the application process for them, while 20 per cent indicated applying through a cooperative.¹⁸ Only 2 per cent applied on their own. As for the main challenges with acquiring a permit, the survey participants listed that the three requirements that created most difficulty included paying medical examination fees of 30 Jordanian Dinars, the document verification fee of 10 Jordanian Dinars, and social security subscription fees (8 per cent of monthly wages).

It is worth noting that certain policies have been laxed since 2016 through the signing of Jordan Compact; a plan that brought together international and development actors under the leadership of the host country, Jordan. The Compact pledged \$700million in grants annually for three years as well as concessional loans of \$1.9billion, provided to fulfil targets such as formalizing labor market access, relaxing trade regulations from the EU on Jordanian exports that employ a Syrian refugee quota, and stipulating that Jordan will institute reforms

¹⁷ ILO, Impact of Syrian Refugees on the Jordanian Labor Market, February 2015

¹⁸ ILO, Work Permits and Employment of Syrian Refugees in Jordan, 2017

to improve the business and investment environment and formalize Syrian refugee businesses. In turn, this plan reduced barriers to the legal employment of refugees in the kingdom since Syrian refugees had to apply for the same work permits as migrant workers prior to the Compact¹⁹. The high fees and administration involved, including official documentation that refugees often did not have, meant that only around 3,000 permits were issued to Syrian refugees annually²⁰. Today, the Compact has opened up a route to legal work for Syrian refugees living in Jordan, pledging jobs to refugees in Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and giving Syrian refugees the right to work in specific sectors, namely in agriculture, manufacturing and construction, through work permits²¹.

Under the new policies, Syrians refugees no longer have to obtain a medical certificate from the Ministry of Health, although some participants in the ILO survey²² were unaware of this, and reported still having to pay the fee. Additionally, it is also no longer required of employers to provide evidence of social security enrolment for the worker at the time of submitting the work permit application, although they are required to subscribe the worker shortly after the permit has been issued, which directly corresponds with one of the Skills4Work project mandates to provide beneficiaries chosen for employment with adequate social security coverage. Lastly, it should also be noted that the employers are responsible for paying the above-mentioned 10 Jordanian Dinar document verification fee, although some Syrian workers reported paying for their applications— an issue the project aims at solving directly by working with the employers to ensure the fee is paid. Overall, the introduction of the Jordan Compact resulted in the issuance of 190,000 work permits since 2016, which helps the project significantly; as a large portion of it is dependent on the ease of acquiring work permits for refugees.

¹⁹ ILO, ILO's Support to Syrian Refugees and Host Communities, 2020

²⁰ Kelberer and Sullivan, 2017

²¹ ILO, Work Permits and Employment of Syrian Refugees in Jordan, 2017

²² ILO, Impact of Syrian Refugees on the Jordanian Labor Market, February 2015

3.3 Informal Employment

Today, it is estimated that 44 per cent of overall employment in Jordan is informal, often characterized by low-income, unskilled labor, lacking any legal protection²³. In recent years, Jordan's informal labor market challenges have been exacerbated by the influx of Syrian refugees. Additionally, Jordan's informal economy was estimated to constitute 20-25 percent of total economic activity in the country in 2010, which stresses the importance of establishing a guideline to transition towards formalization²⁴. According to the International Conference on Labor Statistics²⁵ guidelines, informal employment encompasses jobs where the workers operate within their own informal enterprises, like supermarkets, and street vendors. Furthermore, the scope of informal employment includes day workers who do not have a written contract, who are not covered by social security, are below the minimum working age of 16, employed without a legal work permit, or paid less than the minimum monthly wage (220JOD for Jordanians, 150JOD for non-Jordanians²⁶).

There are a variety of factors that dictate why individuals would partake in the informal economy; for Syrian refugees, this can include the difficulties associated with work permit acquisition. Meanwhile, it can also be due to the increase in taxation and social security contributions that drive individuals and firms to operate informally. Furthermore, some individuals feel that a contract would subject them to more responsibilities with their employer, which drives them away. As part of its objective, the project aims to secure employment opportunities with reputable and credible SMEs in order to ensure that employers do not exploit their workers or design their contract in such a way that would take advantage of them.

Syrian refugees' need to obtain work permits in order to operate formally within the Jordanian workforce, as such there are substantially more Syrian refugees currently in the informal sector than Jordanians. Nonetheless, the share of Jordanians in informal employment remains significant; as an ILP survey demonstrates that it comprises one out of every two workers in the host community²⁷.

Initiatives like the aforementioned Jordan Compact have significantly assisted in the reduction of refugees pursuing informal employment due to the hardships of obtaining a work permit.

²³ Al-Quds Center for Political Studies, State of the Informal Economy in Jordan, 2019

²⁴ UNDP, The Panoramic Study of the Informal Economy in Jordan (2013), at 18 November 2014.

²⁵ ILO, Work Permits and Employment of Syrian Refugees in Jordan, 2017

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ ILO, Impact of Syrian Refugees on the Jordanian Labor Market, February 2015

Informal employment is generally more prominent among those aged above 55 due to a lack of pension payments, alongside those with lower educational attainment²⁸; however, for Syrian refugees in particular, informal employment was equally present across all working ages and all education levels. Women in both communities had more regulated forms of employment and were less likely to work in the informal sector when compared to men, primarily because women work in the manufacturing sector, where it is more formally regulated than construction, for instance, which is more male-dominated field. Additionally, given social norms and constraints, men are more likely to work as day laborers; which contributes to the higher proportion of informal employment among their group. Moreover, informal employment encompasses 53 per cent of youth. This group is engaged as paid employees holding informal jobs in the formal sector. They hold contracts, but are not granted access to basic rights such as paid sick leave, paid annual leave and pension contributions. Additionally, most of the working youth receive a below-average wage²⁹, which emphasizes their importance as one of the vulnerable groups targeted by the project.

When informally employed, both Syrian refugees and Jordanian workers do not receive sufficient job stability. This is because they are more likely to be subjected to harsh or illegal working conditions, long working hours with no overtime pay, no social security or insurance, and extremely low pay. Additionally, since workers who are informally employed do not typically have a contract, their employers are not legally bound to fulfil any contractual obligations; so, they are able to terminate employment without compensation or prior notice. Subsequently, this makes workers vulnerable to their employers, which is especially risky under the current climate imposed by COVID-19, where sudden lay-off levels are spiking. In fact, when referring back to the ILO's latest findings on the impact of the pandemic, it was concluded that workers in informal employment are most vulnerable and most affected by the crisis³⁰. In parallel, those who operate in the informal sector typically work as day laborers, which means that due to COVID shutdowns, their daily labor and productivity is severely impacted (especially since remote working is not an option in many sectors like construction); thus, they are more likely to be laid off. Because of this, there is significant importance in the project team examining alternative opportunities for employment that can be performed virtually or at a distance if need be, as part of the project's greater plan to increase formalization among Syrian refugees and the Jordanian host community.

3.4 Skills Alignment

²⁸ Never attended school or only received basic education

²⁹ ILO, Labor market transitions of young women and men in Jordan, Work4Youth Publication Series No. 14, June 2014

³⁰ ILO, Impact of COVID-19 on Syrian Refugees and Host Communities in Jordan and Lebanon, 2020

Skills alignment remains a concern for the employment of both Syrian refugees and host communities in Jordan. In the case of refugees, skills alignment entails whether Syrian refugees are working in the same sector they were prior to displacement from Syria. The construction sector was found to have the highest alignment; as the majority of respondents who previously worked in construction are now employed in the same sector. Meanwhile, there is similar alignment in the food and beverage sector, with most respondents having been employed in the same sector prior to displacement. The lowest degree of alignment is demonstrated in the agriculture sector; whereby only 27 per cent of Syrian refugees who are currently working in the sector, have worked in it previously in Syria.

As for the Jordanian host community, skills alignment is largely concentrated on the mismatch between education and market demand. Referring back to the aforementioned high youth unemployment rate of 34.96 per cent³¹, it is clear that there is a substantial skills misalignment. According to a study conducted by the Economic Research Forum (ERF), it was revealed that the most educated young people are also the most affected by unemployment³²; thus, youth with a post-secondary and university education typically struggle the most with finding work opportunities post-graduation. Because unemployment, particularly among youth, is largely attributed to a mismatch between labor supply and labor demand. The need for projects like Skills4Work is emphasized, as its primary goal is to bridge this prominent gap through skills development initiatives.

3.5 Underemployment

Underemployment refers to the lack of utilization of a worker because the job does not require the use of the individual's skills, is part-time, or leaves the worker idle³³. As a whole, underemployment remains a main concern among host and refugee populations alike. In Jordan, when employed individuals do not perceive their work to be adequate to their skillset, or when they are working less hours than the nationally mandated 40 weekly hours for full-time and 20 weekly hours for part-time positions³⁴, this is considered as underemployed. When surveyed by the ILO³⁵, only 1 per cent of employed Syrian refugees outside camps and 0.2 per cent of Jordanian workers reported being in an adequate work situation; which implies that the current main jobs do not match what respondents consider to be their primary occupation in terms of education, skills, and experience. The ILO survey respondents also stated actively looking for work that was more aligned with their current skills.

³¹ Statista, Youth Unemployment Rate Jordan, 2020

³² Mona Amer, School-to-Work Transition in Jordan, 2016

³³ Investopedia, Underemployment Definition, 2020

³⁴ HG, Legal Working Hours in Jordan, 2020

³⁵ ILO, Impact of Syrian Refugees on the Jordanian Labor Market, February 2015

Studies on underemployment within host-refugee communities in Jordan also reveal that workers in the agriculture industry can be classified as underemployed³⁶, as the work in those particular industries is typically seasonal and/or sporadic. Additionally, the same studies show that underemployment can also occur in the form of ‘overemployment with underpayment’; whereby workers either receive meagre overtime pay or none at all. Because underemployment is so prominent in Jordan, the Skills4Work project emerges as an opportunity to facilitate the job search process for Syrian refugees and Jordanian host communities; as it will actively work to provide the target groups with job opportunities that fit their skillset and correspond to their preferred working hours, in order to ensure the groups are not just employed but rather working towards their full potential.

3.6 Working Conditions

For the purpose of the project, it is essential to acquire information on the general environment that the labor force operates in; since one of the primary goals is to ensure fair working conditions among host populations and Syrian refugees alike. Initially, the minimum wage is determined by the government after negotiations with representatives of trade unions and employers. The minimum wage was raised to 220JOD for Jordanians and 150JOD for non-Jordanians in 2017³⁷. This two-tier minimum wage system has raised concerns among Jordanians since employers have incentives to prefer hiring non-Jordanians, such as Syrian refugees. Conversely, it can lead Syrian refugees to feel underpaid in comparison to their Jordanian counterparts.

The standard workweek in Jordan is set by law at 48 hours; which is in line with the other countries in the Arab States³⁸. Overall, the share of employees working long hours is significantly higher for Syrian refugees outside the camps than among Jordanian workers, as over half of the Jordanian host community reported working between 40-59 weekly hours, whereas only 36 per cent of Syrian refugees reported working those same hours; meanwhile 30 per cent work reported working over 60 hours a week³⁹. In turn, this leaves refugees feeling overworked and underpaid, which can decrease their productivity at work and significantly affect their overall wellbeing. Some Syrian refugees have reported facing hazardous and exploitative working conditions in a variety of sectors, primarily because they are working within the informal sector at higher numbers, which increases their vulnerability amongst employers. A new “Regulation of Flexible Employment” was approved

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ ILO, Minimum wages and wage protection in the Arab States: Ensuring a just system for national and migrant workers

³⁸ Hammouri Law Firm, Jordanian Labor Law no. (8), 2020

³⁹ ILO, Impact of Syrian Refugees on the Jordanian Labor Market, February 2015

in 2017, and it introduced flexible working arrangements for specific categories of employees in Jordan⁴⁰. However, certain issues still need to be elaborated upon of aligning this regulation of amending to the Labor Law. Therefore, formalization becomes all the more essential for these groups; which is why it is necessary to focus on this aspect for this project.

Generally, social security under Jordanian law encompasses insurance against work injuries, maternity insurance (paid maternity leave), insurance against old age, disability, and death, as well as insurance against unemployment⁴¹. Among the Jordanian host community, insurance against old age, disability, and death is regulated for the vast majority⁴², meanwhile, insurance against unemployment and work injuries are not included for most workers. For women in the community, over half hold maternity insurance. This is a stark contrast for Syrian refugee populations, whereby the majority of workers inside and outside camps do not hold any type of social coverage in their contracts⁴³.

All forms of social insurance are practiced to a much larger extent among workers that have a written contract as opposed to those with only an oral contract, which stresses the importance of formalization of work for Jordanian host communities and Syrian refugees. Although this issue affects both refugees and host communities, Syrian refugees are disproportionately impacted since 65 per cent are working without a written contract, which is significantly lower than the figure of 18 per cent for Jordanian host communities⁴⁴. Again, this echoes back to the concept of informal employment and unregistered Syrian refugees, and puts such groups at higher risk under the current pandemic.

3.7 Work Distance

Overall, nearly one in three Syrian refugees, and a higher share of women than men work in their own neighborhood⁴⁵. The reason for this is because women are discouraged culturally and socially from working at a far distance from their residence, since they typically have more familial obligations, in addition to the increased dangers of using public transportation for women; especially at night. In the capital of Amman, two out of every five employed Syrian refugees work outside the living area, while in less densely-populated areas like Mafraq, this figure is significantly less. This is partially attributed to the presence of refugee camps in Mafraq, which provide work opportunities for Syrian refugees. Further, less populated areas typically have a specific district which combines the residential

⁴⁰ Al Tamimi & Company, New Employment Regime in Jordan: Working Within Flexible Arrangements, 2020

⁴¹ SSIF, Social Security Law in Jordan, 2014

⁴² ILO, Impact of Syrian Refugees on the Jordanian Labor Market, February 2015

⁴³ ILO, Impact of Syrian Refugees on the Jordanian Labor Market, February 2015

⁴⁴ Labor Force Survey, 2018

⁴⁵ FAFO, The Living Conditions of Syrians in Jordan, 2019

neighborhoods and workplaces, whereas the capital city is all-around populated, making it difficult to have work proximity to home.

Since many Syrian refugees tend to work close to home because of the presence of jobs in camps, nearly half of them walk to work, while the remainder rely solely on some means of transportation, like a car, bus or bike. Some combine two or more means of transportation, such as a bus and a taxi to be able to reach their place of work. For Syrians working in camps, two-thirds of the employed walk to work, compared to about one-third of those employed in Amman. In Amman, Zarqa and Irbid, about one-third of the employed commute by bus whereas one-fifth does so in Mafraq. Women more often than men walk to work, which is a natural consequence of women having employment in their immediate surroundings.

Today, in the work climate post COVID-19 closures, factories have begun increasingly hiring people who work at a closer proximity to the plant, in order to mitigate the risks brought forth by transportation or roadways shutting down. Therefore, this emphasizes the importance of the project team evaluating the locations of chosen beneficiaries for employment, and then matching them with SMEs at close proximity accordingly.

3.8 Women in the Workforce

There are very stark gender gaps in the labor market in Jordan. First, Jordanian women have one of the lowest labor force participation rates in the world with a gender gap of 44 per cent in 2020⁴⁶. Similarly, the female unemployment rate of 28.6 per cent in Jordan is much higher compared to the male rate of 21.5 per cent, meanwhile the duration of unemployment for women is substantially larger than the duration for males, as 87 per cent of men find employment in less than a year whereas 20 per cent of women are typically out of job at least a year⁴⁷. Although the Jordanian Constitution states that every worker shall receive wages that align with the quantity and quality of their work; the Labor Code does not include a right to equal payment for every individual who produces work of equal value⁴⁸. Therefore, in practice, gender wage-gaps are present.

Women on average receive less monthly income than their male counterparts; which is a reflection of the deep gender pay-gap present in Jordan. According to the World Bank, men working in the country's private sector earn 41 per cent on average more than women, in the public sector, men earn about 28 per cent more. This gender wage-gap is similar in the

⁴⁶ ILO, Key Indicators of the Labor Market, 2020

⁴⁷ Department of Statistics Jordan, Employment and Unemployment, 2020

⁴⁸ Sweidan, Male-Female Pay Differences: Jordan Case, 2012

manufacturing sector at 41 per cent⁴⁹. However, in terms of education, a recurring trend continues to be on the rise in secondary and post-secondary educational attainment among women, exceeding that of men's⁵⁰, which corresponds with national statistics, that half of the country's university graduates were females, although they comprised only 11 per cent of the workforce⁵¹. There are various reasons behind the gender gap in employment, as according to the ILO⁵², women from both refugee/host communities cite one of the primary challenges of being in the Jordanian workforce as getting paid less than men for the same work, in addition to only receiving low-pay job opportunities despite having equal levels of educational attainment. Like men, the rise in unemployment among women is higher among college graduates, due to the high saturation of educated labor, alongside the rise in duration of unemployment among blue-collar workers who are often unable to compete with those who have higher educational qualifications in the job market.

The main reason why gender wage-gaps are so prominent in the Jordanian labor market is bounded in traditional beliefs culturally enforced by family and community. For instance, while the majority in see no issue in women joining the workforce, there are certain reservations held about the circumstances under which they should be allowed to work⁵³, such as the view that women should not work too far from home, and that they should not combine a career with raising children. This is further backed up by the view that female employment is of secondary importance to male employment, and that women should avoid working unless they are in need of extra income. However, as an ILO⁵⁴ study points out, negative attitudes towards women in the workforce are typically more common among populations with little or no education. Nonetheless, a growing trend in shift in attitudes towards gender equality has been witnessed in Jordan in recent years. For example, a recent study from 2019 revealed that 96 per cent of people believe that it is acceptable for women to work⁵⁵, a statistic that was much lower a decade earlier. Although, modern shifts in sexist beliefs among Arab society will take some time to be fully reflected in dwindling the gender gap; efforts taken by projects like Skills4Work aim at prioritizing skills development for women will help empower their role within the Jordanian labor market.

⁴⁹ World Bank, Enterprise Survey: Jordan 2013, Country Profile

⁵⁰ ILO, Impact of Syrian Refugees on the Jordanian Labor Market, February 2015

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² ILO, Impact of Syrian Refugees on the Jordanian Labor Market, February 2015

⁵³ ILO, Impact of Syrian Refugees on the Jordanian Labor Market, February 2015

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ British Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, Attitudes towards Gender Roles in Jordan, January 2015, Vol.

3.9 Youth in the Workforce

Both Syrian refugees and host communities' youth face many challenges in the labor market. As previously mentioned, Jordan has one of the highest youth unemployment rates in the world at 34.96 per cent. The impact of political, social, and economic marginalization on Jordan's youth is noted in the growing tensions between the government and its increasingly agitated young citizens disappointed by the insufficient job creation in the formal sector.

A good indicator, nonetheless, is that the youth in Jordan are highly educated, as education is embedded as a core value in the culture. Albeit Syrian refugees have lower levels of educational attainment likely due to displacement, as 60 per cent of the refugees above the age of 15 have never completed basic education, and only about 15 per cent have completed secondary school, compared to 42 per cent of Jordanians above the age of 15⁵⁶. Yet generally, education remains high among youth in the country as the secondary net enrolment rate was 86.5 per cent for males and 89.4 per cent for females⁵⁷.

The high percentage of university degree graduates, coupled with the higher participation within the informal market by Jordanian youth, leaves very few young people to enrol in vocational education, leaving the demand for such qualifications unmet, specifically within the industrial sectors. Reasons behind it are mainly cultural; cultural norms-direct high school graduates towards higher education in the medical and engineering fields, as it is viewed as more prestigious by the community. However, due to the lack of job opportunities in these domains, Jordanian youth tend in many cases to accept jobs below their qualifications, lower wages, long working hours, and generally indecent working conditions. Therefore, a critical issue regarding high youth unemployment is related to mismatches between labor supply and labor demand. The formal private and public sectors are unable to absorb sufficient work entrants. The youth often lack access to, and quality of, national programs that facilitate a smooth school-to-work transition, including vocational training and career guidance.

To reduce the severity of this issue, the Jordanian Government has been active in developing policies to promote youth employment, working directly with NGOs in order to promote job creation and skills development opportunities; such as those present in the Skills4Work project. Some of the main priorities in strengthening the youth's participation within the labor market entail focusing on education and training, job creation and entrepreneurship, inclusion of youth in the labor market and institutional reform.

⁵⁶ ILO, Impact of Syrian Refugees on the Jordanian Labor Market, February 2015

⁵⁷ OECD, Key Issues Affecting Youth in Jordan, 2020

3.10 COVID-19 Impact on Labor⁵⁸

The COVID-19 pandemic has incited a labor market crisis, which is expected to affect both the quantity and/or rates of unemployed and underemployment⁵⁹, and the quality of work granted (e.g. wages, income, social protection). The crisis is expected to effect more vulnerable labor groups (i.e. migrants, refugees, women, persons with disability...etc.)⁶⁰; while expanding the wage gap, and by extension the social gaps within the economy.

Although COVID-19 implications affect the country as a whole; refugees and host communities are more vulnerable during such times, since they had been disproportionately disadvantaged prior to the pandemic, due to a lack of resources and job opportunities. Both refugee/host populations are also more at risk because a larger proportion work within the informal sector compared to the rest of the Jordanian population. Underemployment is directly affected by the lockdown; with working hours and thereby wages slashed, this leads to diminished incomes and thus purchasing power. ⁶¹ It will, thus automatically result in working poverty as wages are lowered to meet the standards of decent living conditions.⁶²

An assessment conducted by the ILO for approximately 1,600 households including vulnerable Jordanian families and Syrian refugees has reflected that only 6 percent of them have been working as they did before the crisis. From the remaining households, only 2 percent were working from home, and 61 percent were either laid-off or temporarily laid-off; while the remaining 31 percent have received paid leave.⁶³ According to that same assessment, and specifically in regards to the ‘manufacturing sector’, it has performed a bit better than other sectors, and as such was able to preserve the rights of its labor force more, as almost 60 percent of the workers in this sector have been granted paid leave, and 10 percent have been permanently laid-off.⁶⁴

As mentioned previously, the majority of workers that have been laid-off permanently were within the ‘informal market’, which was to be expected due to lack of legal consequence of laying-off these employees. This reflects that formalization of the labor market at this time, becomes much more essential; specifically, when it comes to drafting contracts for migrant workers and Syrian refugees working within Jordan.⁶⁵

⁵⁸ ILO Policy Paper, Leaders International, June 2020

⁵⁹ Underemployment is particularly important because of growing casual and informal employment

⁶⁰ ILO, COVID-19: Labor Market Impact and Policy Response in Arab States, 2020

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² ILO, COVID-19: Labor Market Impact and Policy Response in Arab States, 2020

⁶³ ILO, Rapid assessment of the impact of COVID -19 on vulnerable workers in Jordan, 2020

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ ILO, Rapid assessment of the impact of COVID -19 on vulnerable workers in Jordan, 2020

A recent survey by UNHCR has reflected major implications on the livelihoods of Syrian refugees and vulnerable Jordanian families. The survey included over 1,000 households, from which 54 percent of Jordanians, and 65 percent of refugees reported that they became unemployed due to the COVID-19 crisis, and are not expecting to find work beyond the crisis, as the main source of income for over 40 percent was in the informal market (daily-paid workers). From the refugees surveyed only 5 percent stated that they received salaried work with regular income, as the rest rely on family or aid support for survival.⁶⁶ Even with the extra pressures faced by these groups as an outcome of the crisis, refugees and migrant workers are not covered to a large extent by the official government regulations to assist vulnerable communities. Although the aforementioned Jordan Compact was meant to integrate Syrian refugees into the crisis, its regulations were not amended to fit the current circumstances.⁶⁷

The pandemic has also widened the gap of gender inequalities, even within the formal market, that is relatively more stable. The closure of schools and care facilities have forced women to work from home when possible, or put their careers on hold all together, due to inability to conduct both, specifically within the Arab-world. Again, this problem is worse among refugees, as only 8 percent of women were reported to be employed before the crisis.⁶⁸ Since women are a priority within the project beneficiaries, it becomes even important to lead initiatives that can further empower them during a time where they in most dire need of it.

To counteract the effects of this crisis, the government has been working closely to facilitate health and safety measures and operations within factories and large conglomerates. Such protocols include enforcing sector specific COVID-19 protection measures (e.g. social distancing, sanitary procedures for home deliveries, occupational safety and health standards, etc.), and imposing a fine of 3,000 JD should the businesses violate the laws. Furthermore, The Ministry of Labor (MoL) has formulated multiple guidelines for health and safety measures, as larger industrial establishments resume their operations during their COVID-19 pandemic; where a set of emergency response regulations need to be interacted in case of infection, specifically in relation to transportations and supply operations, staff and workers' dorms, corridors, worksites, meal halls, and the clinic.⁶⁹ Therefore, this reinstates the need for the project team to work closely with appropriate government bodies in order

⁶⁶ Multi-Sectoral Rapid Needs Assessment –COVID19, UNHCR, 2020

⁶⁷ ILO, Informal Economy, Refugees, and Vulnerable Workers, ILO-COVID Vulnerable Labor Survey, 2020

⁶⁸ ILO, COVID-19: Labor Market Impact and Policy Response in Arab States, 2020

⁶⁹ Ministry of Labor, Guidelines number (9) SOPs of Safety and Health Measures applied to curb spread of COVID 19 virus in Large Industrial Establishments, 2020

to design a plan that can directly help both Syrian refugees and surrounding host communities.

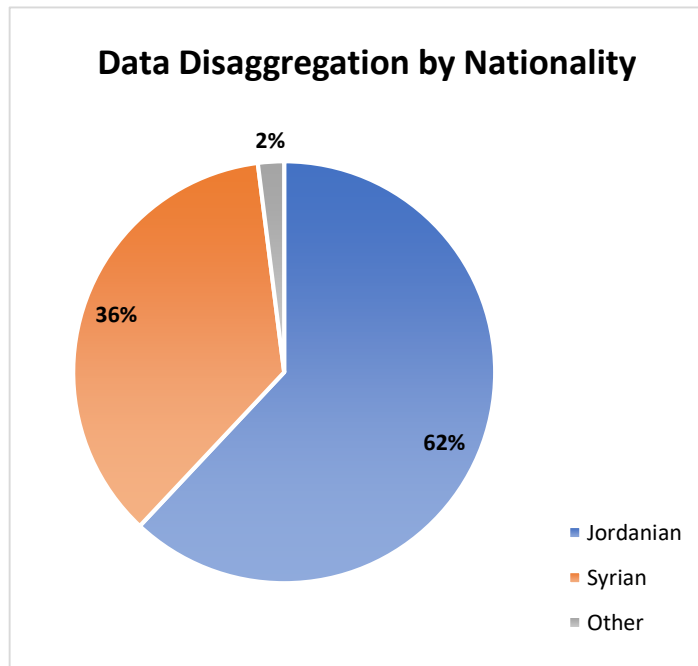
Section 4: Survey Findings – Primary Research

This section builds on characteristics and trends present within the sampled population of respondents. The extracted data from this section builds on the data deduced from desk research in order to verify, assess, and inspect expected and new trends.

4.1 Demographics

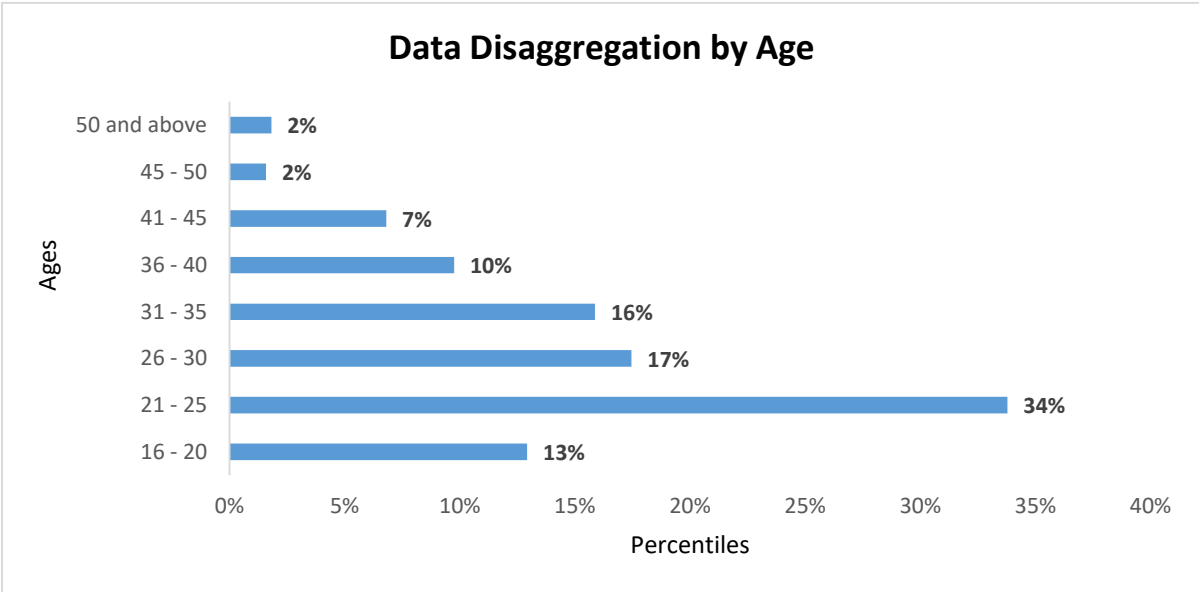
Out of 441 respondents, 272 were Jordanian, while 160 were Syrian. As for the remaining 9 respondents, the majority identified as Palestinian, with 2 respondents being Sudani and Iraqi. However, taking into consideration that the project scope of focus is primarily directed at helping Syrian refugees and the surrounding Jordanian host communities, the 2 per cent of other nationalities (see **Chart 1**) will be omitted when setting the basis for selection of 200 beneficiaries. Since the survey was published online, it was expected that nationalities other than the two targeted would respond, and it was also assumed that Jordanian communities would receive the widest reach since they are proportionately more than Syrians. Additionally, the current ratio of respondents is 62:36 Jordanians to Syrians, which needs to be taken into consideration during the evaluation process in order to have as close to the government mandated 70:30 ratio as possible when selecting the 200 beneficiaries.

Chart 1: Nationality



Meanwhile, **Chart 2** reflects that the highest saturation of respondents is between the 21-25 age range, who make up 149 individuals, or 34 per cent of the survey participants alone. The data corresponds with the general demographic environment in Jordan, whereby the median age was 23.8 years⁷⁰ as of 2019; making it a very youthful population. Keeping in mind that the project’s age range is between 18-45 in order to target the high youth unemployment rate of 34.96 per cent⁷¹ in Jordan, it is coherent that the vast majority of respondents lie in the 26-30 and 31-35 age groups, who make up a respective 17 and 16 per cent of survey participants. Furthermore, there are outliers in the data as the survey garnered two responses from 16-year-old individuals, as well as fifteen responses from individuals above 45 years of age; both groups outside the desired age range specifically curated to prioritize youth. Therefore, the outliers in age groups will not be considered when moving to the next phase of the project.

Chart 2: Age

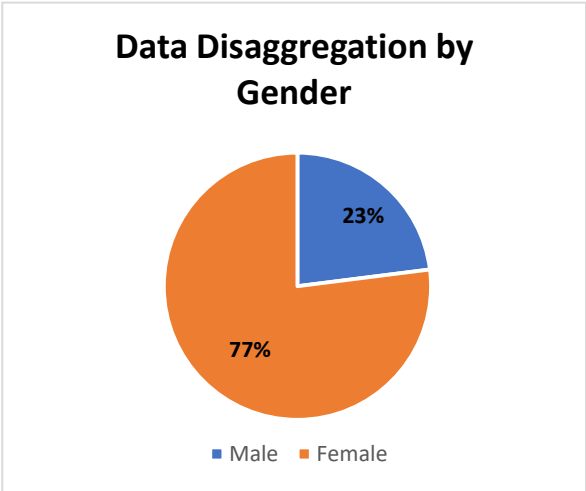


Interestingly, female respondents largely outweighed male respondents as seen in **Chart 3**, 338 individuals or 77 per cent alone were females. This can be attributed to factors like filtering the Facebook post’s algorithm to reach mostly female users, as it corresponds with the project’s intensive focus on developing the capacity and skillset of women and female-headed houses in particular. Furthermore, since desk research conducted in Section 3.9

⁷⁰ Department of Statistics, Jordan, 2019
⁷¹ Statista, Youth Unemployment Rate Jordan, 2020

shows that women have higher unemployment rates than men, it is expected that they would answer at a greater proportion to surveys such as this one. Although the project aims for equalization of beneficiaries, priority is given to women due to their low labor force participation rate of 14 per cent in Jordan⁷², alongside youth; therefore, the larger proportion of female respondents aligns well with future steps of the project.

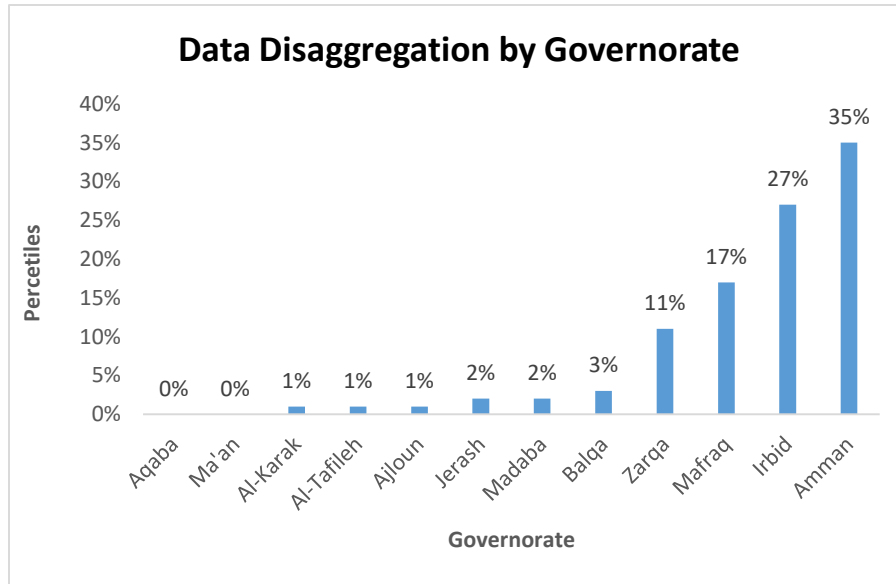
Chart 3: Gender



As for the location in **Chart 4**, the vast majority of respondents are situated in the governorates of Amman (35 per cent), Irbid (27 per cent), Mafrq (17 per cent), and Zarqa (11 per cent); holding 156, 117, 76, and 49 of survey participants respectively. Reaching out to targeted areas was enabled by the location-based boost offered on Facebook, the survey’s platform, as the project’s focus is on providing trainings in those particular four governorates where refugee populations are the highest, as discussed in Section 1.1. However, the survey still generated an overall 43 responses from individuals in nearby governorates like Balqa, Madaba, Jerash, and to a lesser extent in Ajloun, Tafileh, and Al-Karak.

Chart 4: Location

⁷² WDI 2017, retrieved in April 2017.



To elaborate further, the table below provides an overview on the respondent dispersion within governorates. Overall, gaining a deeper understanding of population concentrations sets the precedent for where exactly the project should target its focus moving forward.

Table 1: Refugee Concentration in Governorates

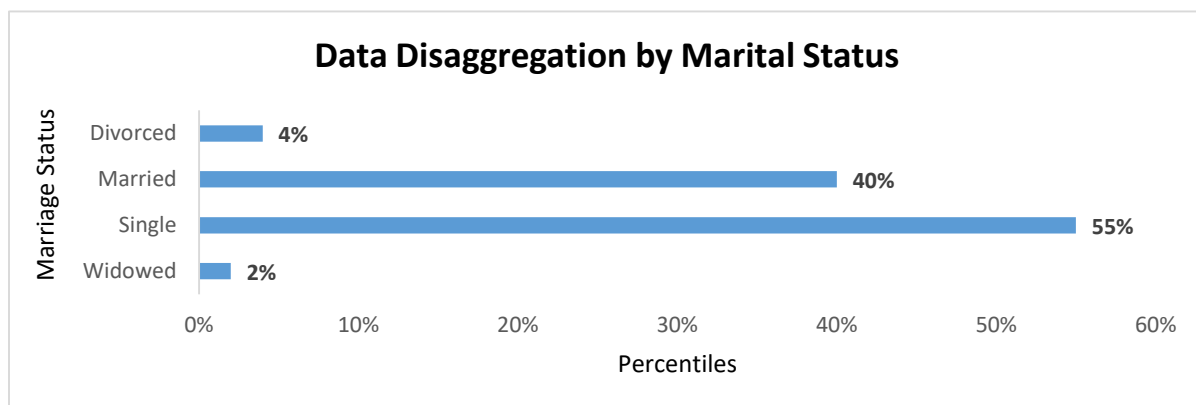
Governorate	Frequency
Amman	
Marka	20
Tabarbour	11
Marj Al Hamam	10
Jubaiha	10
Abu Nsair	7
<u>Total</u>	58
Irbid	
Eastern District	7
Edun	7
Huwwarah	6
<u>Total</u>	20
Mafraq	

Zaatari Camp	11
Southern District	8
Hashmi District	5
<u>Total</u>	24
Zarqa	
Rusayfa	6
Hashmiyyeh	5
Azraq Camp	4
<u>Total</u>	15

4.2 Family Dynamics

For marital status, **Chart 5** revealed that 242 of respondents, or 55 per cent, identified as being single; which is likely owing to the sample group being mainly youth. Meanwhile, 176 (40 per cent) of respondents answered as married, 16 as divorced, and 7 as widowed. Majority of respondents being single carries essential implications on the project; for instance, it indicates more disposable time and less familial obligations which allow them to partake in longer trainings, modules, or be more willing to work longer hours. On the other hand, married individuals are likely in more dire need of stable jobs and skill development since they hold more responsibilities. Therefore, a stable and equalized approach must be carried out when filtering out beneficiaries in order to balance between the different groups

Chart 5: Marital Status

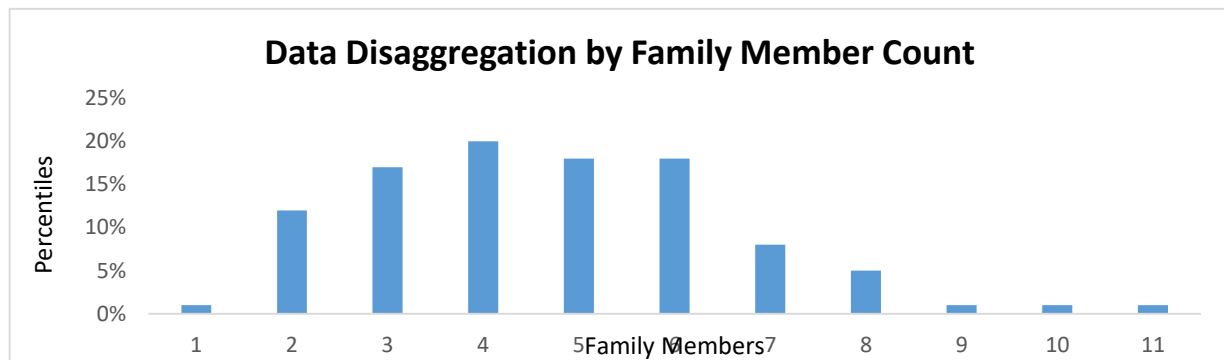


and their needs.

Results in **Chart 6** demonstrate that most respondents have on average four to five family members, identical to that of the national average in Jordan⁷³, 34 per cent have more than five family members, and only 13 per cent have less than three members. In line with modern shifts in family dynamics, there were fewer respondents with more than six family members, which entails to some extent more awareness regarding family planning in recent years.

As for the number of family members under 18, it is essential to acquire an understanding of this information, as it indicates how many dependents are in the family, and therefore constitutes one of the main criteria for evaluation. Generally, the majority of participants have less than six family members under the age of 18, and the individuals who have more than six members under 18 only comprise 3 per cent of responses. Lastly, 43 per cent of surveyed participants mentioned having families of their own, which further adds to the

Chart 6: Family Member Count



number of dependents relying on them for income.

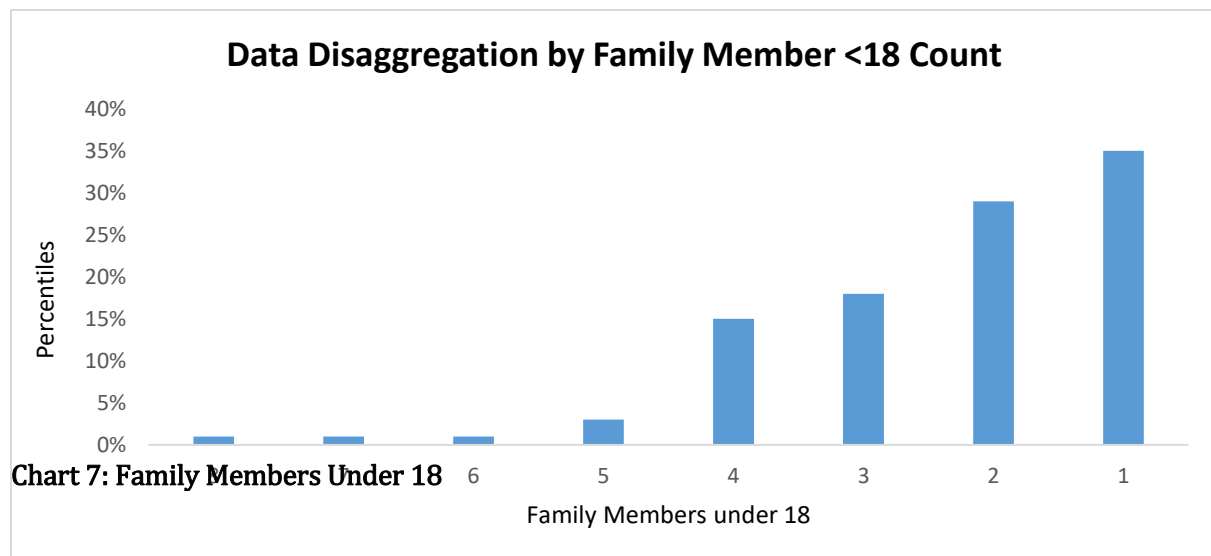


Chart 7: Family Members Under 18

⁷³ Department of Statistics, Jordan, 2018

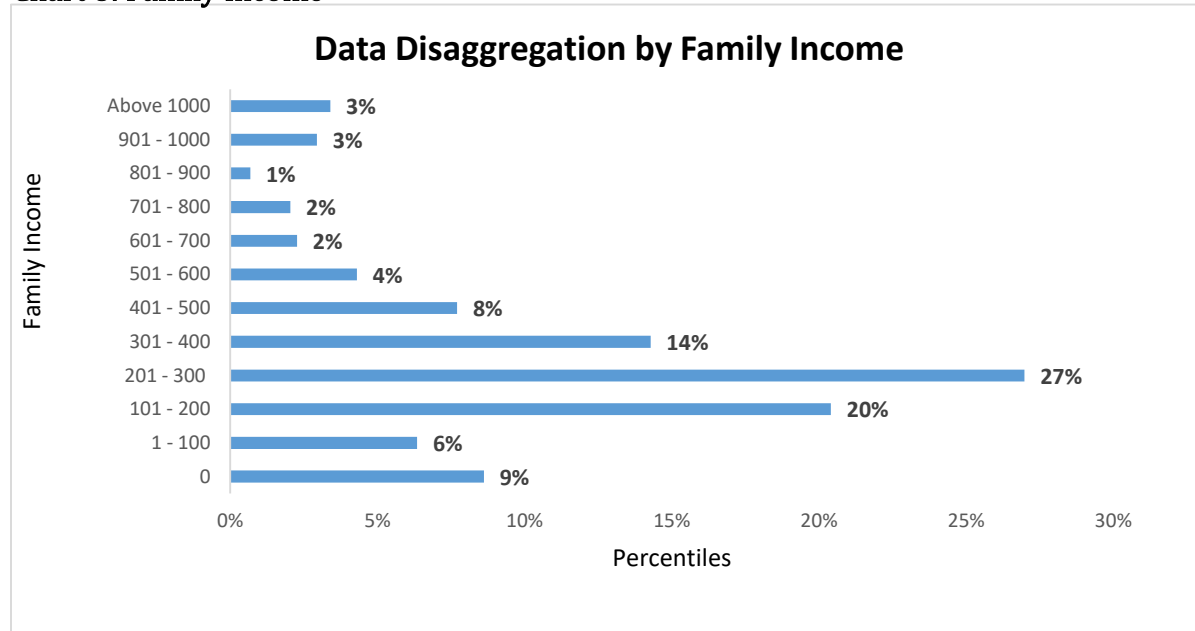
Survey results in **Chart 8** demonstrate that the majority of respondents receive an accumulated family income rate ranging between 201-300 JOD per month, which is slightly below the national 323 JOD poverty line deemed necessary to cover basic needs for a family with 6 members⁷⁴. One must also take into consideration that the survey was conducted after COVID-19 led to increased unemployment rates; therefore, the low-income rates can also be partially attributed to the worsening pandemic.

Furthermore, the amount of income currently brought in by families may also set their expectations for future salaries, which is an essential factor when matching SME's to potential beneficiaries. For instance, the 8 per cent of families in the higher income range (above 700JOD/monthly) may not approve of a job at an SME that will pay 150-200JOD since it is a meagre contribution to their family's accumulated monthly income. However, this is also dependent on the number of working individuals within the family, thus, this factor is not conclusive on its own.

Additionally, the data shows that families within the lowest income range typically only have one working family member; whereas respondents with a family income of over 800JOD/monthly generally have more than one working member. Such factors will be taken into consideration when evaluating the selection of beneficiaries; since there are respondents whose families earn 3000JOD/monthly with only 1 or 2 working family members, which indicates that they are not as in need for the project's support programs as much as the 9 per cent of families who currently have no monthly income.

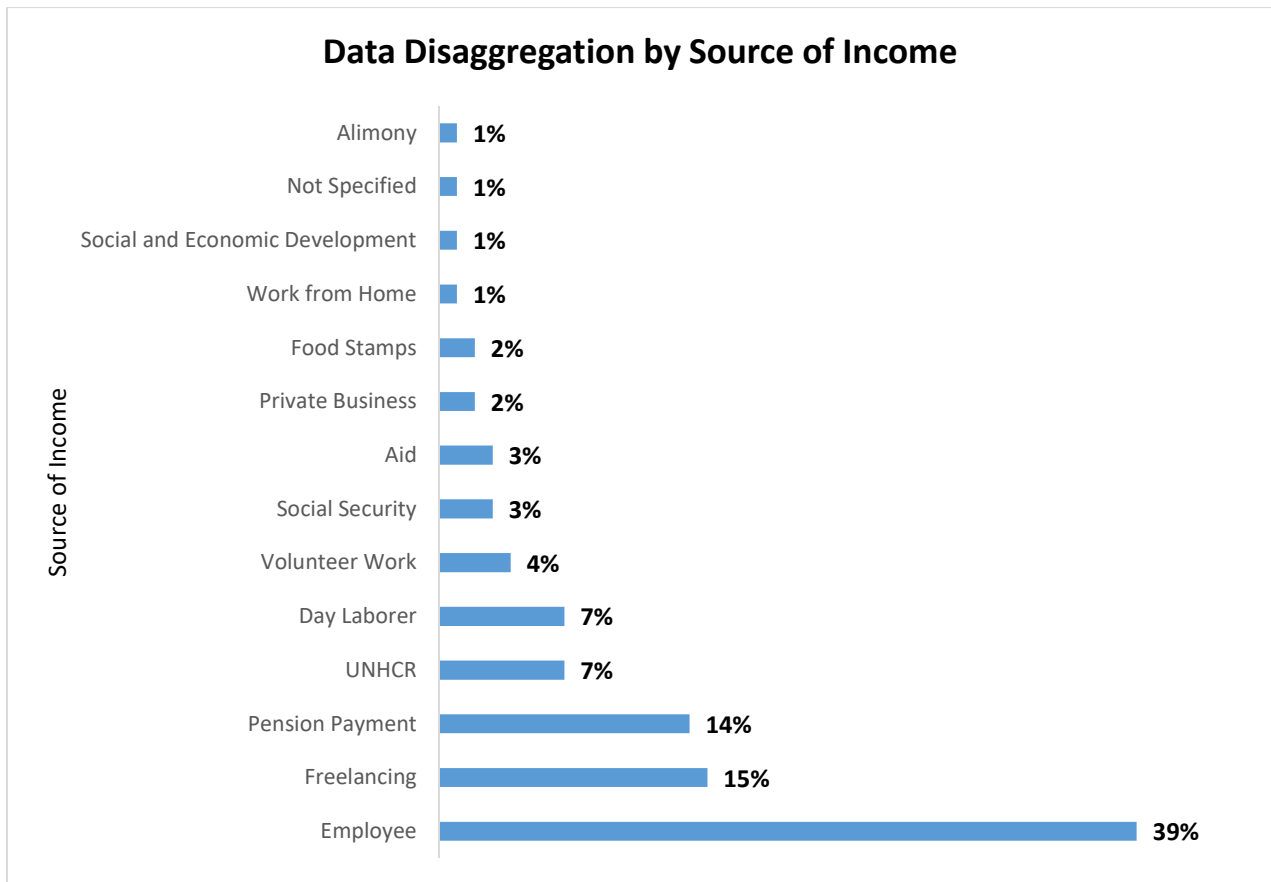
⁷⁴ Fair Labor, Jordan Benchmarks and Charts, 2016

Chart 8: Family Income



As for respondents' sources of income, shown in **Chart 9**, it is pertinent to understand such information since it dictates the level of individuals' dependence on aid and assistance, and provides a guideline for the SME job match-making step of the project. It also plays a role in grasping a general understanding of how the respondents yield their income; whether it is through the private or public sector. Generally, 39 per cent of respondents generate income as employees; 27 per cent of which are in the private sector, and 25 per cent in the public sector. Meanwhile, a worrisome 19 per cent indicated not having any source of income. To reiterate, respondents who are already employed and generate a sufficient income are less befitting for the project than the 19 per cent who do not currently have an income source, since the project's mandate is centered around skills development in order to help fulfil market demand, reduce unemployment, and increase job creation.

Chart 9: Family Source of Income

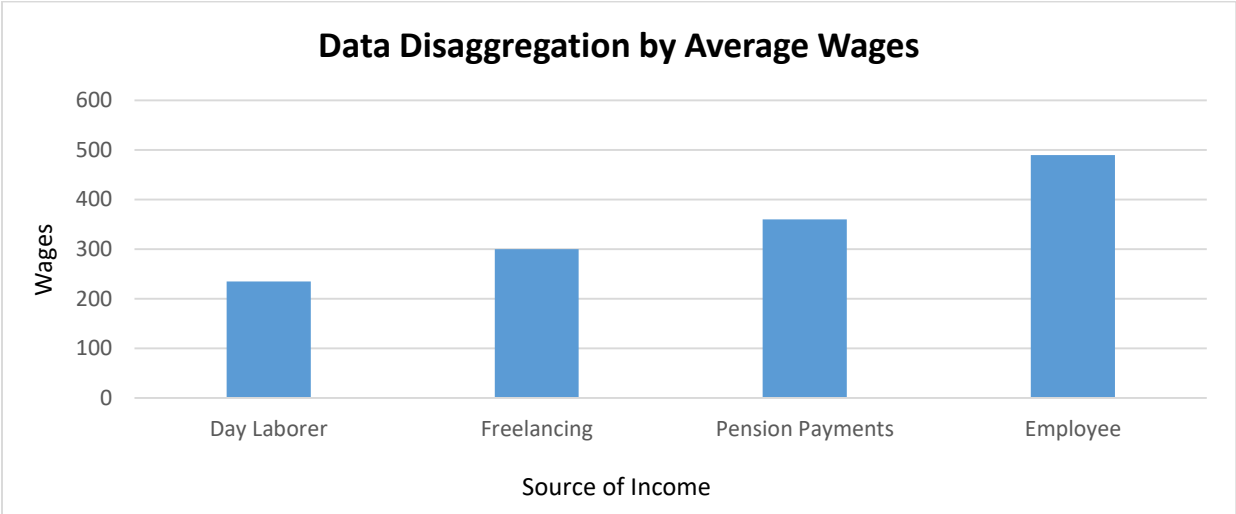


The respondents' differing sources of income also entail varying monthly income levels. For instance, 17 respondents who are employees answered that they each make over 500JOD/month, whereas one family whose only source of income is aid only receives 100JOD/month. Furthermore, it can be seen in **Chart 10** that respondents who work as day laborers yield 235JOD monthly, freelancers make 300JOD, retired individuals receive on average 360JOD, relatively dependent on their last position and previous line of work, and full-time employees generate the highest salary which is averaged at 490JOD. To narrow it down further, employees in the private sector have been found to yield slightly less income than those in the public sector; as the former group earn 262JOD monthly, whereas the latter group earns 292JOD. This can be stemmed from the fact, that those in the private sector are more likely to be engaged in informal employment practices than those in the public sector, which contributes to less and inconsistent monthly pay.

As for retirement, individuals' wages are highly impacted by an array of factors; including pension calculation, which use the last three years prior to retirement as the reference period for measuring the average wage. Therefore, that respondents who did not earn high wages prior to retirement will be constrained within a specific range for their pension.

Further, many individuals may not receive pension payments at all since studies show that those who operated in sectors other than the “formal full-employment” private sector and public sector (i.e. irregular wage work, self-employed) are less likely to receive pension payments; which stresses the importance of allocating regular, formal employment opportunities to selected beneficiaries as part of the project’s mandate of improving livelihoods. On a different front, another mandated factor for Jordanians to receive pension payments is to pay a minimum 7 years of contributions and to have social security coverage for at least 15 years, therefore, those who fail to fulfil this requirement will not receive any pension payments post retirement⁷⁵.

Chart 10: Average Wages



Results in **Chart 11** demonstrate that the majority (76 per cent) of respondents live in male-headed households; whereby the father, son, or husband is the sole provider for the family. In families where this is the case, the monthly income ranges from 200 to 5000JOD, the latter being a clear outlier. One respondent in this category reported receiving no income. Overall, the average income in male-headed households is around 545JOD, which in comparison to the previously-stated average of six family members per respondent, is extremely low. One of the single male respondents reported being the sole provider for his six-member family while only making 300JOD.

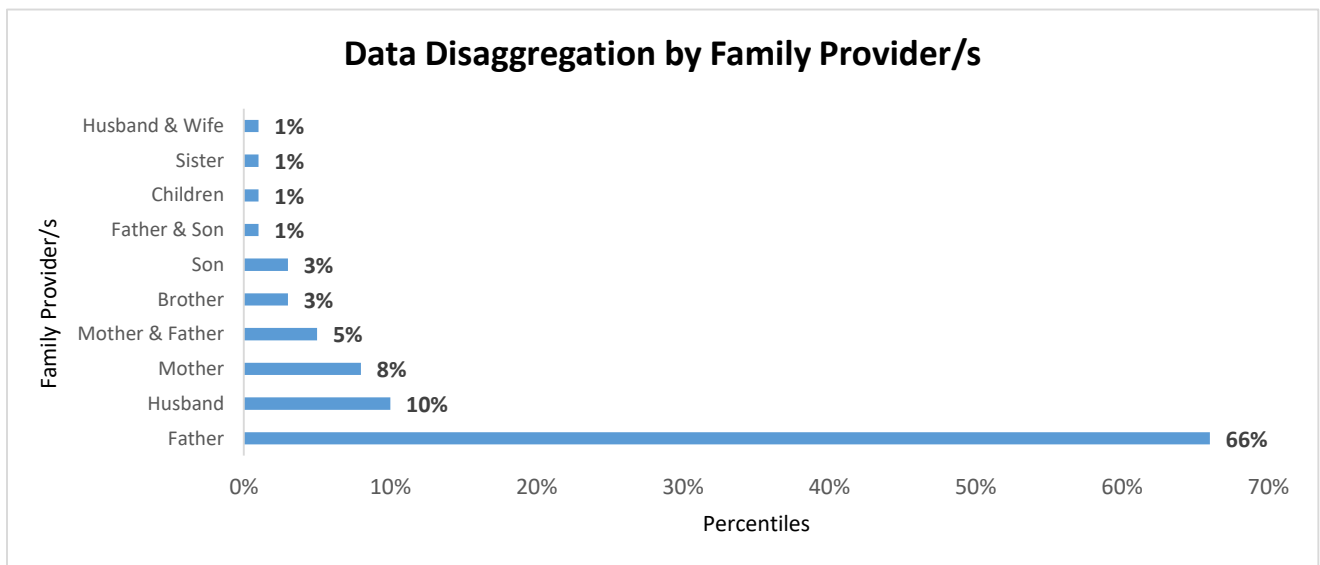
For the 8 per cent of female-headed houses, the income ranges from 120 to 800JOD, with the average monthly income being 363JOD; a clear disparity from cases where the father is the breadwinner. A 35-year-old respondent who makes 200JOD has seven family members; 5 of whom are under 18, which means her income is insufficient to provide basic needs for

⁷⁵ SSA, Social Security Programs in Jordan, 2020

dependents. Because the amount yielded by females is reflected to be lower than for males, it reinstates the need to prioritize women in the selection of beneficiaries; especially since data trends prove that female-headed households typically contain a higher number of family members under 18. Taking this into consideration, it can be understood why the project aims to equalize pay among genders in its target group.

Meanwhile, children, or youth between 18-30, are the providers for their households in 1 per cent of cases, with the main jobs they occupy being freelancing and day laboring. Although their percentile is not significant, youth who are the sole providers for their families are at the top of the priority list for the project, especially since they are also the least-earning due to a lack of experience and underdeveloped skillset; whereby they only bring in a monthly amount between 200 and 400JOD.

Chart 11: Family Provider/s



4.3 Disabilities

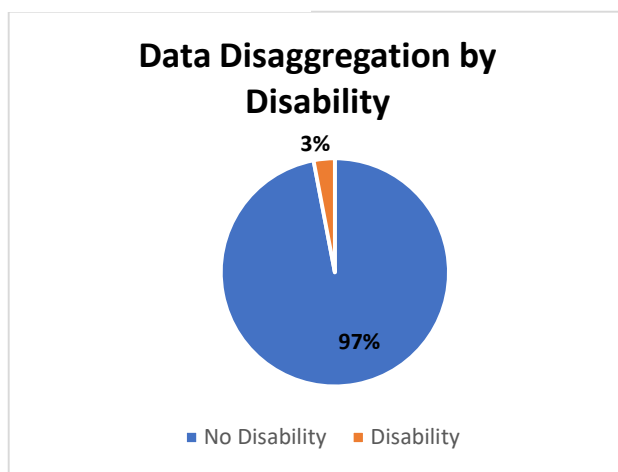
One of the project’s objectives is to provide marginalized and vulnerable groups with skills that will help integrate them into the workforce. This goal is at par with Jordanian labor laws which mandate that in organizations where the number of employees exceed 50, the number of employed disabled persons should amount to at least 4% of workers, in areas where the nature of work is accessible to those with disabilities⁷⁶.

Having a disability paves way for discrimination and is typically associated with reduced chances of employment, which can significantly impact mental health and job stability

⁷⁶ Jordan Labor Watch, Employment of Persons with Disabilities, December 2016

and/or security. Further, less employment opportunities for those with disabilities raise the overall national unemployment rate; which is particularly harmful for developing economies like Jordan. It also causes social exclusion among peoples with disabilities among the Jordanian labor force; which prevents them from receiving the same opportunities and income as those who are more-abled. For this reason, prioritizing disabled persons alongside women and youth as part of the project’s mandate was necessary, as equalizing rights and opportunities for all members of a given society represents the cornerstone of the rights-based approach to social development. As shown in **Chart 12**, 3 per cent of respondents are disabled.

Chart 12: Persons with Disabilities



Of the 3 per cent respondents with disabilities, 36 per cent are movement impaired, while 7 per cent are hearing impaired— as revealed in **Chart 13**. The majority of respondents have other disabilities that were not specified. Ultimately, understanding respondents’ disabilities will not only allow the project to provide new opportunities, but it will also help in catering the program’s services to their needs in order to guarantee ease of delivery. For instance, in an interview conducted by BetterWork among women with disabilities, it was revealed that those with partial movement impairments may not be able to undertake jobs that require strenuous movement like sewing; therefore, the only jobs they are able to obtain in that domain are as sewing-assistance⁷⁷, whereas those who have hearing impairments have a higher chance on of on-the-job success operating sewing machines. At the other end, persons with movement impairments have historically, performed better at desk jobs⁷⁸. However, by delivering vocational training and skills development programs for those with disabilities, an array of new opportunities can arise. There is also a greater emphasis on the project team

⁷⁷ BetterWork Jordan, Workers with disabilities: a strength for Jordan’s Labor Market

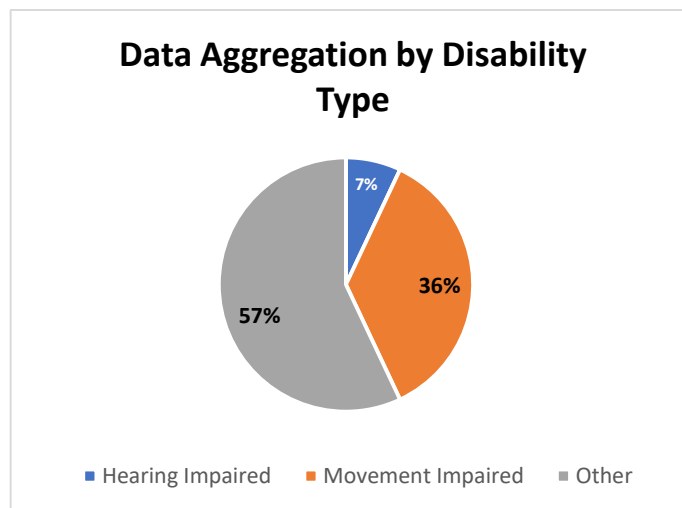
⁷⁸ ESCWA Jordan, Mapping Inequity: Persons with Physical Disabilities in Jordan

to take careful consideration on the level of accessibility of each chosen SME, and to ensure that selected beneficiaries are provided jobs in enterprises that are well-equipped to accommodate their needs.

Survey data has also revealed that of the 14 persons with disabilities, the immense majority, or 71 per cent, were women. Largely, this is due to the bulk of respondents being women as demonstrated earlier in **Chart 1**. Unlike the salary differences mentioned in the above-section, there is little to no disparity in the income yielded by females with disabilities when compared to males with disabilities; however, because women are disproportionately impacted by employment opportunities in general, women with disabilities will be specifically prioritized within the project's scope.

Out of the 14 individuals, 8 are also the sole providers within their families, which is a situation made particularly difficult since this group accumulates a monthly average of 221JOD, significantly lower than any other group discussed previously. One respondent even reported not making any income at all. Interestingly, the data showed no discrepancies in income based on the type of disability, however this can also be attributed to the group's sample size being too small to test.

Chart 13: Disability Type



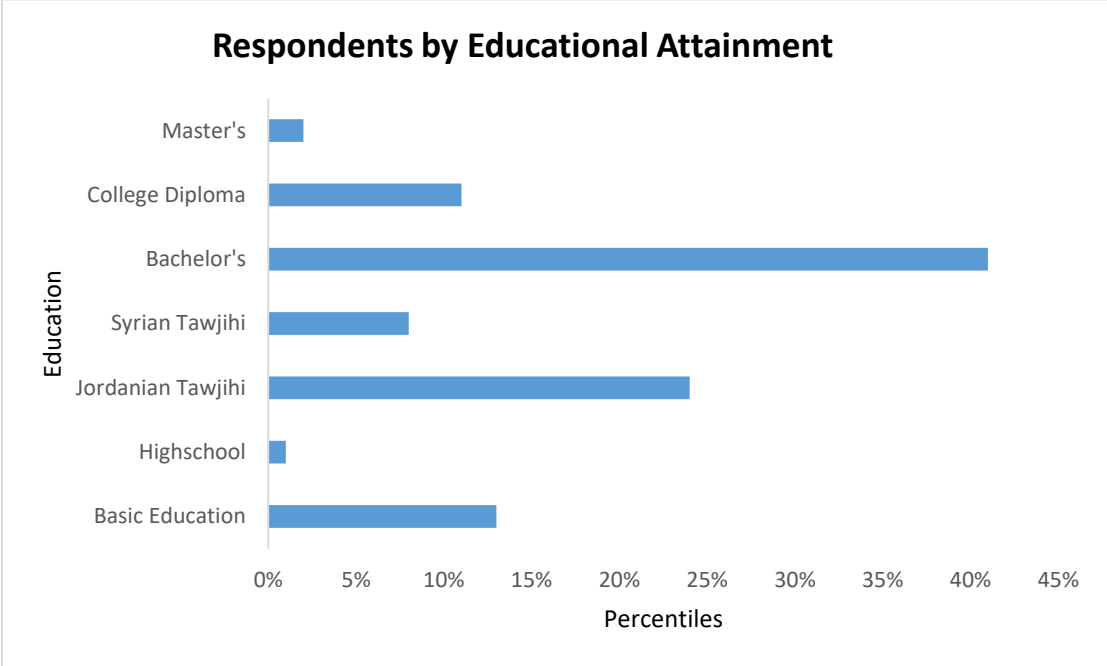
4.4 Educational Attainment

One of the requirements set up by the project is for respondents to have completed at minimum a 9th grade education in order to enable understanding of the training's basics. In the survey, the lowest level of educational attainment was listed as 'basic education'; which encompasses finishing grade 10, whereas College Diploma refers to obtaining a certificate

from a 2-year educational institution. Therefore, from **Chart 14** it can be seen that all respondents have completed the minimum instated requirements for education, however, their different educational levels carry various implications. For instance, respondents who have attained a Bachelor’s or Master’s degree may be more likely to refuse working blue-collar jobs than those with a lower education.

Overall, 183 of respondents, or 41 per cent, have obtained a Bachelor’s degree, meanwhile Jordan Tawjihi achievers largely outnumber those with Syrian Tawjihi, due to the greater number of Jordanian respondents, as well as Syrians who completed Tawjihi after displacement to Jordan. Essentially, what this information entails is that the vast majority of respondents have finished highschool, which means they are educated enough to complete the curriculum related to vocational trainings that will be developed by the project.

Chart 14: Education

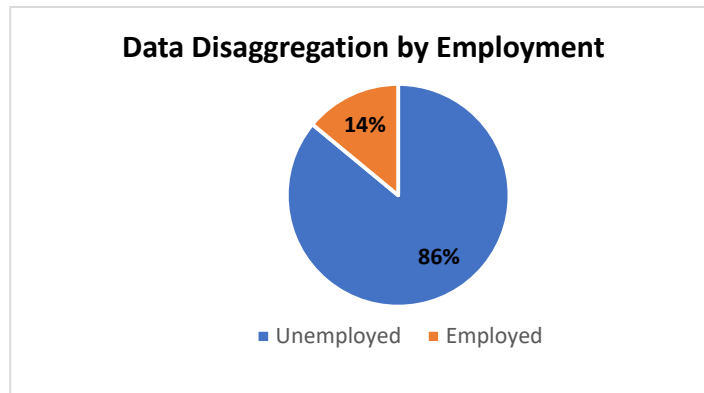


4.5 Employment and Work Experience

Out of the 441 respondents, a worrying majority of 86 per cent answered as being currently unemployed, as seen in **Chart 15**. Exact reasons for unemployment were not identified, but

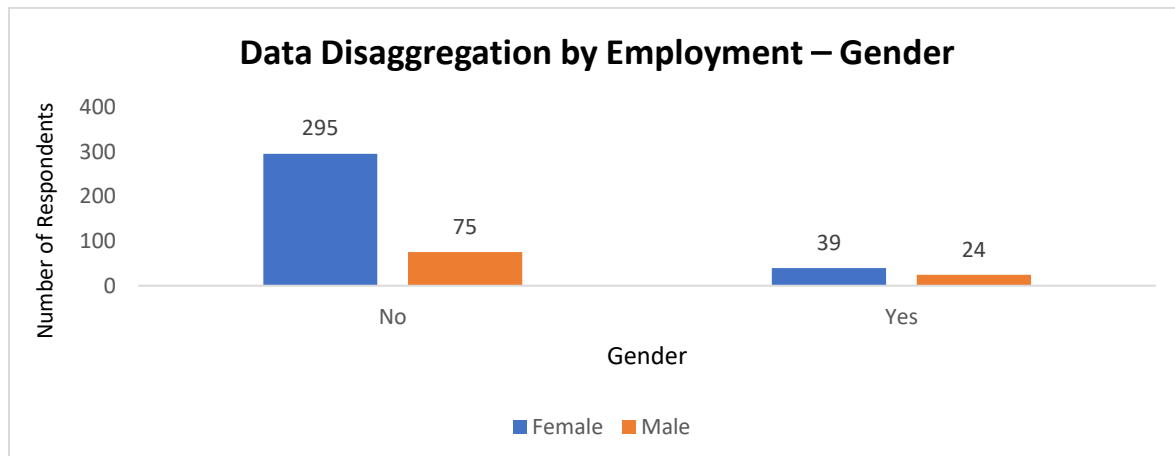
as previously mentioned, a portion of this large percentage may be attributed to COVID-19 lay-offs and restrictions. Of the 14 per cent employed respondents, all were registered with the social security corporation. For the project, attaining such information is essential as it provides deeper insight on the level of formalization of the targeted population within the job market. Since data in Section 4.4, discuss the harmful implications of rising informal unemployment, it becomes pertinent to understand how many individuals within the sample group are operating within the informal sector.

Chart 15: Employment



When further disaggregating the data based on gender and age, it can be seen in **Chart 16** that 295 of the female respondents, or 80 per cent of the total sample, answered as being unemployed in comparison to male respondents. However, this can be largely attributed to the disproportion of female respondents as a whole, as the number of women respondents who indicated being employed was also larger than the male section. When narrowing down the data, it was found that, of the entire female respondent group, 88 per cent answered as unemployed, meanwhile the percentage is 75 per cent for unemployed males. Parallel to Section 4.9, this data demonstrates that women are disproportionately impacted by unemployment in Jordan and reiterates the need for prioritizing them in the project.

Chart 16: Employment by Gender



Employment by Age

As for age segregation, it was found that 51 per cent of the unemployed respondents were youth, which corresponds with the aforementioned high youth unemployment rates of 34.96 per cent in Jordan⁷⁹. Although skills misalignment is a major factor contributing to the high rate, another aspect which plays a role is the late retirement age of 60 for men and 55 for women⁸⁰; whereby the longer experienced men and women remain in the job market, the more saturated the competition, which significantly reduces the chances of employment for youth with little to no work experience. Youth unemployment is particularly worrisome for developing countries' economies because there is high potential not being cultivated, which reinstates the importance of prioritizing skills development for youth in this project. When narrowing down the data even further based on youth unemployment by gender, it was found that 40 per cent of unemployed youth are women, which can be attributed to the already much higher unemployment level of women comparatively (28.6 per cent for women, 21.5 per cent for men)⁸¹ and the pre-existing low labor force participation rate of women in Jordan, which was found to be 14 per cent⁸².

Chart 17 below shows that among different educational levels, the highest unemployment rate is among those with a Bachelor's degree; as it stands at 31 per cent. Meanwhile, those who have obtained the Tawjihi have an unemployment rate of 18 per cent (Syrian and Jordanian Tawjihi were treated equally since unemployment rates were the same among both). Those with the highest education credential, a Master's degree, also had a relatively high unemployment rate of 14 per cent. Overall, this data displays a clear disparity between the education received and the skills needed in the market, which is one of the gaps the project aims to smooth out.

Because of the immense degree of skills misalignment present in Jordan, there is greater emphasis on the role of government in leading degree advisement initiatives that will help youth understand labor demand and obtain skills that are currently missing in the Jordanian job market⁸³. As a matter of fact, it is important to delve into other factors that contribute to which degrees individuals choose to obtain as a post-secondary education; like societal norms. Within the Jordanian community, there are norms that may pressure youth into pursuing degrees in either the medical or STEM fields; which is problematic as it creates unequal labor supply to demand in the job market. As a result, unemployment rates go up

⁷⁹ Statista, Unemployment Rate in Jordan, 2020

⁸⁰ SSA, Social Security Programs Throughout the World: Asia and the Pacific, 2010

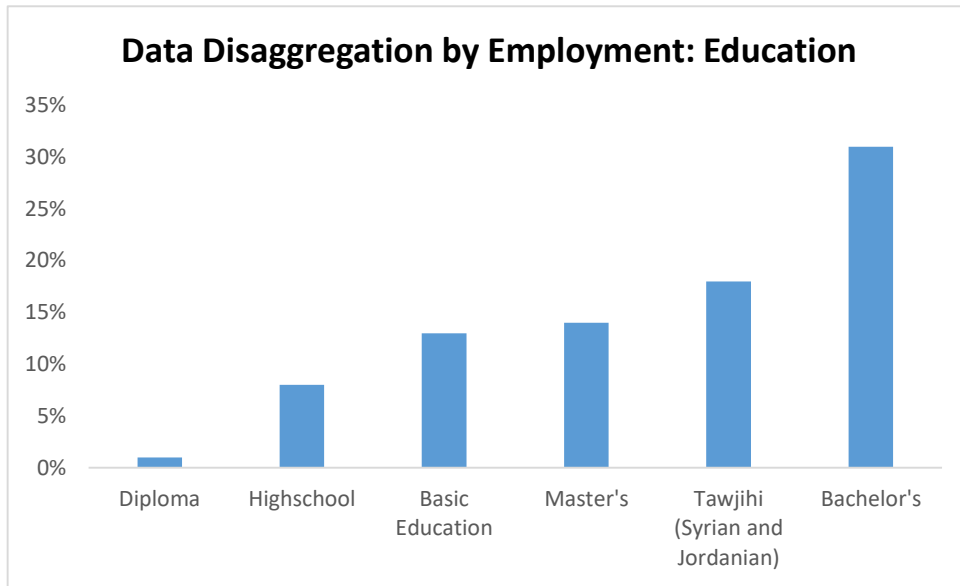
⁸¹ Department of Statistics Jordan, Employment and Unemployment, 2020

⁸² WDI 2017, retrieved in April 2017.

⁸³ UNICEF Jordan, OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH IN JORDAN, February 2019

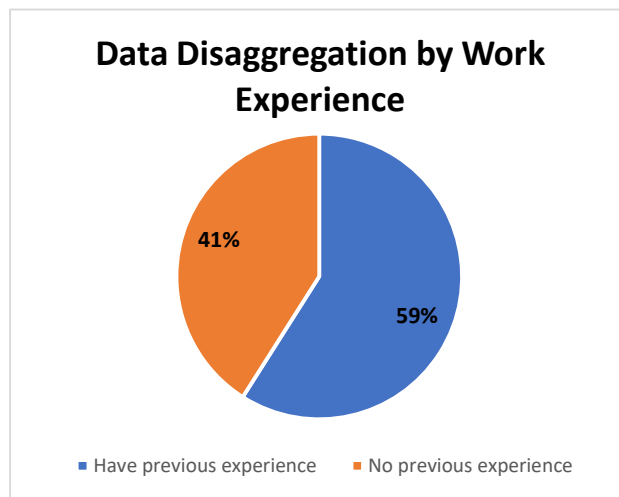
because the labor market is deeply saturated and highly competitive. For this reason, it is pertinent that projects like Skills4Work work with TVET providers in order to target the gaps that are currently present in the Jordanian job market in order to combat this issue.

Chart 17: Employment by Education



According to **Chart 18**, 59 per cent of respondents have mentioned having previous experience, and a multitude of domains were mentioned, the most prominent being commerce, beauty salons, pharmacy reps, productive kitchens, teaching, and engineering. Although, 32 per cent have stated a desire to leave their current job; the exact reasons could not be identified.

Chart 18: Work Experience



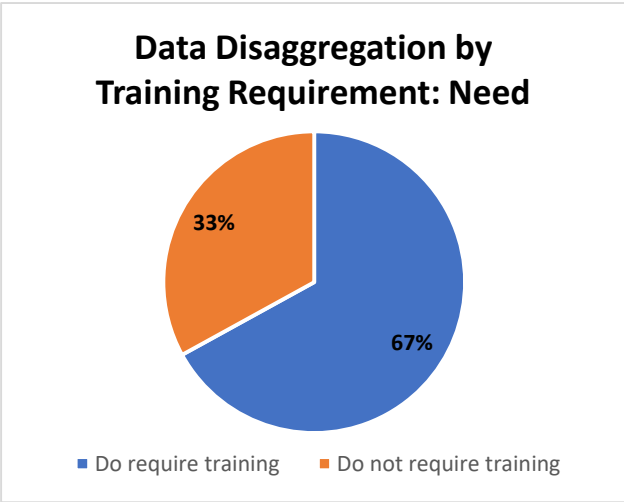
Current work schedules among respondents range from one working day a week to seven. Daily work hours also range from six to twelve. Again, such information is relevant to the project’s future programs because it likely dictates the respondents’ work preferences. For instance, since most of survey respondents are young women, current working hours may be the only hours that fit with their families. Alternatively, such information lends itself to an examination of fair working conditions among the targeted population; for instance, since the Jordanian Labor Laws mandate no more than eight working hours per day⁸⁴, it can be assumed that respondents who work between nine to twelve daily hours with no overtime pay are in the informal sector and have no official contracts.

4.6 Trainings

Assessing respondents’ willingness and need to undergo training is an essential factor for understanding how the selection and hiring process will be conducted. **Chart 19** demonstrates that a clear majority; i.e. 67 per cent or 296 respondents do believe they require training, which indicates that they may feel more inclined to complete the specified trainings since they want to develop their skillset, whereas individuals who do not believe they need any training may not be as willing to take it.

Of those who are currently unemployed, almost all, or 91 per cent, indicated that they do need trainings in order to find a job. This implies awareness among the sample population that they currently struggle from skills misalignment, and shows a willingness to mend that by undertaking the needed trainings.

Chart 19: Need for Training

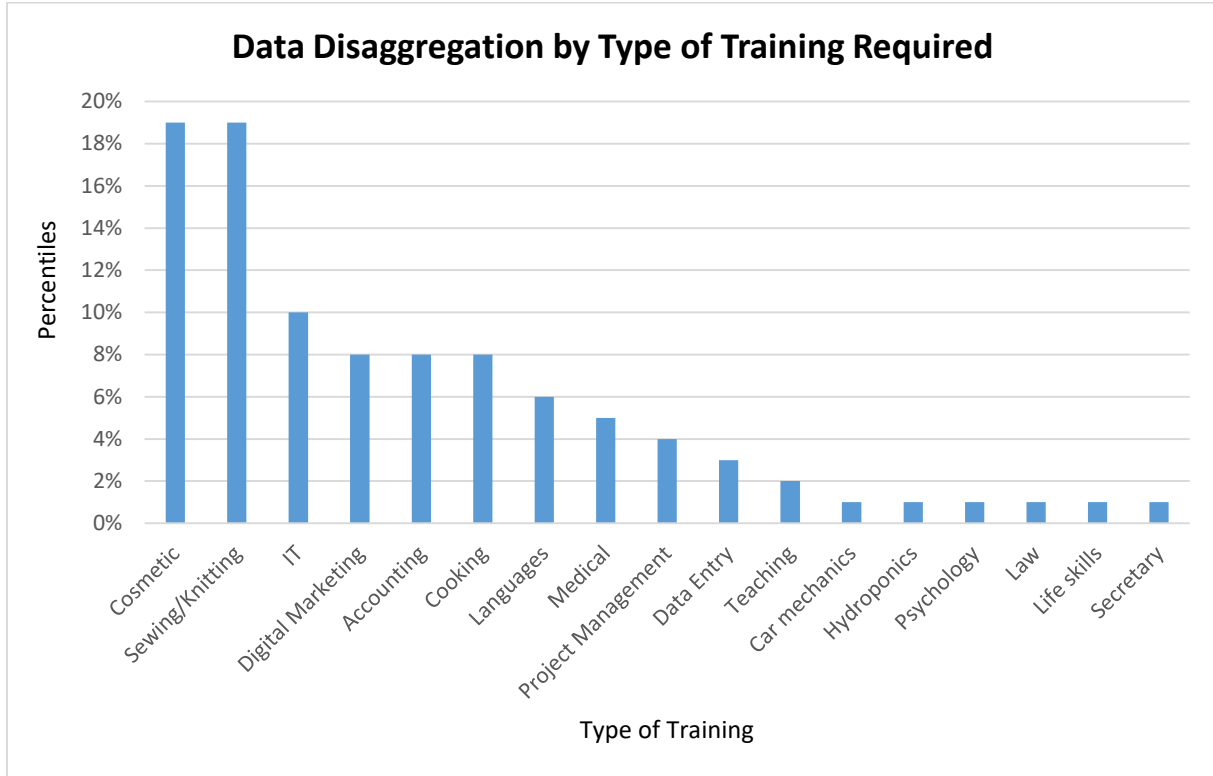


⁸⁴ HG, Rights of the Employee in Jordan, n.d.

For the required type of training, it is highly based on the labor demand that is currently needed in the Jordanian job market. Although the need for training may imply that the respondents lacked any previous work experience, this was untrue as the greater majority of respondents did have past experience; however, not in the same sector they wanted training in. Thus, this also indicates a possible need for improvement and career shifts among the respondents. As shown in **Chart 20**, the most popular types of training demanded included cosmetic (19 per cent), sewing/knitting (19 per cent), and IT (10 per cent). Other popular fields that 8 per cent of respondents chose for each were trainings in digital marketing, accounting, and cooking. Additionally, 6 per cent of respondents said they wanted to learn new languages, 5 per cent requested training in the medical field, 4 per cent in project management, and 3 per cent in data entry. The least popular fields for training were car mechanics, hydroponics, psychology, law, life skills, and secretary; which yielded a meagre 1 per cent of respondents each.

Certain factors played a role in the type of trainings that respondents chose; for instance, the reason why cosmetics and sewing/knitting were easily the most popular are attributed to the vast majority of female respondents; since these sectors are mainly dominated by women. The other determining factor was the belief that these particular fields opened up higher opportunities for work. Overall, the most popular trainings will be considered as the project moves forth, however, the determining factor is largely the trainings which will fulfil existing labor demand; as it is important that the skills obtained from the project programs are aligned with current SME vacancies.

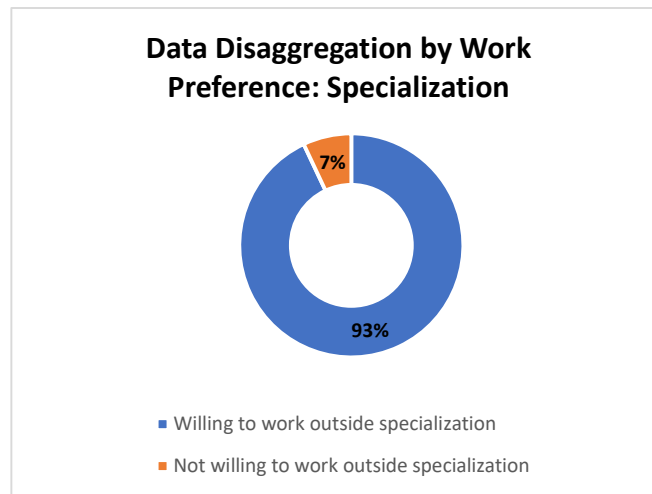
Chart 20: Type of Training Required



4.7 Work Preferences

Although these criteria are not essential deciding factors for beneficiary selection, they are nonetheless important in order to gain a deeper understanding of the type of work respondents are willing to do. As seen in **Chart 21**, almost all (93 per cent) of respondents do not have an issue working in a field outside their specialization; an answer that was likely chosen because the majority of respondents are currently unemployed. As respondents are also willing to undergo trainings, the project will be able to design both the training programs and the type of work without any anticipated difficulty.

Chart 21: Work Specialization

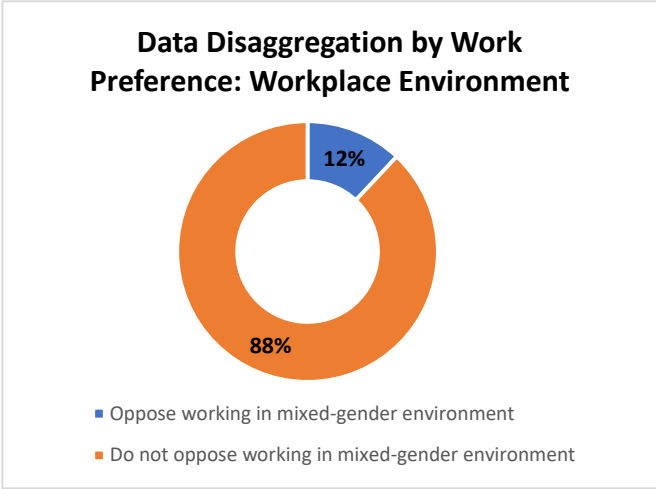


The type of work dynamic preferred by respondents allows for a better understanding on how to make their workplace more comfortable, thereby enabling the respondents to perform better at work, and provide a more suitable work environment. This, in turn, will greatly assist the project team in the allocation of work for the selected beneficiaries. **Chart 22** reflects that a majority of 88 per cent, or 387 respondents, have no problem working in a mixed-gender environment, whereas the remaining 12 per cent do, presumably for cultural and/or religious reasons.

Depending on the line of work, some workplaces in Jordan are gender segregated because the work is generally female or male dominant, therefore it will not be difficult to find a suitable workplace for the opposing minority. As for other workplace components, only 6 per cent of respondents are against wearing uniforms at work (which is mandatory for most manufacturing firms), meanwhile 29 per cent oppose working on a shift schedule. However, such information can present a potential obstacle when moving forward with the job match-making phase of the project, since the main focus is on the industrial sector due to its ease of

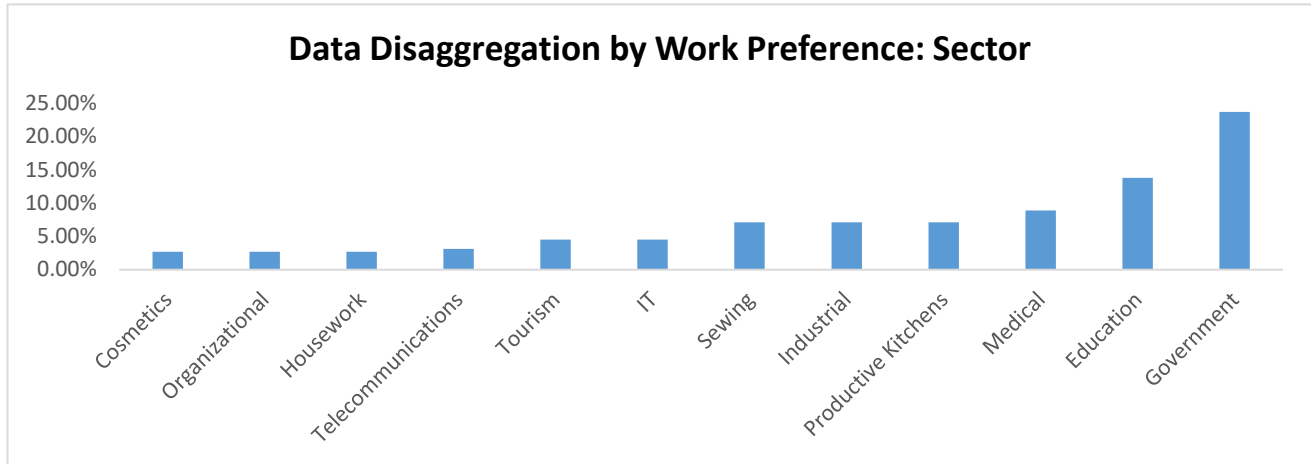
work permit acquisition for Syrians (as will be elaborated in Section 4.3, which means higher flexibility will be needed among the target population in order to accommodate industrial rules and policies. Although, the focus is largely on the industrial sector, the project team will take careful consideration in order to make sure that the rules and policies do not exploit project beneficiaries; especially day laborers who were found to be struggling from unpaid overtime.

Chart 22: Workplace Environment



As seen in **Chart 23**, the preference for work sector differed highly from preferences for trainings. For instance, although 19 per cent of respondents listed a willingness to train in cosmetics, only a small 2.7 per cent expressed an interest in working in the cosmetic sector. The most popular sector preferences for work are jobs in government (23.7 per cent), education (13.8 per cent), and medical (8.9 per cent). The reason why respondents selected different options for trainings in comparison to their earlier answers for which work sector they prefer to work in is likely due to wanting to improve on a skillset that they currently do not possess through trainings, whereas their preferred work sector is related to an array of other factors. Such factors may include sectors' which respondents associate with higher job security and stability, alongside having higher employment opportunities, and a more consistent income stream. It is also related to the field of study that respondents with a Bachelor's degree majored in, as well as which jobs are associated with higher salaries, pension plans, social security coverage, and better working conditions as a whole.

Chart 23: Sector Preference

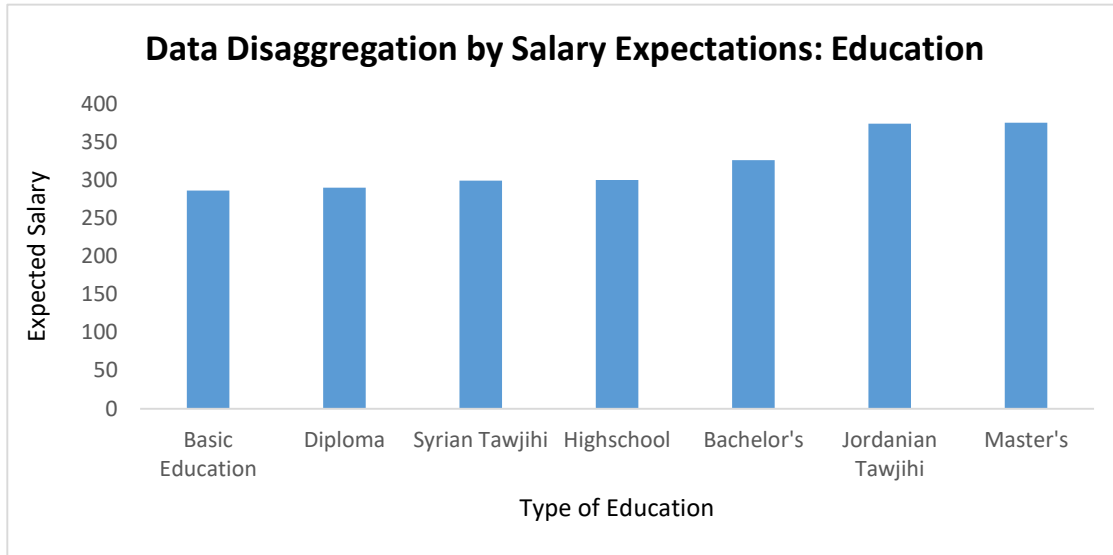


4.8 Salary Expectations

Surprisingly, the data above shows almost no discrepancies in the average expected salary, as all education groups expect an average monthly wage between 200-400JOD. Those with a basic education, naturally have lower salary expectations (avg. of 286JOD) in comparison to those with a Master’s degree, who expect an average of 375JOD. However, the data also demonstrates that respondents who have completed the Jordanian Tawjihi expect 374JOD, higher than the average expected wage for those with a Bachelor’s degree (326JOD). Therefore, there is no clear relationship between education level and salary expectations, which can be attributed to the high level of unemployment among the sample population pushing those with a higher educational attainment to accept a lower salary.

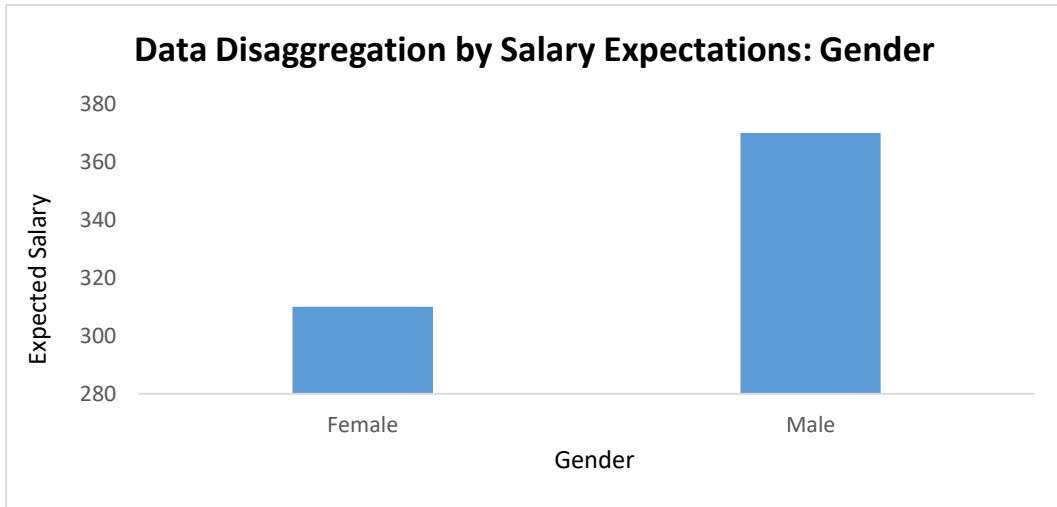
The small discrepancy in average expected wage seen in the chart, is mainly due to the higher employment rates among Tawjihi graduates; as they are more likely to accept blue collar jobs. Most Jordanians with a post-secondary education are willing to settle for an average salary that is only slightly above the national minimum wage in order to have the minimum purchasing power for acquiring basic goods.

Chart 24: Salary Expectation by Education



When comparing salary expectations based on gender as seen in **Chart 25**, there is a larger discrepancy as female respondents had an average expected wage of 310JOD, meanwhile male respondents expect a monthly wage of 370JOD. This gap is particularly interesting as both genders held similar education levels and past work experience, however, it is at par with earlier data in Section 3.2 demonstrated that in female-headed households, the monthly family income was much lower than cases where males were the primary breadwinners. The reason for this prominent wage gap is highly related to the cultural attitudes in Jordanian society; which highlight the difficulty for women to acquire jobs; leaving them unemployed for longer duration, thereby pushing them to settle for lower wages than men. However, since the project aims for equalization and inclusivity for both genders, such data will only be considered to gather insight on the target population rather than as a guideline.

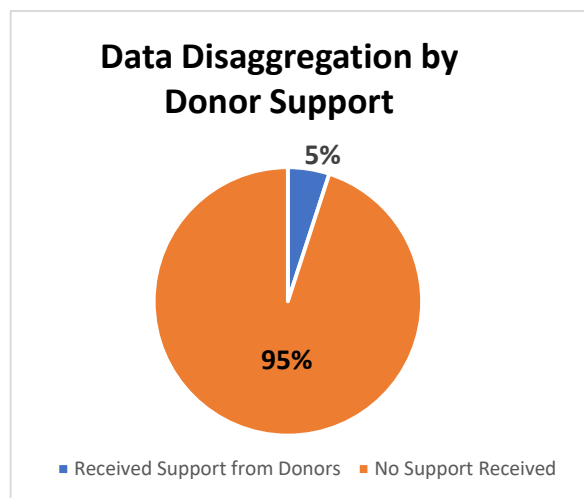
Chart 25: Salary Expectation by Gender



4.9 Donor Support

Typically, lower-income families may receive support from donors in the form of scholarships, bursaries, grants, or loans, due to their refugee status, low-income, and/or position under the national poverty line. Syrian refugees in Jordan typically receive donor support from aid agencies such as the UNHCR upon arrival, however, donor support to host Jordanian communities remains an issue because foreign aid organizations typically prioritize refugee populations. This explains the results shown in **Chart 26**, which demonstrate how a tremendous majority; i.e. 95 per cent, of respondents have not received donor support.

Chart 26: Donor Support



Of the 15 respondents who have received support, the cited organizations were:

Table 2: Donor Support Organizations

Donor Support Organization	Respondent Frequency
Edu-Syria Scholarship	3
Military Scholarship	2
Jaseem Jeish Bursary	2
Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	1
Jordan River	1
Elia Nuqul Foundation	1
American Near East Refugee Aid	1
Grants and Loans	1
Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research Student Support Fund	1
French Development Agency	1

Section 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

From the data analysis presented above, several implications can be deduced with regards to assessing the challenges faced by both Syrian refugees and the Jordanian host community, alongside the barriers that may affect either one of the communities. Garnering such information is extremely vital in order to hold a better grasp on the current situation on the ground, in order to allow the project team to move forth with future studies that assess the specific needs of the target group and tailor the skills development program accordingly.

Even among those who are employed, another issue arises in the domain of high informal employment which leaves workers extremely vulnerable to external shocks; as seen most recently with the COVID-19 lay-off surges. Therefore, there is a high degree of job insecurity present, combined with low wages that are not enough to sustain a decent livelihood, and working conditions that are often exploitative and predatory towards refugees in particular. Additionally, the population does not receive sufficient aid from agencies, and even when they do, it is typically short-term and is exhausted quickly. Therefore, projects that cultivate skills development are a much better investment in the long-run since they teach tangible and intangible skills that will ease the group's job search.

Although obtaining a higher education is typically associated with finding better job opportunities, the data demonstrates that even those who are well-educated among the target group suffer from a high degree of unemployment; particularly Bachelor's or Master's holders. As a result of this, salary expectations do not differ between those who have

different educational levels since the skills mismatch forces them to accept jobs that are well below their skill level and subsequently accept lower wages. Comprehensive research also reflects that women are more disproportionately affected by unemployment, and that women have slightly lower salary expectations than men.

As mentioned above, the problems manifest further with a surge of informal employment among the population, typically because of skills mismatch and the lack of formal employment opportunities. In this case, Syrian refugees historically have been more disproportionately affected because of the obstacles of work permit acquisition. However, although work permit laws have been lax, informal employment remains a massive problem among the Syrian refugees because there are employers who are not willing to pay the necessary fees for work permit applications and instead force the burden onto the refugees, who often do not have the means to pay and complete the application on their own. Therefore, informal employment is seen as an easy way out. For Jordanian host communities, informal work is rising due to the influx of migrant workers who work at a lower wage, which therefore forces them to accept wages lower than the mandated minimum in order to find a way outside unemployment.

While skills misalignment has slight variations in definition among Syrian refugees and Jordanian host populations, its impact remains the same for both, as it paves way for increased informal employment and underemployment. This is especially dangerous during the COVID-19 pandemic as it makes those who are informally employed more at risk of losing their jobs without compensation. However, a good sign is that the target population shows a willingness to undergo vocational trainings that will help foster a path towards formal employment opportunities. Further, to directly counteract rising informal employment in Jordan, the project must work towards contributing to market formalization, primarily through finding ways of increasing sector-specific work permits under the currently-laxed laws, while ensuring that relevant oversight mechanisms are in place to promote decent work conditions and adherence to labor standards, specifically with labor laws that mandate no more than 48 working hours and the national minimum wage. The project can ensure that employers comply with these laws through selecting trusted and reliable SMEs (that will be narrowed down through a comprehensive assessment), and working directly with them to assure that employees are provided with written contracts that clarify their responsibilities, social security, and work requirements clearly.

Generally, women face more challenges than men in the labor market. Although they may have similar qualifications in terms of education, women are generally unemployed for a longer period of time and receive lower pay for the same work. Women also face barriers from traditional beliefs in Arab society that are rooted in sexism, whereby some extreme beliefs are completely against the employment of women (although this has been improving

in recent years), or with other beliefs that limit women from entering traditionally “male-dominated” sectors like construction.

Lastly, taking into consideration all the repercussions COVID-19 has had on the labor market, it is essential to evaluate ways to increase formalization among the workforce in order to protect both Syrian refugees and Jordanian host communities from vulnerability towards the employer and sudden lay-offs. Therefore, there should be an enhanced focus on how to assist Syrian refugees and Jordanian host communities during the changes imposed by COVID-19; for instance, through workshops on where to seek medical treatment if a serious case of the virus is contracted, in addition to referring them to testing centers. Further, the trainings that will be provided must cater to social distancing guidelines (masks, maintaining a safe distance, having sanitization stations). Additionally, a global result of the pandemic was the acceleration of the digital revolution; as much more so than before countries, enterprises, and individuals need to rely on technology in light of social distancing and working from home. This has brought to the surface, the fact that the majority of factory workers are illiterate when it comes to technology, and are unable to use simple platforms (ex: Skype, Zoom, Slack...etc.), which makes it much more difficult to connect with them during lockdown. As such orientation and training courses should be administered to factory workers to assist them in adapting to technological platforms; especially as a second wave of the pandemic is anticipated.

Finally, special consideration must also be given to vulnerable groups; particularly women, youth, and persons with disabilities. This is because data shows that these groups have been at a historical disadvantage when it comes to work opportunities and income levels, thus, they are prioritized as part of the project’s mandate. This can be done through organizing trainings that fall within the sectors that women showed interest in, and making the trainings accessible and inclusive for those with disabilities. Further, the type of job chosen when match-making with SMEs should accommodate, as much as possible, the preferred working hours of the individuals and their specific needs if they are a person with disabilities, for instance.

Annexes

Annex I: Needs Assessment Questionnaire

General Information

Nationality

Age

Birthdate (Day/Month/Year)

Governorate

District/Neighborhood

Gender Female Male

Marital Status Single Married Divorced Widowed

Do you have any

If answered yes, please specify:

Please state the following:

No. of family

Monthly family

No. of working family members?

No. of family members under 18?.....

Are you the main family provider?

What is your family's source of income?

How many females are in your family?.....

Kindly state your city of residence:

Education Information

What is your highest educational attainment level?

- Highschool Diploma (Grade 9 – 12)
- Highschool (Did not pass)
- Jordanian Tawjihi
- Syrian Tawjihi
- Certificate / Major
- Bachelor's or higher / Major

Do you currently have a scholarship/donor support from other organizations?

- Yes No

If yes, please state the name of the organization and program:

Are you currently studying?

- Yes No

Work Information

Are you currently working? Yes No

Work hours: from until

No. of working days:

Would you like to continue your current work? Yes No

Are you currently registered with social security? Yes No

Do you have previous work experience? Yes No

Which sector do you currently work in? Yes No

If you are unemployed, do you think you need training to find a job? Yes No

What line of work would you like to specialize in?.....

Which industry would you like to work in?.....

Do you have an issue with wearing uniforms at work? Yes No

Do you mind working in a sector that differs from your area of expertise? Yes No

Do you mind working in a mixed-gender workplace? Yes No

Why did you choose your particular line of work?

What are your salary expectations?

Do you mind working in shifts? Yes No

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