



International
Labour
Organization

LESSONS LEARNED AND EMERGING GOOD PRACTICES

OF ILO'S SYRIA CRISIS RESPONSE
IN JORDAN AND LEBANON





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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

3RP	Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
EIIP	Employment-Intensive Infrastructure Programme
FAFO	Norwegian Institute for Research
FCO	UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office
GFJTU	General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions
GoJ	Government of Jordan
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPEC	International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour
KfW	German Development Bank
JCI	Jordan Chamber of Industry
MoL	Ministry of Labour
MoSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
MPWH	Ministry of Public Works and Housing
NET	National Employment and Training
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
P&B	ILO's Programme and Budget
RBSA	Regular Budget Supplementary Account
ROAS	ILO Regional Office for Arab States
SCI	Save the Children International
RoO	Rules of Origin
RPL	recognition of prior learning
3RP	UN Inter-Agency Syria Regional Response Plan
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education Training
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNPF	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund

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FOREWORD

The Syrian refugee crisis represents one of the largest, most protracted and complex humanitarian emergencies of modern times. Since 2011, the Syrian conflict has resulted in an estimated 5.6 million Syrians seeking refuge in neighboring countries. Lebanon and Jordan host the largest numbers of registered refugees per capita in the world.

ILO adopted in 2016 the Guiding principles on the access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market¹. In order to operationalize these principles, within the framework of the Regional Refugee Response and Resilience Plan (3RP), the Jordan Response Plan, and the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP), the ILO Regional Office for Arab states has adopted a development-focused and employment-driven strategy to support host communities and refugees in Jordan and Lebanon. Embedded in the principles of decent work, the ILO strategy builds on its core mandate to promote employment, social dialogue, social protection and international labour standards.

This report synthesizes the lessons learned and emerging good practices from the ILO ROAS interventions to promote decent work amongst Syrian refugees and host communities. Given the magnitude of the crisis and importance of the regional response, this report constitutes a useful knowledge tool for the Office, as well as constituents and stakeholders to contribute to building resilience and long term economic and social development of refugees and host communities in similar crisis situations. The report is also expected to provide useful insights for the implementation of the soon to be adopted Global Compact for Refugees.

Ruba Jaradat
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Regional Director for Arab States



1 See http://ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_protect/@protrav/@migrant/documents/genericdocument/wcms_536440.pdf

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INTRODUCTION

THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS IN A NUTSHELL

UNTIL AUGUST 2018, THERE WERE 5.6 MILLION SYRIAN REFUGEES, 63.3 PER CENT IN TURKEY, 17.4 PER CENT IN LEBANON AND 11.9 PER CENT IN JORDAN [UNHCR].

KEY INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL COMMITMENTS

The Syrian refugee crisis represents one of the largest, most protracted and complex humanitarian emergencies of modern times. Since 2011, the Syrian conflict has resulted in an estimated 5.6 million Syrians seeking refuge in neighbouring countries. Some 47 per cent are under 18 years old and 48 per cent are women², who live primarily in urban, peri-urban and rural areas, with only 10 per cent living in camps³. Lebanon and Jordan host the largest numbers of registered refugees per capita in the world. In Lebanon, one in five people is a refugee, while in Jordan it is one in 15. In both countries, nearly 80 per cent of Syrian refugees living outside camps are living below the poverty line⁴. Host communities and refugees in Jordan and Lebanon face a myriad of socioeconomic pressures stemming from the refugee crisis, including:

- competition for lower-skilled jobs between local workers, migrant workers and Syrian refugees, and deteriorating working conditions;
- a rise in demand for consumer goods and services which exerts upward pressure on prices;
- a decrease in access and quality of public services, including utilities, infrastructure, healthcare and education;
- growth in informal employment, increased exploitation and unacceptable forms of work, particularly for women and children – including child labour, child marriage, trafficking and forced labour; and
- rising social tensions and lower social cohesion among refugee and host communities.

THE REGIONAL REFUGEE AND RESILIENCE PLAN (3RP)

By 2013, a development crisis emerged alongside the humanitarian crisis, and the international community agreed that development assistance would be needed to support both refugees and citizens of host nations throughout the region. The integration of humanitarian and development efforts was formalized in 2014 with the Strategic Response Plan (SRP) for Syria and the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), which focused on alleviating the suffering of those most vulnerable, as well as addressing basic needs and preventing large numbers of refugees from falling deeper into poverty. Longer-term interventions were designed to bolster the resilience of refugee and host communities, while enhancing the capacity of national systems. The 3RP continues to be a nationally led process, incorporating in full the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP),

2 UNHCR, Update August 16 2018: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria>

3 3RP. (2018). p.6.

4 3RP. (2017).

2017-2020), the [Jordan Response Plan \(JRP, 2017-2019\)](#), the Iraq SRP, and country responses in Turkey and Egypt. Together, these constitute the strategic partnership mechanisms between governments, donors, UN agencies and NGOs for the development of a comprehensive resilience-strengthening and development response to the impacts of the Syrian crisis.

THE LONDON INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE (FEBRUARY 2016)

Growth, resilience and economic stability were at the heart of the “Supporting Syria and the Region” conference (London, UK, 4 February 2016). The conference placed a spotlight on the critical role of decent work in the intervention strategy, highlighting the nexus between humanitarian action and development cooperation. The outcome of the London Conference has played a particularly significant role in reinforcing the ILO’s approach in addressing the impact of large movements of refugees in Jordan and beyond on the labour market⁵.

During the London Conference, the Government of Jordan signed the Jordan Compact and agreed to boost employment and accommodate Syrian refugees into the labour market with 200,000 jobs for Syrian refugees in return for improved access to the European market, increased investment and soft loans. The Government of Lebanon signed Lebanon’s Statement of Intent, whereby it pledged to reduce the dependence of vulnerable people on aid and increase the productivity and income of local communities.

Two other international conferences specific to the Syrian crisis were held in January and April 2017: (1) the Helsinki conference on supporting Syrians, and (2) the first Brussels conference on supporting the future of Syria and the region. In April 2018, a second conference was organized in Brussels, co-chaired by the European Union and the UN, which succeeded in mobilising aid to Syrians inside the country as well as neighbouring countries, including aid for host communities, through pledges totalling US\$4.4 billion (€3.5 billion) for 2018, as well as multi-year pledges of \$3.4 billion (€2.7 billion) for 2019-2020⁶.

THE NEW YORK DECLARATION FOR REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

At the United Nations Summit for Refugees and Migrants hosted by the General Assembly in New York in September 2016, member States unanimously adopted the “[New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants](#)”, which strongly affirmed the principles, standards and practices of the international refugee regime. The Declaration includes Annex I, the “comprehensive refugee response framework” (CRRF). It calls upon the UNHCR to launch the application of this framework to a range of refugee situations and, based on the learning outcomes of these, to develop the **Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) in 2018**. It also calls for a process driven by member States to develop a Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, which is supposed to cover the situation of migrants in vulnerable situations (who often move together with refugees in mixed flows), as well as migrants within countries in crisis.

5 ILO, (2016h)

6 <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-ministerial-meetings/2018/04/24-25/>

ILO'S RESPONSE: AN EMPLOYMENT-DRIVEN STRATEGY EMBEDDED INTO NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE CRISIS RESPONSE STRATEGIES

The mandate of the ILO enables it to play an important role in the nexus between humanitarian aid and development, which is often engaged in resilience-focused interventions. With its tripartite and membership-based structure, standards and the long history of technical support to constituents in target countries, the ILO is uniquely positioned to provide a normative framework for application in the context of building resilience. The ILO takes a long-term approach to livelihoods and employment creation though fostering a sense of ownership among national counterparts. In the case of Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon, the need for assistance is on a large scale, with pressure on social cohesion because of high levels of unemployment and slow economic growth.

In this framework, the ILO and UNHCR signed a memorandum of understanding in 2016 and defined a joint action plan to promote long-term decent employment opportunities for refugees and other forcibly displaced persons.

In 2016, the ILO also developed the guiding principles on the access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market (see box 1), which was subsequently adopted by its governing body. It sets out core principles to support member States on the access of refugees and other forcibly displaced people to the labour market and assist those members affected by such situations, particularly frontline states affected by large movements, and aims to ensure responses that meet the needs and expectations of all stakeholders - host, refugee and forcibly displaced communities.

BOX 1: ILO'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON THE ACCESS OF REFUGEES AND OTHER FORCIBLY DISPLACED PERSONS TO THE LABOUR MARKET (2016) includes:

- a. Governance frameworks on access to labour markets;
- b. Economic and employment policies for inclusive labour markets;
- c. Labour rights and equality of opportunity and treatment;
- d. Partnership, coordination and coherence;
- e. Voluntary repatriation and reintegration of returnees;
- f. Additional pathways for labour mobility.

Furthermore, as part of the wider UN, regional and national responses to the refugee crisis (such as the 3RP 2017-2018), the ILO has been engaged in the regional refugee response to the Syrian crisis in Jordan and Lebanon, adopting a cross-cutting development-focused strategy through three interlinked key pillars:



METHODOLOGY: SELECTION CRITERIA

Through a desk review of secondary data (project reports and evaluations), consultations with relevant technical staff and interviews with key stakeholders in Amman and Beirut, a series of emerging good practices and lessons learned were selected and arranged thematically, based on the following criteria:

- **EFFECTIVE AND SUCCESSFUL.** A “good practice” is one that has proven its strategic relevance as the most effective way of achieving a specific objective and oriented towards having a **positive impact** on individuals and/or communities in the medium and longer terms.
- **INNOVATIVE.** What is special about the practice that makes it of potential interest to others?
- **GENDER-SENSITIVE.** A description of the practice must show how stakeholders – men and women – involved in the process were able to improve their employment and livelihoods.
- **FEASIBLE.** It is easy to learn and implement.
- **PARTICIPATORY.** It is essential that participatory approaches support a joint sense of ownership of decisions and actions. Special emphasis should be given to the inclusion of social partners.
- **SUSTAINABLE.** Is the practice and/or its benefits likely to continue in some way, and continue to be effective over the medium to long term? Does it contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development? Does it contain a green aspect?
- **REPLICABLE AND ADAPTABLE.** A “good practice” should be replicable and adaptable to similar objectives in a variety of situations.

BOX 2: ILO AND CRISIS RESPONSE

The ILO has responded to conflicts and disasters since its foundation, and ever since has highlighted the role of socioeconomic policies and programmes in peacebuilding and recovery. The concept of lasting peace flowing from social justice was the most evocative expression of the ILO’s role in contributing to peace, and the ILO received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1969 on the occasion of its 50th anniversary. The Declaration of Philadelphia, and subsequent declarations, including the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998) and the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization (2008), all embody this approach.

[Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 \(No. 205\)](#)

Adopted at the 106th International Labour Conference (ILC) in 2017, it updates the guidance of the earlier ILO Recommendation adopted in 1944, to provide responses to contemporary crisis situations arising from conflicts and disasters. It also widens the focus of the standard on reconstruction and recovery to include prevention and preparedness. The new standard provides a unique normative framework focusing on the world of work related measures to prevent and respond to the devastating effects of conflicts and disasters on economies and societies, paying special attention to vulnerable population groups, such as children, young people, women and displaced people. Section XI relates to refugees and returnees especially refugees’ access to labour markets.

ILO'S PROGRAMME ON JOBS FOR PEACE AND RESILIENCE

To better equip the ILO to work in fragile situations, the Director-General decided in 2015, to create a development cooperation flagship programme called the "Jobs for Peace and Resilience". It is designed as an employment-generation programme for conflict-affected and disaster-prone countries. It will place particular importance on the needs of unemployed, underemployed, and low-skilled young people, who are particularly susceptible to the kind of social exclusion that can trigger social and political instability.

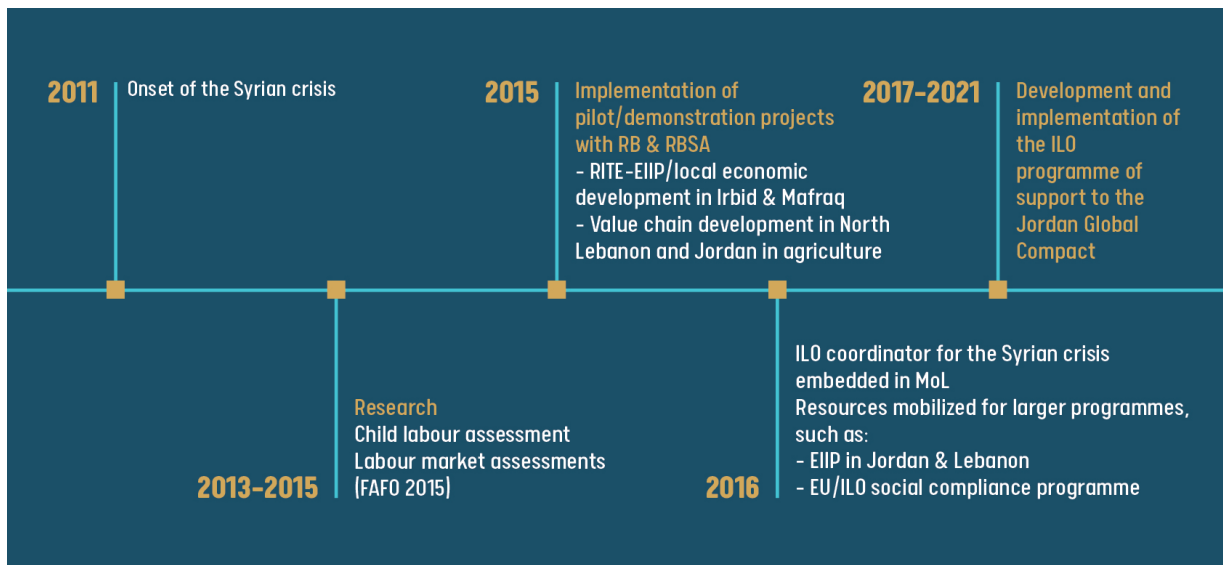
PILLAR I

SUPPORT EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY
DEVELOPMENT AND STRENGTHEN
INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES FOR A WELL-
COORDINATED, EMPLOYMENT-RICH
NATIONAL RESPONSE



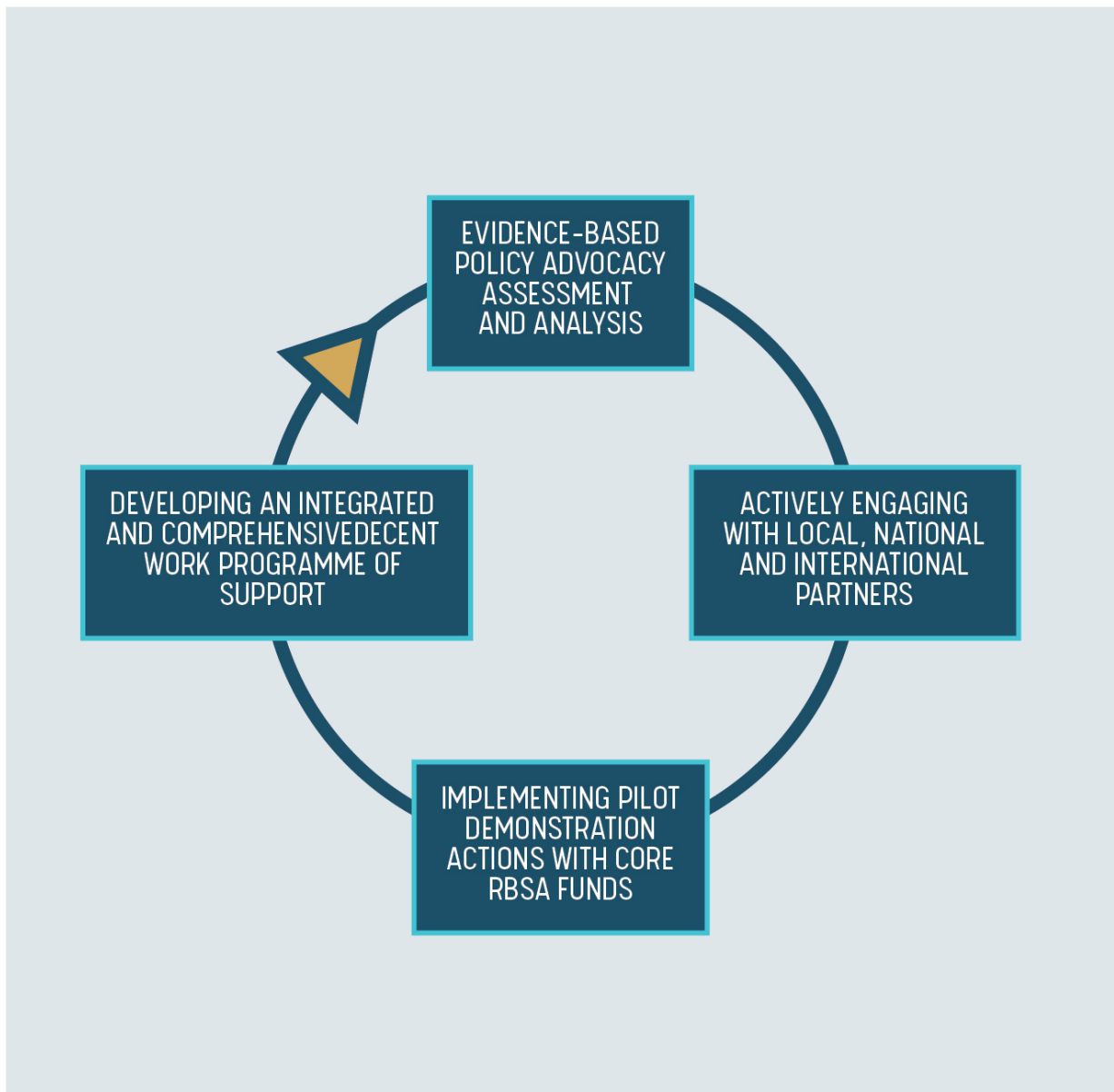
1.1 ILO'S STRATEGIC APPROACH TO POSITION THE DECENT WORK AGENDA

This section of emerging good practices relates to ILO intervention processes in Jordan and Lebanon. These practices respond to the Syrian refugee crisis in a “downstream/upstream” approach using pilot demonstration projects (funded 2014–2016), and implement a comprehensive and integrated Programme of Support (PoS) to the Jordan Compact 2017–2021. Some actions listed here are further developed as specific emerging good practices in the following thematic sections:



The ILO may not always be seen as an obvious partner of choice for policy-makers in the international community when it comes to responding to crises. Too often, the quality of employment is seen as a secondary consideration to the policy discussions on livelihoods, and the implementation capacity of the organization is also questioned.

Therefore, the ILO needed to position the Decent Work Agenda among the national and international communities in Jordan and Lebanon, promoting a long-term strategy from the onset of the Syrian refugee crisis, to move as quickly as possible away from emergency relief work towards providing what people need most: dignity, security and self-reliance. Key to the strategy’s success was the persistent advocacy that decent work deficits for any population – refugees included – on an already heavily segmented labour market will undermine employment outcomes for all, and risk creating social tensions and unrest.



Concretely, in both Jordan and Lebanon and as part of the wider UN response to the Syrian refugee crisis, from 2013 the ILO allocated flexible core funding, mainly from the Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA), has been used to:

- Implement assessments and analysis to generate evidence for policy advocacy;
- Actively engage with local, national and international partners; and
- Launch small-scale demonstration projects.

In Jordan, this approach led to the development of an ILO comprehensive and integrated PoS (2017–2021).

1.1.1 CONDUCTING EARLY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS FOR EVIDENCE- BASED POLICY ADVOCACY

Data on the impact of the Syrian crisis on the Jordanian and Lebanese labour market were limited until 2015. Therefore, the ILO advocated among national and international actors to build knowledge and, in partnership with the Oslo-based Norwegian Institute for Research (FAFO) Institute for Applied International Studies, carried out an assessment on the impact of the Syrian refugees on the Jordanian labour market (2015)⁷. The assessment illuminated the employment profile of Syrian refugees in Jordan and was considered by many stakeholders as an important study in closing the knowledge gap. It directly influenced the interventions and policy messages of the ILO and others donors⁸.

In addition, two child labour assessments were carried out to determine the nature, pattern, distribution, dynamics and causes of child labour in the informal agricultural and urban sectors for Jordanians and Syrian refugees. Recommendations were made regarding policy options, including regulations and protective measures to tackle child labour⁹.

BOX 3: KEY ILO RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS ON ACCESS TO THE LABOUR MARKET FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES, MIGRANTS AND HOST COMMUNITY WORKERS (2017):

In June 2017, the ILO, in close collaboration with the UNHCR launched an Impact assessment on work permits and employment of Syrian refugees in Jordan, covering the governorates of Amman, Irbid, Mafrq and Zarqa in Jordan. It explored the procedural difficulties and opportunities that Syrian workers face, as well as the costs and benefits of having work permits. In cases where Syrian workers did not have permits, it sought to understand the institutional, economic and personal barriers that prevented them from obtaining them.

Also in 2017, the ILO released an in-depth report: A challenging market becomes more challenging: Jordanian workers, migrant workers and refugees in the Jordanian labour market, which laid out potential solutions to the diverse and complex challenges facing three competing groups in Jordan's strained labour market - Jordanians, migrants and Syrian refugees.

7 Stave, Svein, & Hillesund, S. (ILO/FAFO 2015)

8 ILO, (2017f).

9 ILO, (2014b, 2014c).

1.1.2 ENGAGING WITH LOCAL, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

The ILO takes a long-term approach to livelihoods and employment-creation through creating a sense of ownership among its national counterparts. Nevertheless, the ILO's role in post-crisis environments is not always well understood, and the ILO has had to engage in advocacy work to highlight how the Decent Work Agenda provides a comparative advantage for UN agencies and NGOs working on humanitarian and development assistance for refugees. Indeed, access to decent work is one of the ILO's key differentiators with respect to other development actors that provide employment or income-generating opportunities.

The ILO has been involved in institutional discussions on sustainable and effective responses to support the access of refugees (and other forcibly displaced persons) to the labour market in Jordan and Lebanon. As a result, the ILO in Jordan is co-facilitating (with UNDP) the livelihoods task force, chaired by the Ministry of Labour (MoL), to implement the Jordan Response Plan. This plan seeks to address labour market challenges, such as high unemployment (especially among people), increasing levels of informalization, and child labour.

Furthermore, the ILO can assist other UN organizations in mainstreaming the Decent Work approach into their programmes and actions. For example, in August 2017, Better Work Jordan participated in the UNHCR's recruitment event in Irbid and gave guidance on issues related to workers' rights and responsibilities, as well the programme's role in ensuring decent conditions in the workplace.

1.1.3 IMPLEMENTING SMALL-SCALE DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS WITH CORE FUNDING (RBSA) FOR UP-SCALING

Small-scale projects with core funding (RBSA) were run in both Jordan and Lebanon (2014–2017) on value chain development in the agricultural sector (Emerging good practices 3.2.1) and pilot employment intensive programmes (Emerging good practice 3.1.1), through the maintenance and rehabilitation of roads and farmlands, irrigation and terracing works. The ILO core-funded interventions also supported implementation of the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) in Jordan through their focus on enhancing employment opportunities as a response to the Syrian crisis, such as facilitating work permits in specified sectors in line with Jordanian labour regulations (see Emerging good practice 2.1.2).

The ground level (downstream) pilot interventions have fed useful first-hand information into evidence-based advocacy efforts (upstream). These helped to test the Decent Work approach on the ground in order to scale up the interventions and mobilize resources from a large set of donors, while engaging broader policy issues based on concrete experiences¹⁰, such as employment-intensive programmes (EIIPs)¹¹ in both Jordan and Lebanon. The local economic development projects implemented in Jordan and Lebanon for demonstration purposes were entry points for promoting engagement and trust with multilateral and bilateral partners (Emerging good practice 3.2.1).

1.1.4 DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING AN INTEGRATED ILO PROGRAMME OF SUPPORT (POS) TO THE GLOBAL COMPACT IN JORDAN (2018-2016)

In 2016, the ILO conducted a high-level strategic analysis of its future response to the Syrian refugee crisis and developed a comprehensive and integrated PoS to the Jordan Compact covering the period 2017–2021. It was built on the ILO's established reliable and solid relationship with the Government of Jordan since 2011, and the experiences gained under the RBSA funding period.

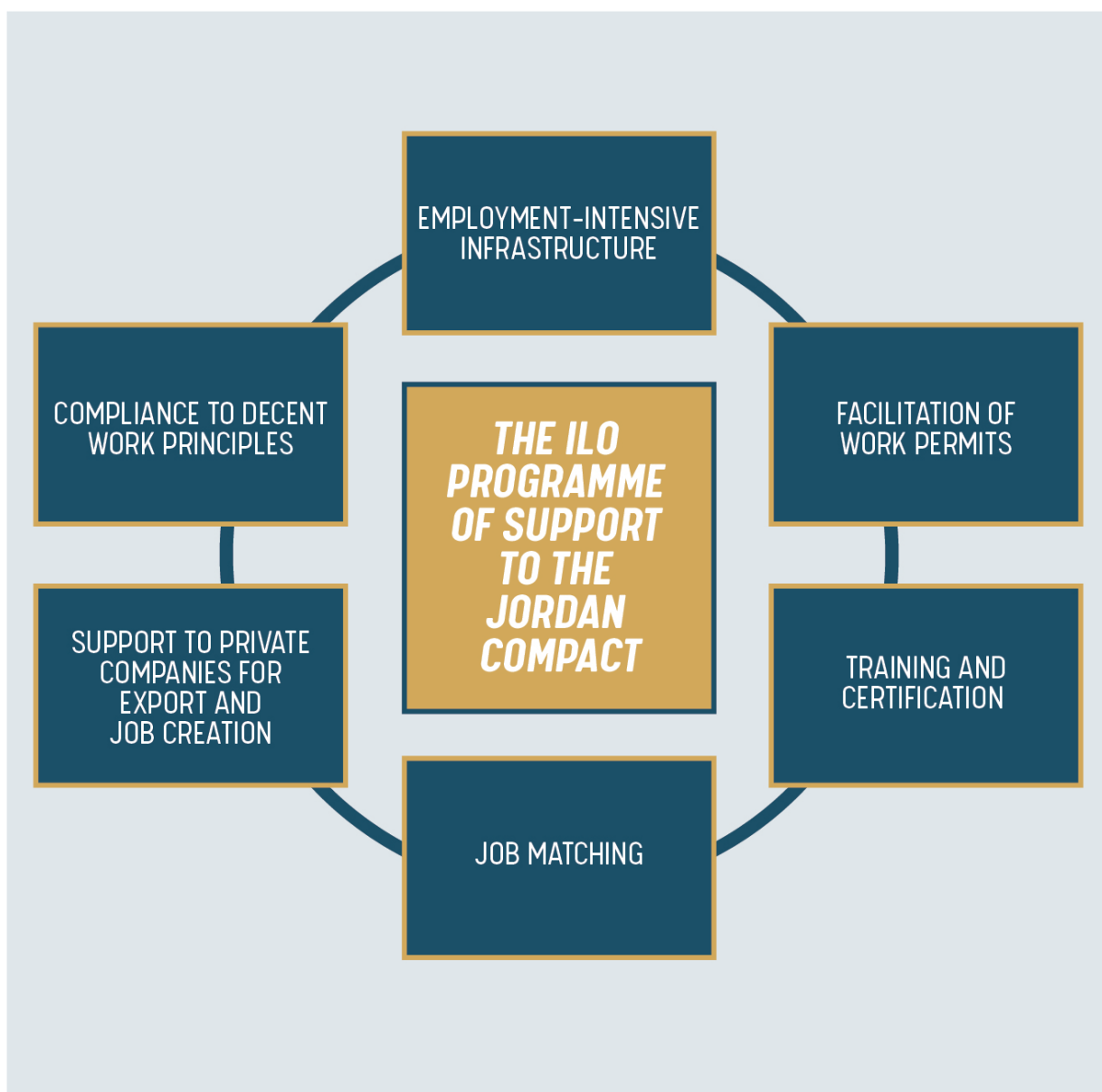
The PoS to the Jordan Compact tackles both the long-term decent work deficits of the country, as well as the immediate challenges the country is facing because of the refugee crisis. It looks at the labour market in its entirety – not only with reference to refugees but also to the Jordanian

¹⁰ ILO, (2017g).

¹¹ See section 3 for more details.

and migrant workforces. It prioritizes job creation as the most important objective, but also acknowledges that the target of 200,000 jobs for Syrians will be reached through the formalization of jobs in the agriculture and construction sectors, and the replacement of migrant workers. For the ILO, the PoS to the Jordan Compact is embedded in a more holistic and long-term approach, addressing labour market challenges as a whole. Certain fundamental principles underpin the operations of the ILO, including rights at work, international labour standards, social dialogue and partnership, gender equality, non-discrimination and equal treatment. The PoS provides a strong direction for ILO's future work by focusing on labour market governance, improved private sector productivity, and immediate job creation for Syrian refugees and Jordanians.

The Programme is currently functioning as an integrated system of interrelated projects funded by six donors, including Germany, the European Union, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States for the period 2016-2019. Several emerging good practices from Jordan illustrated in this publication are being implemented through the PoS project.



1.1.5 LESSONS LEARNED

- **EARLY INVOLVEMENT WITH THE ILO'S OWN RESOURCES IS CRUCIAL AND SHOULD BE USED TO FOCUS ON EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY ADVOCACY ON DECENT EMPLOYMENT.** The ILO has a key role to play in any refugee crisis response but must be present from the beginning to position the Decent Work Agenda through a combination of downstream (micro level) and upstream (macro level) interventions. The community-level demonstration interventions allow the ILO to develop and advocate evidence-based policy changes at the national level. Although the ILO's involvement in the Syrian refugee crisis came late both in Jordan and Lebanon, the interventions between 2013 and 2016 (mainly funded by RBSA) nevertheless positioned the ILO as an actor trusted by both government and donors. In particular, it identified employment opportunities for Syrian workers and economic opportunities for host communities.
- **THE ILO TRIPARTITE STRUCTURE AND NORMATIVE SETTING PLACES IT IN A UNIQUE POSITION IN THE NEXUS BETWEEN HUMANITARIAN ACTION AND DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION.** The ILO's privileged relationship with the Ministry of Labour (MoL) and its social partners contribute to efficient policy advocacy.
- **COLLABORATING WITH UN INTER-AGENCY WORKING GROUPS AND CLUSTERS ON LIVELIHOODS AND CONTRIBUTING TO NATIONAL RESILIENCE PLANS.** Supporting access to decent work is the ILO's key differentiator compared with other development partners. Conducting labour market assessments is a key approach to mainstreaming the Decent Work Agenda across sectors and interventions by development partners¹².
- **PROMOTING A COMPREHENSIVE EMPLOYMENT POLICY FRAMEWORK SUCH AS THE POS.** The ILO complements **downstream** demonstration interventions with **upstream** institutional and complementary, mutually supportive, policy measures – a piecemeal approach to employment creation is neither sufficient nor sustainable. The PoS to the Jordan Compact is the roadmap for future ILO actions to ensure coherence. While donor support is a positive result, the ILO should avoid developing and implementing scattered projects, and instead promote regional and national strategies and programmes to enhance the sustainability and effectiveness of ILO's work. It is, therefore, important to develop a pragmatic and balanced approach between being reactive to donors' demands, and proactive in shaping donors' agendas. One should not exclude the other.

12 ILO, (2018a)

PILLAR II

STRENGTHEN LABOUR MARKET
GOVERNANCE FOR IMPROVED
COMPLIANCE WITH DECENT WORK
PRINCIPLES, INCLUDING THE
ELIMINATION OF CHILD LABOUR



2.1 FACILITATING ACCESS TO THE LABOUR MARKET IN JORDAN

SOME CHALLENGES

50 PER CENT OF JORDANIAN WORKERS AND 99 PER CENT OF SYRIAN REFUGEE WORKERS WORK IN THE INFORMAL ECONOMY (ILO, 2015).

ONLY 51 PER CENT OF SYRIAN MEN (AND 7 PER CENT OF WOMEN) WHO LIVE OUTSIDE REFUGEE CAMPS PARTICIPATE IN THE JORDANIAN LABOUR MARKET.

Addressing the complex issue of refugees' access to the labour market raises a number of challenges. Existing bilateral agreements with Syria, as well as regulatory frameworks for migrant workers, need to be adapted in the context of refugees. Jordan is neither a signatory to the [UNHCR 1951 Refugee Convention](#), nor its 1967 Protocol, and still lacks domestic refugee legislation and policy that would outline concrete measures and provisions for the protection for its refugee population. Furthermore, Jordan was already facing challenges in terms of quality and quantity of employment – especially for young people – prior to the crisis.

Due to the challenges facing Syrian refugees in accessing the labour market since the outset of the crisis, most still seek informal work, working longer hours for lower wages, usually without any written contract or social protections. Furthermore, many refugees fear being caught by the authorities and then deported to a camp or back to Syria. Also, Syrians who receive benefits from the UNHCR tend to avoid formal employment for fear that formal paid employment could result in losing such entitlements¹³.

Foreign nationals do not have equal access to the Jordanian labour market. The Labour Code (Art. 12) states that they are only able to participate in employment if they have qualifications that are not readily available in the Jordanian labour market, or if they are occupying jobs for which there is a surplus demand.

Under normal circumstances, work permits are applied for and delivered through employers and become invalid if workers change employers or job title. Furthermore, all applications for a work permit must be accompanied by a copy of the work contract, valid passport and the associated employer's business license and social security registration. Consequently, prior to the adoption of the Jordan Compact, Syrians either did not apply for work permits or were denied, leading most of them to engage in informal work without work permits¹⁴. Employers were also required to pay for a worker's permit, although in practice the workers ended up paying for them.

The 2016 London Conference was a game changer for this debate. Following a commitment by the Government to open the labour market, the Government of Jordan pledged to create 200,000 jobs for Syrian refugees in exchange for preferential access to European markets, grants and concessional loans to support the Jordan Response Plan. To

13 ILO/KfW study on labour wages for EIIP, p.32; ILO, London Syria evaluation report, May 2018.

14 KfW/ILO. Wage rate and labour supply study in Mafraq and Irbid Governates, Final report, January 2017.

2.1.1 EVIDENCE- BASED POLICY ADVOCACY AND STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES

help deliver on its commitments, in December 2016 the Government of Jordan amended work permit procedures and regulations to allow Syrian refugees access to flexible work permits through agricultural cooperatives. The agriculture sector was the first sector selected as it was deemed to hold little interest for Jordanians, as agricultural work was already carried out primarily by migrant workers. Nonetheless, flexible work permits represented a major policy change for Jordan, foregoing the requirement that work permits be tied to a single employer and enabling workers to move between employers in the context of seasonal labour demand.

STRATEGY

In order to address the challenges facing refugees and host communities in their search for work and livelihoods in Jordan, the ILO's initial focus was to conduct research to identify the impact of refugees' presence in the labour market, and investigate the potential for formalizing their work (see Emerging good practice 1.1). Based on the FAFO/ILO research recommendation¹⁵, the ILO then advocated for a number of regulatory reforms to the MoL to support the implementation of the Jordan Compact. As work permits in the agriculture sector were successful, the ILO supported the MoL with analysis as it planned to open additional sectors to Syrians without eroding the employment of Jordanians. It was agreed to open the construction sector for Syrians in 2017.

The ILO supported the Government in meeting its obligation to the Jordan Compact with respect to work permits while contributing to the PoS objectives and maintaining Decent Work principles. Initially, and in coordination with ILO specialists, an ILO Refugee Response Coordinator was placed within the MoL to facilitate advocacy work.

PROGRESS

The ILO has engaged with key national institutions, such as the MoL, at both the national and local levels, and with workers' and employers' organizations. The ILO Decent Work Country Team's continuous support has also allowed for sustained efforts in engaging with key departments to change requirements to access the labour market by Syrian refugees, strengthening the capacity of the labour inspectorate, and engaging with Decent Work principles for both Syrian and Jordanian workers. Based on evidence gathered in-country, this strategy has contributed to change within the MoL that was most clearly reflected in policy changes vis-à-vis Syrian refugee workers obtaining more work permits in the agricultural and construction sectors¹⁶.

Continuous technical support from the ILO Decent Work Country Team and the presence of the ILO's Refugee Response Coordinator within the MoL, have contributed to the development of a relationship of trust between MoL, social partners and the ILO. It has also allowed for sustained efforts in engaging key departments to advocate for change around access to the labour market for Syrian refugees, strengthening the capacity of the labour inspectorate, and instilling Decent Work principles for both Syrian and Jordanian workers.

This was also reflected in a number of policy decisions taken by the MoL in 2017 to grant Syrians work permits and to delink permits to a specific

15 Stave, Svein, & Hillesund, S. (ILO/FAFO 2015).

16 ILO. (2018b).

2.1.2 FACILITATING THE ISSUANCE OF WORK PERMITS IN KEY SECTORS

employer in other sectors, as well as¹⁷:

- Extension of the grace period till June 2018 for fees and refraining from deporting undocumented workers from camps;
- Allowing Syrians inside camps to access work permits and work outside camps;
- Allowing Syrians in the construction sector to obtain free work permits through the general federation of Jordanian trade unions (GFJTU), allowing them to move between employers;
- Allowing employers to issue short-term work permits (less than 6 months);
- Allowing Syrians to move from one sector to another in the sectors open to non-Jordanians; and
- Allowing Syrians to move from one employer to another without clearance if the permit has expired.

APPROACH

In 2016, the Government of Jordan agreed to issue work permits for Syrian refugees free of charge in the agricultural sector for a limited time period. However, initially this did not lead to a significant increase in work permits. Therefore, the ILO held discussions with Syrian refugee farmers and found that, despite these measures, a lack of employers willing and able to complete the necessary paperwork was the main reason for the slow uptake. Therefore, the ILO developed an innovative approach, endorsed by the MoL, that included de-linking work permit applications from specific employers in the agriculture sector, allowing 22 cooperatives to apply for Syrian refugee work permits. Facilitating access to work permits in agriculture helped the sector meet the seasonally-driven demand for labour, where a worker is most efficient if they can move between employers according to peak harvest seasons for different crops.

The initiative includes disseminating clear instructions to local MoL authorities to enable them to issue work permits in a timely manner. It also includes information campaigns within refugee communities on how to apply for work permits, as well as their rights and entitlements under labour laws. Representatives from agricultural cooperatives and the trade union were trained on how to facilitate work permits for Syrian workers.

Through field visits and in-house support, cooperatives played a key role as focal points for MoL mobile teams to deliver work permits in rural areas of Mafraq and Irbid. Seminars and training sessions were conducted; cooperatives provided employers with certain technical services that related to productivity, including training on labour rights and occupational safety and health (OSH).

The same model has been applied since August 2017 in the construction sector, where more than 40 per cent of working Syrian refugees in Jordan are employed¹⁸. Work permits are delivered through the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions (GFJTU).

Furthermore, three guidance and support offices were established in Amman GFJTU headquarters, and in the districts of Irbid and Mafraq. The GFJTU offices provide legal advisory services¹⁹ and are allowed to issue 10,000 renewable one-year permits annually with the support of the MoL and ILO. These work permits neither tie the worker to a specific employer nor a specific area of specialty within the construction sector.

17 ILO. (2017c).

18 ILO. (2017l), p.24.

19 ILO. (2018a).

Most applicants are casual construction workers or self-employed and, therefore, cannot apply to a social security company for coverage. As an intermediate response and for the purpose of this intervention, the MoL stipulates that workers should be covered by a private insurance scheme. More work remains to be done to identify lasting solutions for refugees' access to social security benefits.

Workshops on OSH and labour rights were provided by the GFJTU for Syrian and Jordanian workers in the three governorates of Amman, Irbid and Mafraq.

PROGRESS

From January 2016 to October 2018, up to 118,000 work permits have been issued²⁰ to refugees in **Jordan, 64% of which were facilitated by the ILO.** Furthermore, **57,000 work permits were issued in the agriculture and construction sectors since 2016.** Only 4 per cent were distributed to women, as the construction industry is considered a male-dominated sector. Furthermore, in many cases women do not apply for work permits because they do not consider their work as a job that requires a permit, but rather as family support.



UP TO **118,000 WORK PERMITS** HAVE BEEN ISSUED TO REFUGEES IN JORDAN, **64%** OF WHICH WERE FACILITATED BY THE ILO.

The approach gave **clear advantages to the MoL, employers and the Syrian refugees**, including:

- Reduced waiting times at mol offices in the governorates;
- Applications could be made in bulk and processed more rapidly;
- Less anxiety for refugees in approaching government departments;
- Refugees were informed of the work permits through facilitators based within cooperatives and trade unions through outreach visits to refugee communities;
- Employers were not required to make an application;
- Refugees could work for more than one employer, and move between employers or from one governorate to another.

The ILO study on work permits and employment of Syrian refugees²¹ found that those with work permits earn more than those who are working without work permits. This finding was confirmed by a recent survey conducted by the Overseas Development Institute on the impact of the UNHCR/UNICEF cash assistance programme²². It reports that “of

20 ILO, Project updates report.

21 ILO. (2017n)

22 Overseas Development Institute, (2017).

households with a work permit, **76 per cent said it had improved their sense of security and their social and economic conditions**. Furthermore, refugees now see the permit as a way to move around securely, to work legally and not run the risk of deportation to a camp or Syria²³.

CHALLENGES AND NEXT STEPS

Future work with cooperatives could be reinforced through programmes integrated with local development, including capacity building, and institutional strengthening²⁴. Cooperatives in areas with a large influx of refugees do not always have the capacity to deal with the demands on services nor do they always have a strong member base, and their regulations do not always allow for non-Jordanians to run cooperatives. However, the cooperatives in each governorate could be trained and empowered to provide a package of services for jobseekers and aspiring entrepreneurs from both refugee and host communities, including registering, counselling, outreach, referrals and placement.

In the case of the construction sector, it is not part of the trade union's mandate to facilitate work permits for the MoL. With respect to social security requirements, registering workers with a private insurance scheme should be an intermediate solution since the ILO should continue to work with the Government to make sure that refugees have access to the national security scheme, as stipulated in the ILO's guiding principles, as well as in the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), ratified by Jordan in 2014, and the Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205).

In parallel, the GFJTU have established a migrant and refugee committee, with sub-committees at the governorate level, to make sure that refugees' issues are well represented. This process may entail expanding membership to include Syrian refugees. A survey on the impact of unionizing Syrian refugees should be conducted, as well as advocacy work with trade unions on greater integration of Syrian workers.

As a next step, it is crucial to better understand how Syrian, and other migrant workers, are affected by work permit regulations (e.g. high fees required of migrants for work permits). While operating within this legal framework, the Government has recognized the special situation of Syrians as refugees (rather than as migrant workers) and has developed regulations accordingly by amending the migrant status of refugees – instead of assigning them a refugee-specific status. The Government has given priority to Syrian refugees by temporarily restricting the entry of new migrant workers and by reducing work permit fees for Syrians to JOD 10 (US\$14) while employers who recruit other migrants, such as Egyptians (who represent the majority in the construction sector), have to pay JOD 500. However, caution is urged as this policy could lead to segmentation within the labour market between refugees, national workers and migrants.

Work permit numbers are not always a good indicator of decent employment creation; rather they are an indicator of the formalization of labour²⁵. The pledge of 200,000 jobs for Syrians in Jordan was concretized in various documents, including the Jordan–EU trade agreement, and the World Bank Programme for Results, under which a number of work permits were issued to Syrian refugees with a modified migrant status.

23 ILO, (2017g), p.17.

24 Ibid

25 The UNHCR/ILO impact research looked at the costs and benefits of ongoing reforms to the work permit system, while also looking at possible alternatives that can both serve as indicators and provide the necessary decent work guarantees.

However:

- a. The refugee status is significantly different from a migrant status as the latter is not considered at risk of a well-founded threat of persecution if they return home and, therefore, migrant regulations are not fully adequate to cover all protection concerns regarding refugees;
- b. Work permits provide the right to work but not employment itself – and not decent employment; as such they may not be the best measure of whether 200,000 decent jobs were created;
- c. While these documents (trade agreement/programme for results) acted as a welcome pull factor for the regularization of refugees, it also created unintended consequences, such as the lifting of the requirement for social security registration before registering for work permits, and the lifting of the requirement for occupational licenses. The joint ilo/unhcr study shows that access to work permits does not lead automatically to social security registration, even though 20 per cent of syrian workers with permits reported being covered by social security, compared to just 3 per cent among those who do not have work permits²⁶;
- d. The target of 200,000 work permits is gender-blind, and does not take into account other difficulties women face in securing formal employment; and
- e. The target of 200,000 work permits encouraged the government – in a general context of low job creation – to adopt the policy of replacing migrant workers with syrians and jordanians, but this has proven difficult and challenging.

In retrospect, using work permits as a key performance indicator for these international agreements has favoured the formalization of refugees' work – but only to a certain extent. More is now required to devise a refugee-specific regulatory package that guarantees equal access to social security, and a reform of the occupational license system to protect workers against OSH risks. Nevertheless, the study found that work permits give Syrian refugees in Jordan a sense of stability and security²⁷.

BOX 4: WORK PERMITS IN LEBANON

In Lebanon, a ministerial decision was issued: Syrian nationals are now exempt from the general prohibition on foreigners when working in agriculture, construction and environment activities, according to Decision No. 218/1 issued by the Ministry of Labour in December 2015.

Furthermore, a policy paper was prepared by the ILO and presented as a joint UN position against the policy that when Syrian refugees obtained residency permits with a “displaced person” status they were required to sign a notarized “pledge not to work”. As part of the Jordanian Government’s pledges at the **London Conference**, this **“pledge not to work” was replaced by a “pledge to abide by Lebanese laws”** as of June 2016.

26 Ibid, p. 14.

27 ILO, (2017n).

Furthermore, understanding how migrant workers are impacted by work permit regulations and procedures for Syrian refugees is critical for the development of interventions. It is also critical for the development of forward-looking strategies that consider the labour market needs of the country in the medium and long terms. There are now distinct groups of workers in Jordan: Jordanians, migrant workers, Palestinian refugees, and Syrian refugees. Because all four groups are present in significant numbers, the challenges for any group must be addressed within the context of the labour market as a whole. The 200,000 jobs to be created for Syrian refugees under the Jordan Compact will be secured through the formalization of existing jobs while decreasing reliance on migrant workers in certain sectors – workers who might be consequently excluded from the labour market. Indeed, Jordan has put a moratorium on the entry of new migrant workers in all sectors apart from domestic work and the garment sector.

There is a dangerous level of competition emerging between local workers, migrant workers, Palestinian refugees and Syrian refugees, with a downward impact on working conditions and wages. In accordance with the ILO Fair Migration Agenda, ILO interventions must ensure that migrant workers are not adversely affected. Advocacy work also will have to be conducted with other UN and development partners.

BOX 5: INNOVATION: E-LEARNING INTRODUCING SYRIAN REFUGEES TO THEIR WORKPLACE RIGHTS IN JORDAN

The ILO has launched an e-learning programme for Syrian refugees in Jordan that explains their rights and responsibilities under Jordan's labour law. The programme was developed with the support of the MoL and the Social Security Corporation. The online programme outlines the benefits of working legally through obtaining work permits, as well as the procedures needed to obtain them. It also covers aspects related to OSH, insurance, and permits for construction workers according to the signed agreement with the trade union. It is a free, easy-to-use programme that participants can access through their smartphones. The programme was initially used by 500 Syrians working in the construction sector in Irbid, Mafraq, Zarqa and Amman, as well as the agriculture sector, where a large number of workers are women. It will be expanded to reach more workers in other sectors.



2.2 SUPPORTING JOB CREATION AND SOCIAL COMPLIANCE IN SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES

2.2.1 ENGAGING WITH INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS FOR COMPLIANCE WITH DECENT WORK PRINCIPLES IN THE EXPORT SECTOR FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES AND JORDANIAN WORKERS

CONTEXT

BOX 6: BETTER WORK JORDAN IN A NUTSHELL

Better Work – a collaboration between the ILO and the International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group – is a comprehensive programme bringing together all levels of the garment industry to improve working conditions and respect for the labour rights of workers, and to boost the competitiveness of apparel businesses. Since 2009, the ILO, through its Better Work programme has been working with the government, workers and employers to improve working conditions and boost competitiveness of Jordan's garment industry. This sector contains a large proportion of migrant workers. In 2011, the Government of Jordan (GOJ) made enrolment in the programme mandatory for all factories exporting to the United States and Israel.

In line with pledges made at the London Conference, a new trade agreement between Jordan and the EU was signed, which allows for a relaxation of the rules of origin for Jordanian products to enter the EU. It has enabled Jordan to export industrial items duty-free to the EU market for a period of ten years, but it does not alter EU quality requirements. Two of the conditions set forth in the agreement are that:

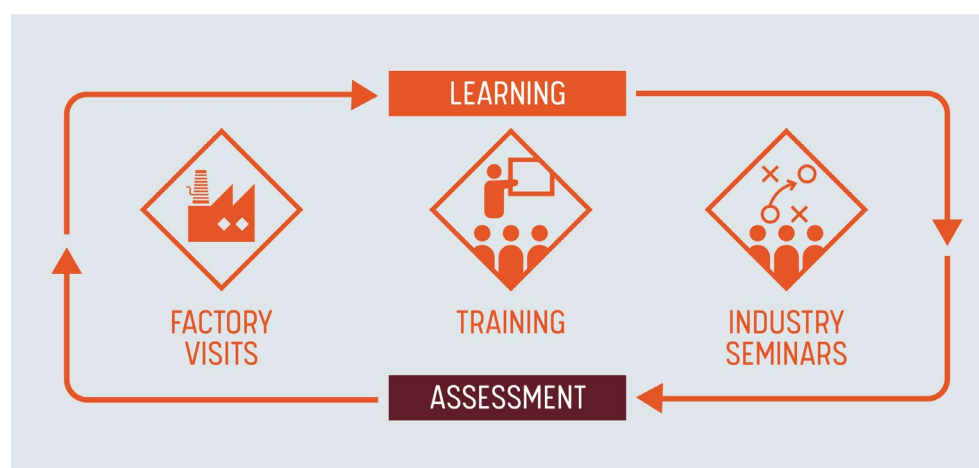
1. Products to be exported under the new agreement have to be produced in one of the 18 selected special economic zones (sez) named in the agreement; and
2. Production facilities have to employ 15 per cent of syrian refugees with this percentage rising to 25 per cent by year three. Once the full-time equivalent jobs of syrian refugees has reached 200,000, the regimen will be expanded to the national level.

Through its Better Work programme, the ILO's primary role and focus in the refugee response has been to ensure that those employed in Jordan's export sector are working in decent conditions. The ILO is mentioned as a third-party monitor body within the EU-Jordan trade agreement and has also signed an agreement with the EU to expand Better Work Jordan activities beyond the garment sector and to implement the programme

model to all enterprises exporting to the EU under the rules of origin (RoO) agreement.

On the other hand, companies lack sufficient capacity and the appropriate environment to benefit from the relaxed RoO and, therefore, private sector companies must upgrade work processes and quality assurance mechanisms to comply with EU quality standards. Furthermore, Syrian refugees and host community workers need to upgrade their skills and obtain certification for the new jobs created as a result of the relaxed rules of origin. Support also needs to be provided to the private sector for the recruitment of qualified Syrians and Jordanians so that they can make use of export opportunities under the RoO agreement.

STRATEGY

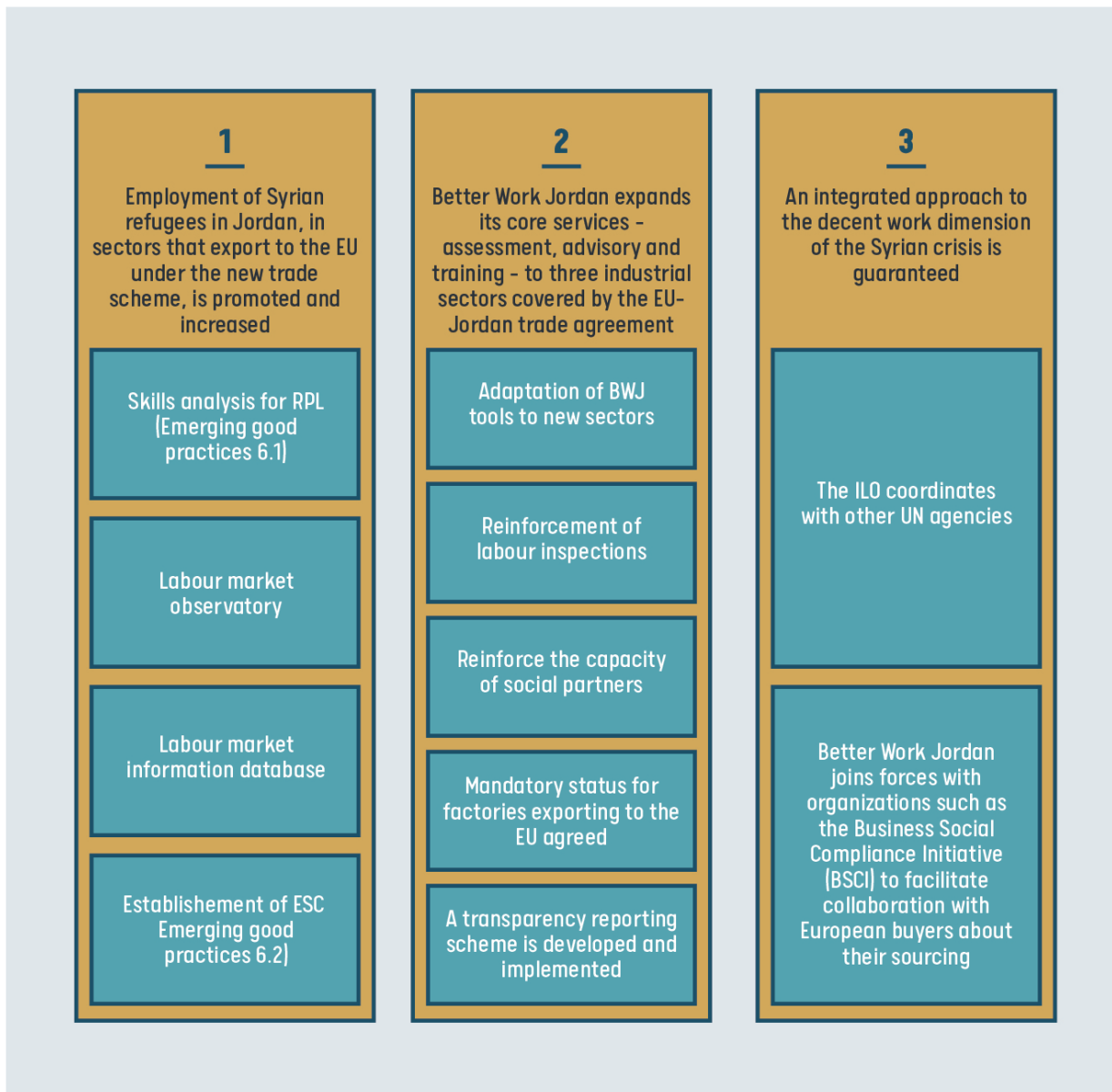


The ILO is providing an integrated package of services to the manufacturing sector that includes (a) skills training through recognition of prior learning (RPL) (see Emerging good practice 3.3.1); (b) job-matching through Employment Service Centres (ESCs) (see Emerging good practice 3.3.2); (c) support for exporting; (d) compliance with Decent Work principles. The latter is built into the Better Work programme in the garment sector to promote decent working conditions at the enterprise level through a package of services delivered to the factories. The training courses for factory representatives support and reinforce the advisory work through detailed instruction on how to tackle challenges and improve workplace relations. Examples of this include training on managing health and safety in the workplace, enabling worker and management representatives to diagnose and improve their own grievance mechanisms, educating supervisors on how to manage workers, and training on setting up proper human resources systems.

Simultaneously, the ILO provides a comprehensive assessment to determine each factory's overall progress on meeting international core labour standards and national labour laws. Assessment findings are coupled with the factory's own diagnosis of the ability within the enterprise to provide a fair and well-rounded picture of success, demonstrated progress and areas for improvement.

Rolling out the relaxed RoO and attracting Syrian refugees and Jordanian workers to work opportunities in the Special Economic Zones may take some time. Section 3.3.2 illustrates one of the components of the programme related to the set-up and management of Employment Service Centres to link refugees with employers.

INTERVENTION MODEL



PROGRESS

Developing and implementing, in partnership with social partners, a unified contract for migrant workers adapted to refugees

Effective since January 2016, the main garment employer associations and the country's garment union signed the guidelines for the implementation of a new unified contract for migrant workers in the garment sector. Facilitated by the ILO, in partnership with the UNHCR, the contract is expected to help promote fairer recruitment by protecting garment workers from signing multiple contracts both in their home country and subsequently in Jordan. Under [this contract](#), refugees can obtain the same salary as Jordanian workers, plus overtime and free transportation. As of December 2017, six job fairs had been conducted in local community and training centres to identify skilled Syrian refugees. The database has already identified over 2,000 refugees with previous experience as tailors, and an internal safe identification and referral system for refugees has been established.

Leveraging EU-Jordan trade and the World Bank Programme For Results (P4R) as a means for implementing international labour standards (ILS)

In 2016, the World Bank approved a USD 300 million loan with preferential terms (subsidized interest rate) to the Government of Jordan for enhancing “economic opportunities for Jordanian and Syrian refugees”. The P4R is a World Bank financing instrument, which includes using a country’s own institutions and processes, and linking disbursement of funds directly to the achievement of specific programme results. Under this P4R, factory-specific data on compliance is made available through a portal. Buyers can use this data in their decision-making processes, in order to reduce any reputational risks attached to imports. The Better Work Jordan Transparency Portal has been live since July 2017 and can be accessed on the [Better Work website](#).

The ILO Better Work Jordan assessment tools have been designed and piloted for the following new sectors: chemicals, metal, engineering (household appliances).

“We are working on multiple levels: the regulatory level through the adoption of the rules of origin agreement - but also directly with the enterprises to ease their access to the market and their compliance with our standards, and through the ILO to guarantee that these job opportunities are part of the Decent Work initiative.” -

Andrea Matteo Fontana, Ambassador of the European Union to Jordan

CHALLENGES AND NEXT STEPS

It is still early to draw lessons since the programme started in 2017, but some processes and approaches could be considered as emerging lessons or challenges to be addressed in the near future. Jordanian companies still have difficulties complying with strict European Union quality standards. More analysis will be conducted to understand the reasons for this and to overcome any particular challenges. The Jordanian Chamber of Commerce has mentioned several aspects of the agreement that, in its perspective, would need to be amended, and the Government has already stated its readiness to renegotiate it.

In addition, while the garment sector seems to be responsive to the reputational risk attached to less than decent work conditions, it is less obvious for the chemical sector or for companies manufacturing small household appliances. Consequently, it is important that the Government makes participation in the Better Work programme mandatory for companies that want to benefit from the RoO agreement. A request was made in this regard to the MoL.

According to a skills gap assessment conducted in 2017 by the ILO and JCI on 371 companies in Special Economic Zones, most occupations in demand are at the level of technician. Precluding Syrians to work at this level (closed occupations) continues to act as a constraint on the expansion of the manufacturing sector. It is important to note that most garment factories export to the United States and are not required to recruit Syrian refugees for duty-free access there.

2.2.2 LESSONS LEARNED

- **THE ENGAGEMENT OF NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS IN SOCIAL DIALOGUE AT THE FACTORY AND SECTOR LEVELS CAN MAKE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION** in terms of compliance, performance and commitment of all stakeholders. Remediating issues of non-compliance with national and international labour laws has been demonstrated by Better Work Jordan (BWJ), where a constant increase in exports has been matched with improvements in factory working conditions.
- **REINFORCING THE CAPACITIES OF MOL INSPECTORS** so they can take over BWJ's monitoring role will have an impact beyond the garment sector, since trained inspectors engage with all other sectors. The intensive joint training sessions, the secondment of labour inspectors to BWJ, and the joint factory visits have all provided a solid base to create a sense of ownership of the inspection component by the Ministry.
- **ENGAGING WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR IS KEY.** The ILO's close relationship with employers in Jordan has eased the communication channel between other international organizations and the private sector. The ILO is keeping track of employer initiatives regarding Syrian refugees in the garment sector.



2.3 COMBATTING CHILD LABOUR IN LEBANON

2.3.1 TACKLING CHILD LABOUR AMONG SYRIAN REFUGEES AND THEIR HOST COMMUNITIES IN LEBANON

CONTEXT

Widespread child labour continues to be one of the most prevalent and persistent forms of violence and exploitation facing Syrian refugee children. Many Syrian refugee children start working before the age of 12 and become increasingly involved in work that is hazardous and which limits their access to education²⁸. The consequences of harmful work for children are widespread and long-lasting. A lack of access to formal jobs for parents and vocational opportunities for Syrian adolescents exacerbates the problem.

According to the 2016 household survey conducted by the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) and UNICEF, the number of Lebanese children engaged in child labour is three times higher than in 2009. For Syrian children, the number has increased by over 50 per cent²⁹. Three out of four children working in the streets are from Syria. It is estimated that two-thirds of Syrian refugee children are working instead of going to school. Furthermore, child labour and child marriage are increasingly used as coping mechanisms against deepening financial hardship³⁰.

APPROACH

Realising that child labour was quickly becoming one of the biggest child protection challenges among the Syrian refugee communities in both Lebanon and Jordan, the ILO joined the humanitarian community in order to ensure that the protection response focused on the issue appropriately and adequately. At a regional level, the ILO worked with UNICEF and UNHCR to design and publish a strategic plan to eliminate child labour as part of the refugee crisis response³¹.

Building on over a decade of work to eradicate child labour in Lebanon, the ILO works within the framework of the National Action Plan to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labour launched in 2013, and with the National Steering Committee against Child Labour and the Child Labour Unit at the MoL.

The ILO also collaborates with UNICEF and other international and national partners as part of a strategy to ensure education for Syrian refugee

28 3RP. (2017)

29 See: data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=1135.

30 3RP (2016).

31 3RP (2017).

children in a programme called “[The No Lost Generation](https://nolostgeneration.org)”³². The No Lost Generation initiative is a multi-stakeholder regional advocacy network that improves children’s access to quality education and strengthens the protective environment for them. It also seeks to expand regional capacity and access to education and protection for host communities, both inside Syria and in neighbouring countries, by bridging humanitarian and development responses. Under this regional strategy, the ILO focuses on:

- Developing the capacity of local ngos to provide services for children at risk or, in the case of child labour, through the ilo’s supporting children’s rights through education, arts, and the media (scream) methodology;
- Supporting security services, labour inspectors, social workers, and community leaders to respond to child labour among refugees and residents;
- Targeting 10,000 children under 16 who are involved in, or at risk of entering, the worst forms of child labour, directly and indirectly targets their households (70 per cent syrian, 30 per cent lebanese).

Furthermore, the ILO has also conducted workshops targeting farmers and workers in the leafy greens and potato sub-sectors within the framework of the project presented in section 3.2.1. This project raises awareness on the effects of child labour on children’s well-being and proposes preventive actions to reduce child labour in agriculture, as well as on the streets.

PROGRESS

Accordingly, and in coordination with the Lebanese MoL, the ILO and UNICEF have formed a partnership to produce the first comprehensive study on the magnitude and characteristics of working street children (WSC) in Lebanon. The results of the study are intended to inform policy-makers and other actors to more appropriately combat the phenomenon of WSC in Lebanon³³.

Lebanon’s Internal Security Forces, NGOs, the MoL and MoSA have developed a draft code of conduct and coordination mechanism to facilitate better coordination and methodologies to remove WSC and rehabilitate them. Unfortunately, the ILO does not have sufficient resources to develop a demonstration project on child labour.

BOX 7: A COMPILATION OF GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED RELATING TO CHILD LABOUR IN JORDAN was conducted in 2016:

ILO, Moving towards a child labour free jordan:
A collection of good practices 2016.

32 <https://nolostgeneration.org>.

33 ILO & UNICEF. (2015).

PILLAR III

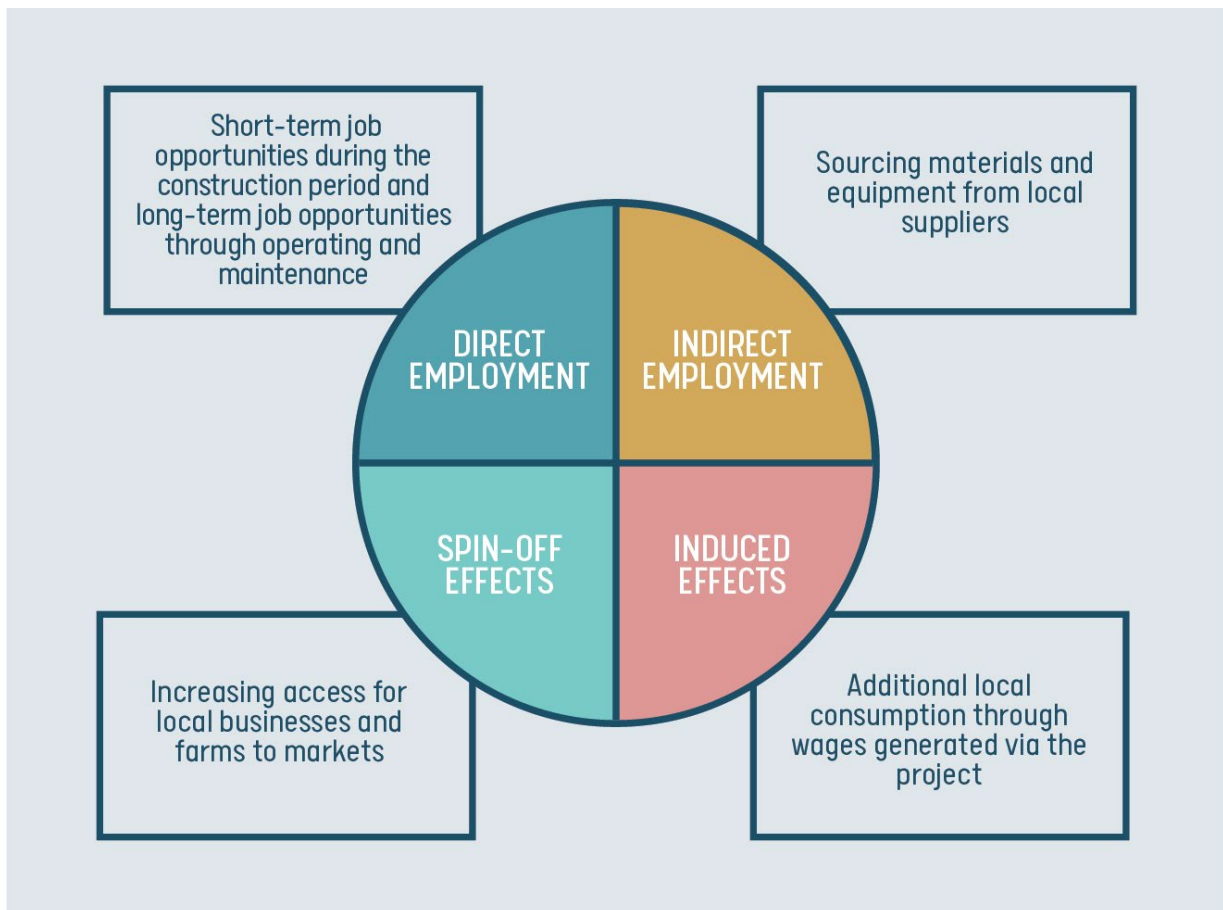
FACILITATE ACCESS TO LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH LABOUR-INTENSIVE WORK, SKILLS DEVELOPMENT, AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT



3.1 EMPLOYMENT-INTENSIVE INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAMME IN LEBANON AND JORDAN

3.1.1 DEMONSTRATING THE FEASIBILITY OF THE EIIP APPROACH THROUGH A PILOT PROJECT IN JORDAN

It has been recognised by the Governments of Jordan and Lebanon and development partners that the Syrian refugee crisis requires an immediate response and a longer-term development approach based on access to decent jobs, increased investment and improved trade. As an immediate response, the ILO is implementing employment-intensive investment programmes (EIIP) to allow Syrian refugees, as well as vulnerable Jordanians and Lebanese, to secure decent livelihoods, as well as create and maintain assets in local communities³⁴.

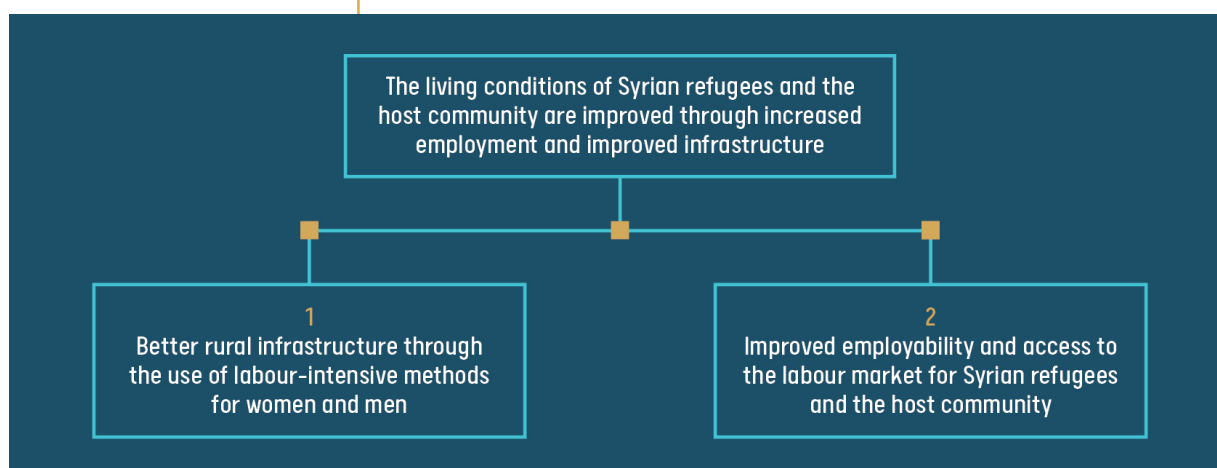


The ILO EIIP³⁵, which has been implemented in all major world regions for the past 40 years, aims to increase the labour intensity of existing infrastructure programmes, and to pilot employment-intensive works and public employment programmes in times of social and economic hardship and crisis.

Investing in public works, including tertiary roads, agriculture infrastructure and schools, creates four types of employment effects. In parallel, the ILO ensures that decent work conditions are respected, including on issues of OSH, child labour, and equal pay for work of equal value.

In both countries, the approach and objectives are similar, but the strategy was adapted to each specific context. In Jordan, the infrastructure contracts are managed directly by the Ministries of Public Work and Housing, Agriculture and Municipal Affairs (with ILO support), while in Lebanon, the contracts are directly managed by the ILO and UNDP, in partnership with the MoL and MoSA.

THEORY OF CHANGE:



STRATEGY

Since the employment-intensive investment approach was new in the Middle East (apart from Yemen), the ILO started with a pilot demonstration project in Jordan in 2015 to determine the feasibility of the approach and the level of interest among national counterparts. It started operating in Mafraq and Irbid through a small number of contractors who were trained in local resource based technology (LRBT). This pilot demonstrated the feasibility of the approach in rural road improvement and maintenance, as well as the construction of water catchments for irrigation and terracing for cultivation.

Compared with the cash-for-work programmes implemented by various agencies prior to the opening of the labour market to refugees, the EIIP places the employment relationship at the core the work undertaken. That is, core labour standards and the labour code apply to the work undertaken. Also, the EIIP takes a comprehensive approach to infrastructure work, mapping - from the outset - what creation, maintenance, and rehabilitation of public assets can be done with increased labour intensity. An EIIP approach includes more intensive monitoring of working conditions, but also of the quality of assets resulting from the work.

35 For more information: <http://www.ilo.org/employment/units/emp-invest/employment-intensive-investment/lang--en/index.htm>.

3.1.2 JORDAN: EMPLOYMENT- INTENSIVE INFRASTRUCTURE WORKS THROUGH DIRECT IMPLEMENTATION AGREEMENTS WITH LINE MINISTRIES

PROGRESS

At the end of the demonstration project, the Government, contractors and community members, as well as donors and other development partners, have been very positive and receptive on: (a) the urgent need and potential contribution of the approach as a means of creating productive employment; and (b) the role of the ILO in implementing it. In particular, the readiness of the Ministry of Public Works and Housing (MPWH) to implement a similar approach for the rest of its portfolio has been extremely important, whereby the ILO can now complement the infrastructure programme of the Ministry by covering just the additional cost of the labour-intensive approach, but not the materials³⁶.

The project established good working relationships between the ILO and the Departments of Public Works and Agriculture, providing a good basis for further cooperation in the development of a larger-scale project and the possibility of attracting funds³⁷. Several donors are now interested in the approach and support the programme with various modalities. For instance, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs has contracted the ILO, under a World Bank loan, to secure technical support to increase labour intensity in its infrastructure portfolio.

CHALLENGES AND NEXT STEPS

In Irbid, the area is sparsely populated and, consequently, even though it was possible to employ Syrians and Jordanians under the initial pilot, 75 per cent of the employed labour force was formerly Egyptian. Projects focusing on Syrian and Jordanian employment thus put Egyptians at risk of moving further into the informal economy – this could, in turn, put Jordanians and Syrians at a disadvantage through a downward spiral on wages. More technical support needs to be provided to the Jordanian Government on its policies and programmes aimed at replacing other migrants with Jordanians and Syrians – in part to secure employment for Jordanians and Syrians, but also to avoid any unintended consequences for other migrants.

In 2017, based on the success and the lessons learned from this demonstration pilot, the German development bank KfW agreed to support two major EIIPs in Jordan and Lebanon. Norway also supports such a programme in green works and forestry in Jordan.

STRATEGY

The ILO does not directly implement projects (or sub-projects). It was agreed that the Ministries of Public Work, Agriculture and Municipal Affairs themselves run the tenders and implement the projects with ILO support for capacity building, changes in tender documents, and monitoring. The ILO has retained a no-objection voice at all stages of the process. This has allowed the implementing ministries to take ownership of the works, while the ILO develops capacity in implementing labour-intensive/ labour-based work methods within the ministries for sustainability.

36 ILO. (2017), p.12.

37 ILO. (2017k)

Implementation agreements were signed with the Ministry of Public Works and Housing (2016), the Ministry of Agriculture (2017), and the Irbid and Mafrq Governorates to implement maintenance and community works. There is a change in attitude among ministry and community staff: decent work conditions and clauses are now included in their own contractual procedures.

The ILO initially held various discussions with the implementing partners on the objective of the programme, how the works would be implemented using the employment-intensive approach, the role and responsibility of each partner, and the activities that would be implemented. Implementation agreements were then signed between the relevant ministries and the ILO. Supported by the ILO, the ministries contracted private firms to implement 14 packages of roadworks.

PROGRESS

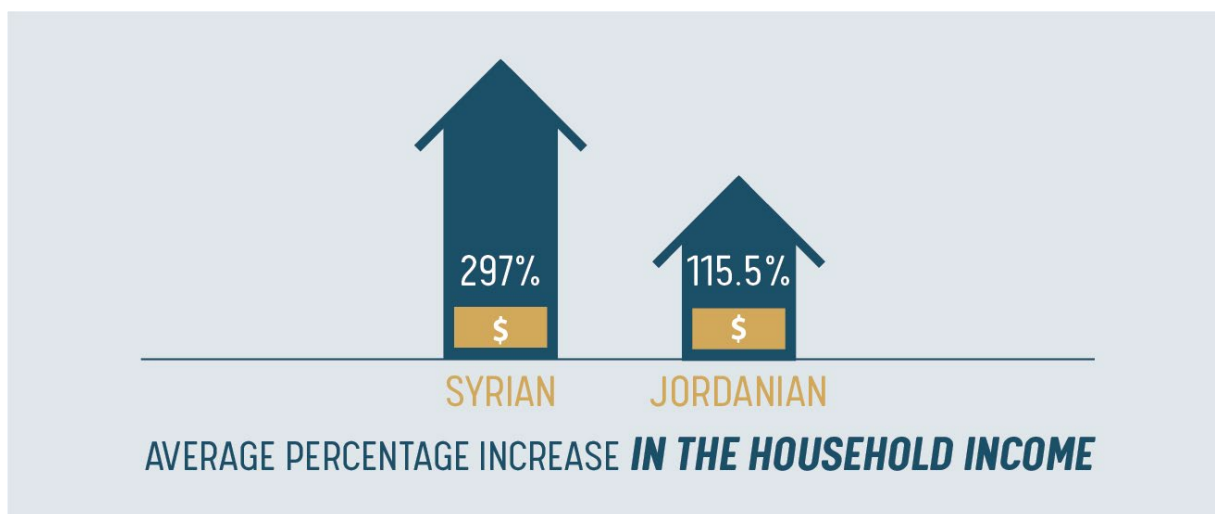
“The employment intensive approach is a new and very good experience. We will reflect this method in our own projects”
Eman Obeidat, Head Civil Engineer, MPWH, Jordan.

“The programme has created the spirit of one team bonding between the two cultures: Syrian and Jordanian”
Male labourer, Irbid.

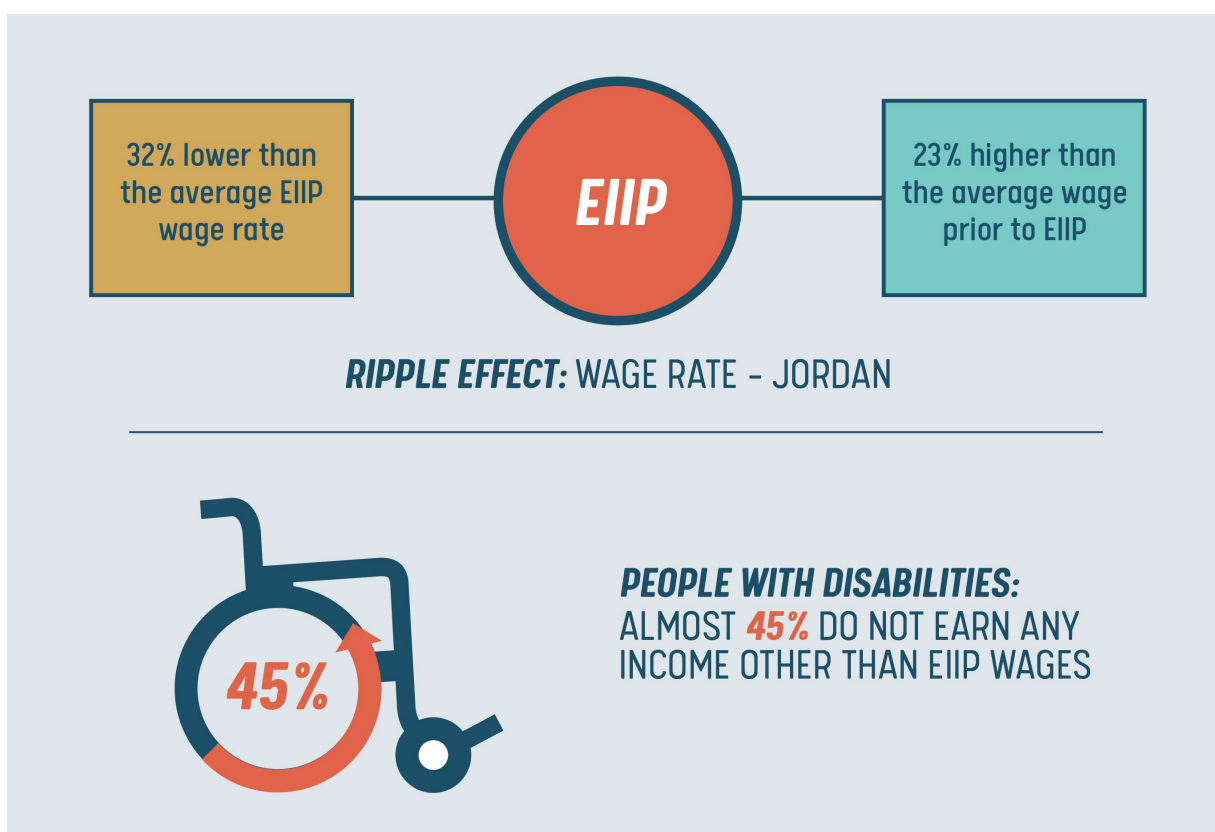
As of December 2017, **3,176 Jordanians and Syrians (13 per cent women; 54 per cent Syrians) have been employed** for a total of **192,000 worker days**. Additionally, 662 km of road has been repaired³⁸.



In a climate of worsening labour market conditions, the project has succeeded in rolling out decent work employment, including reasonable wage rates, good working conditions and social security payments for workers. **In 2017 the average household income - targeted by the project - of Syrian workers increased by 297 per cent and 115 per cent for Jordanians.**



For workers who were employed before the EIIP, their average daily wage amounted to JOD 9.125 per day, 32 per cent lower than the average wage of JOD 13.3 received under EIIP jobs. The workers who were able to secure work after the EIIP initiative reported an average wage of JOD 11.264 - 23 per cent higher than the average wage received prior to EIIP employment³⁹. Almost 45 per cent of people with disabilities did not earn any income other than EIIP wages⁴⁰.



39 ILO. (2018a).

40 ILO. (2017o)

CHALLENGES AND NEXT STEPS

In Jordan, Syrian workers have to be registered for social security, and the employer must provide evidence that they employ a certain share of Jordanians. Furthermore, as per the labour code, employers have up to 16 days to register workers for social security; to be registered, workers should be employed at least 16 days per month, which is not always the case. This acts as an incentive for employers to contract workers for less than 16 working days per month⁴¹.

Donors' requests to use the "job opportunity" indicator of 40-day contracts is not in line with standard labour intensity (LI) measurements. The standard measurement is "number of workers" and "worker days" with the latter aggregated into lots of 21 to calculate months. The introduction of the 40-day indicator also caused confusion as to how to report on jobs that are less than two months in duration.

Public works carried out via ministries is a successful approach that ensures a sense of ownership among stakeholders. More advocacy and capacity-building activities will be developed in the next phase to allow engineers and ministry staff to acquire the necessary skills to implement and monitor employment-intensive works.

Beneficiaries will be referred to employment service centres with a voucher system for skills development, allowing them to benefit from training to assist them in accessing a longer-term job. This will serve as an exit strategy to broaden their employment opportunities. Also, training on the labour-intensive approach, in partnership with the Jordanian Engineers Association, is being developed for contractors. Jordanians and Syrians with RPL certificates (see Emerging good practices 3.3.1) are also being referred to the EIIP project.

The programme is being expanded to other governorates, focusing on green works in agriculture through cooperatives, based on the lessons learned in Mafraq and Irbid. Considerable efforts have been made in reforestation work and water-harvesting, with **1,193 workers employed for 31,519 workdays by April 2018**⁴².



31,519 WORKER DAYS BY APRIL 2018

41 ILO. (2017p).

42 ILO. (2018c)

3.1.3 LEBANON: EMPLOYMENT- INTENSIVE INFRASTRUCTURE WORKS CONTRACTED BY THE UNDP AND ILO IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE MINISTRIES

In addition, the ILO is trying to harmonize practices related to cash-for-work programmes implemented by various agencies, in order to bring them under the scope of the labour code. Core principles have been agreed with these agencies, including standard wages, and a manual is being designed to elaborate on them. It will serve as a reference for practitioners on future knowledge-management efforts, but also for the Government, donors, and potential new agencies starting activities in this field. It also has the potential to be used for an accreditation procedure.

STRATEGY

The Lebanese Government, both through the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan and at the London Conference, indicated a strong need for assistance in infrastructure work. They highlighted the Lebanon Host Communities Support Programme (LHSP), under the leadership of MoSA, as one of the main vehicles that was creating productive infrastructure/assets while also creating work opportunities for the most vulnerable. However, MoSA does not have experience with employment-intensive programmes and requested ILO support in relation to prioritization and selection, as well as the management of such investment projects. The ILO is, therefore, operating in partnership with the UNDP via the LHSP in the most vulnerable municipalities of Bekaa, North, and Mount Lebanon, which host most of the deprived Lebanese and refugees.

Contrary to the EIIP approach in Jordan, the ILO and UNDP tender the work directly to private-sector contractors trained in the local resource-based approach. The ILO is assisting the MoL in the promotion of a system for the speedy and transparent issuance of work permits to Syrian refugees in Lebanon, allowing them to legally and formally take up employment⁴³. The ILO is undertaking formal and on-the-job training for MoL staff on labour-intensive approaches.

The combination of capacity support to the MoL and MoSA, while generating employment for both vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian refugees, and demonstrating the effectiveness of local resource-based technology with the help of an EIIP, is a proven method to not only create jobs, but also for establishing an institutional mechanism to expand such programmes over future years. Ten Social Safeguarding Officers are based in the regions and assigned to specific work sites to monitor the working conditions and adherence to OSH as well as supporting and encouraging communication and information between communities and contractors.

BOX 8: LOCAL RESOURCE-BASED TECHNOLOGY (LRBT)

Lack of sufficient access to goods, facilities and services is a concern expressed in many poor urban and rural communities. EIIP's LRB approaches seek to improve physical access at the local level by optimizing and combining the use of local resources in the development, operation and maintenance of community works through local-level planning, increasing participation, targeting vulnerable groups, and promoting the use of local materials and technologies in project implementation.

PROGRESS

The project started late in 2017 and, by October 2018, **1,753 workers had worked a total of 50,832 worker days**. Some 11 per cent of workers were female and 73 per cent were Syrian⁴⁴.



50,832 WORKER DAYS BY OCTOBER 2018

Advocacy by the ILO led to the MoL granting work permits in a more simplified process⁴⁵. A circular was issued in November 2017, authorizing workers to keep their work permits after working in the project for one year. Other UN agencies can partner with the EIIP and benefit from the simplified process as long as the MoL approves such projects.

Some potential for sustainable jobs has been identified. Beneficiaries are learning new skills and contractors are matching worker skills with specialized tasks.

CHALLENGES AND NEXT STEPS

Legal stipulations with regard to Syrian refugees accessing the Lebanese labour market have changed frequently over the last few years. The ILO will, therefore, continue to work with the MoL towards a more stable and secure regulatory framework for refugees' access to the labour market.

The ILO is currently working on a draft Decree to regularize daily workers and simplify the work permit process if they reside in Lebanon and don't have a specific employer. Nevertheless, the cost of work permits remains prohibitive, and the MoL is neither sufficiently equipped nor capacitated to handle the high demand for work permits⁴⁶. In this context, rather than facilitating large numbers of work permits, the focus of the EIIP has been on supporting legislation, regulations and systems that simplify the process and reduce the cost of work permits.

With the support of the Work Permit Advisor, the ILO has supported the MoL to develop a simplified process for work permits, including a significant cost reduction (from US\$500–US\$600 down to US\$80) and requested that the Ministry of Finance (MoF) eliminate all fees. At this stage, however, it is not clear whether changes to the work permit process will benefit Syrian refugees beyond those beneficiaries of the ILO.

44 ILO. (2018d)

45 Decision 299/1 of 2 November 2017.

46 Ibid.

3.1.4 DEVELOPING A SPECIFIC-GENDER STRATEGY FOR THE EMPLOYMENT- INTENSIVE INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAMMES IN JORDAN

The ILO takes an equal-opportunity approach for women and men, promoting the employment of women in labour-intensive work (at least 10 per cent). Advocacy within established contractor associations, and among women in the workforce, as well as female company ownership, will be promoted. Nevertheless, a specific strategy to tackle women's unemployment needs to be developed because they face significant gender discrimination.

There is also the possibility that short-term work opportunities could have a negative effect on food security for Syrian refugees if they lose their eligibility for food vouchers but then only work for a limited period. Risks around these potential negative effects need to be monitored.

The labour force participation rate of women in Jordan remains at 15 per cent⁴⁷ and continues to be one of the lowest in the world⁴⁸. While for Syrian refugee women it is possible to work if registered with a work permit, the overwhelming majority (97 per cent) neither possess nor have applied to obtain a work permit. In general, Syrian refugee women do not consider the lack of a work permit as a hindrance to employment; rather they consider the work permit too expensive and a limitation to their entitlement to humanitarian assistance.

Other key barriers that limit women from working include: a lack of childcare; a lack of job opportunities; cultural, societal, familial and religious factors; and poor working conditions, such as unacceptable pay, discriminatory hiring processes, and issues related to safety. Furthermore, a gender strategy should not only make jobs culturally suitable, but also challenge cultural misconceptions that impede women taking up certain jobs, as is often the case in the construction sector.

BOX 9: WOMEN AND EMPLOYMENT IN JORDAN

Jordan 2025 is seeking to increase female participation in the workforce from 15 to 27 per cent over the coming decade. To achieve this goal, policies have to address the cultural, legal and institutional discriminatory practices that underlie these low female participation rates. These practices include wage discrimination, with men earning an estimated 13.2 per cent more than women for comparable work. Cultural discrimination further discourages lower-skilled women from taking up jobs in hotels, factories or in locations that are geographically distant or require night-shift work. Transportation difficulties, including frequent delays in public transportation, unreliability, high costs and limited services to places of residence, further exacerbate the cultural challenges, which also impact on Syrian refugee women's participation in the labour market.

On the legal front, even though Article 72 of the Labour Law makes the provision of day care in the workplace compulsory, it is still not prevalent. Jordanian women are still deprived of the structural social support services necessary to promote their participation in the workplace: research clearly shows a negative association between the presence of young children and the probability of women's employment. This issue is a key challenge for Syrian refugee women; thus interventions to address childcare are included in the programme of support⁴⁹.

47 ILO, KILM, 2016.

48 UN WOMEN/REACH. (2017)

49 ILO, (2016h).

3.1.5 LESSONS LEARNED

STRATEGY

With a view to ensuring that gender equality concerns are properly taken into account in all initiatives rolled out by the ILO through employment-intensive programmes in Jordan, the ILO has deemed it necessary to lay the grounds for efficient gender mainstreaming throughout the whole project cycle. A specific gender strategy was elaborated to include gender equality concerns throughout implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Some of the key elements of the strategy⁵⁰ are to:

- Make sure that 10 per cent of direct beneficiaries are women in all EIIIP interventions (construction and agriculture);
- Promote gender-appropriate work environments to enable women to balance their domestic and care responsibilities with EIIIP employment;
- Raise awareness and mobilize the community, institutions, and EIIIP staff to address gender stereotypes and promote gender-inclusive language.

It is important to raise awareness among workers and contractors on the importance of zero tolerance for sexual harassment and violence at work (physical and verbal).

PROGRESS

The ILO has held a number of awareness-raising workshops for women. Around 13 per cent of the jobs created were held by woman – over the 10 per cent target. Women work as supervisors in construction sites or in the maintenance communal works, particularly Syrian refugee woman. A specific gender budget still needs to be allocated to make sure that all the different mainstreaming activities planned throughout the project cycle steps will be effectively conducted.

- **WHEN THE EIIIP APPROACH IS NEW IN A COUNTRY, IT IS IMPORTANT TO START WITH A DEMONSTRATION PROJECT** to determine the feasibility of the approach and the interest of national counterparts.
- **CONDUCTING A LABOUR SUPPLY STUDY** in both countries was crucial for defining adequate wage levels and testing the feasibility of the project, which aims to employ Syrians and Jordanians in equal numbers on road construction and maintenance. The study showed that both Jordanians and Syrians will participate in the EIIIP if they are paid a fair wage.
- **WORKING THROUGH THE MINISTRIES IS A SUCCESSFUL WAY TO CREATE A SENSE OF OWNERSHIP.** Advocacy and capacity-building activities were simultaneously conducted to allow engineers and ministry staff to acquire the necessary skills to implement and monitor the employment-intensive works.
- **INFRASTRUCTURE WORKS THAT TAKE A LABOUR APPROACH ARE GENERALLY MORE EXPENSIVE THAN TECHNOLOGICALLY INTENSIVE METHODS, BUT STILL VIABLE.** The wage levels required (US\$20 per day for unskilled work) were much higher in Jordan and Lebanon than in other countries where the ILO is working – generally lower income countries. The dire unemployment situation in Jordan justifies the additional costs of the project if they are seen as subsidies for employment and asset creation. The project can be supported by

international funds and should be part of a broader discussion in the framework of the National Employment Strategy⁵¹.

- **SETTING THE DAILY WAGE RATE HIGHER THAN THE OFFICIAL MINIMUM WAGE WILL ENSURE A SUPPLY OF WORKERS.** The daily wage rate was set slightly higher than the minimum wage rate to help participants sustain themselves beyond the short-term period of employment.
- **IT IS ESSENTIAL TO LINK EIIP TO LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES AND SKILLS INTERVENTIONS TO ENSURE THE LONG-TERM IMPACTS ON EMPLOYMENT.** The jobs created are short-term (many less than 2 months). Providing recognition of such work experience through certification and “graduation”, and linking work with training, especially for young people and women in the host community, is important⁵². It serves as an exit strategy by broadening their employability and employment opportunities.
- **THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SPECIFIC GENDER STRATEGY AND PROACTIVE ACTIONS THROUGHOUT THE PROJECT CYCLE HAVE SHOWN TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE INCLUSION OF WOMEN** even in male-dominated sectors, such as infrastructure and construction. The ILO has also developed specific guidelines in how to include gender into EIIP programmes.
- **CONTINUOUS ADVOCACY WORK AMONG THE DONOR COMMUNITY IS KEY TO SHOWING HOW EIIP OFFERS AN ALTERNATIVE TO CLASSIC CASH-FOR-WORK PROGRAMMES.**
- **SHORT-TERM PROGRAMMES AND FUNDING CYCLES ARE NOT SUITABLE FOR EIIP.** The first phase was one-year long and, since it was the first time EIIP was implemented in the region, much time was initially taken up with advocacy on the value of the labour-intensive method. After a 6-month advocacy phase, the Government committed to using the EIIP approach.

51 ILO, (2018d), p.8.

52 ILO. (2017), p.79.



3.2 PROMOTING LIVELIHOODS FOR THE HOST COMMUNITY AND SYRIAN REFUGEES

3.2.1 LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES FOR THE HOST COMMUNITY IN LEBANON

The Northern region of Lebanon, North and Beqaa have the highest concentration of displaced Syrians. These areas already had lower labour market participation rates and higher unemployment rates before the current crisis. The youth unemployment rate among Lebanese (34 percent)⁵³ was already alarmingly high before the crisis, resulting in increased rates of migration among young Lebanese. The North, for example, is already underserved, and has around a fifth of the total population in Lebanon. This includes 46 per cent of the extremely poor and 38 per cent of the entire poor population⁵⁴. The presence of Syrian refugees is making this context worse by impacting on a deteriorating labour market, and through increased competition for available jobs. Syrians are often considered skilled labourers who may be willing to accept lower wages and precarious conditions. The economic repercussions and the unstable security situation have particularly impacted the agriculture sector and its food production capacities, especially in the Akkar area in northern Lebanon.

STRATEGY

As mentioned in section 1, the ILO implemented a pilot project first with RBSA core funding focusing on Local Economic Development (LED) in 2014, targeting vulnerable farmers in host communities. The capacity of local organizations and constituents were built in order to strengthen collaboration among them to ensure a holistic and coordinated response to local economic development issues faced by rural Lebanese communities affected by the Syrian refugee crisis. The project was comprised of a supporting mechanism and a platform for knowledge-sharing, exchange of best practice, guidance on interventions and building alliances.

Through a participatory value chain analysis⁵⁵, a potential opportunity for Akkar's potatoes to be exported to Europe was identified. However, this required significant changes along the entire value chain - from input supply to production and distribution. The ILO used the "Making Markets Work for the Poor" (M4P) approach to ensure the sustainability of economic gains and employment created for the poorest and most vulnerable.

53 United Nations, Government of Lebanon and. (2016).

54 ILO. (2016j).

55 See: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/---ifp_seed/documents/publication/wcms_182600.pdf.

BOX 10: DEFINITION

A value chain “describes the full range of activities that are required to bring a product or service from conception, through the intermediary phases of production and delivery to final consumers, and final disposal after use”.

PROGRESS

Awareness was raised among the farmers in the local communities on the advantages of adopting a value chain approach. A demonstration plot of land was cultivated to showcase Akkar farmers, whose variety of produce is sold to a number of markets at a high quality, in accordance with Global Good Agriculture Practices (GlobalGAP) standards.

A culture of partnership, coordination and social cohesion was triggered among Syrian refugees and the host community through the participatory value chain development exercise, using local economic development strategic planning platforms.

The comprehensive capacity-building package led to an expansion of businesses in the potato and leafy green sub-sectors. The ILO provided both skills training and business development services to address those needs identified in local economic value chains. Four cooperatives received training on cooperative and business management, as well as counselling support to improve their legal and managerial status, and they were linked with suppliers and processors. In addition, training was conducted on combatting child labour, which is highly prevalent in the potato sub-sector in Lebanon.

CHALLENGES AND NEXT STEPS

The pilot project did not always include an upstream approach and, therefore, could not actively influence the national employment policy⁵⁶. Furthermore, due to limited capacity (in terms of human and financial resources of local public institutions), and the vacuum within the Lebanese political context (in terms of government formation), local public institutions could not take the lead in continuing the value chain development approach. Nevertheless, the ILO’s actions were coordinated with other UN agencies to position the Decent Work approach within a number of UN mechanisms of support.

- **THE ILO’S LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT APPROACH IS NOT SUITABLE FOR DONORS’ SHORT-TERM EMERGENCY CYCLES.** LED is a long-term participatory process that needs to be implemented within the stages of transition from relief to reconstruction (the five phases of relief/humanitarian assistance – early recovery, recovery, transition from relief to recovery, and reconstruction). Realistically, the model of “market for the poor” can only be implemented from an early recovery phase. Ultimately, more time is required for income to be sustainably generated from exports or local markets at increased levels.
- **VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT IS AN EXCELLENT TOOL FOR SOCIAL COHESION.** The development of the value chain brought, for the first

3.2.2 LESSONS LEARNED

time, cooperatives from different confessions together in Lebanon. All market players developed awareness and were motivated in favour of the common cause: successfully planting new varieties of potatoes, meeting the requirements and conditions for exporting to the EU, and then achieving such exports. Thus, value chain development appears to be a good approach for use in post-conflict countries fragmented by internal conflict and division⁵⁷.

- **THE DECISION ON WHICH LEVEL OF GOVERNANCE TO ATTACH THE LED PLANS NEEDS TO BE SUPPORTED BY STRONG EVIDENCE OF INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY TO MAKE USE OF THE PLANS.** The governorate plans were much appreciated in both Irbid and Mafraq, as it was hoped they would be linked to greater donor resources. But this did not happen, as most resources targeted either specific sectors, or municipality-level plans. At the same time, the decentralization policy of the Government of Jordan experienced challenges in its implementation, and many resources remain centralized.
- **INTERVENTION SHOULD FOCUS ON ILO'S COMPARATIVE APPROACH TO LED, WHICH OFFERS AN EFFECTIVE PLATFORM TO PROMOTE A LOCAL INTEGRATED STRATEGY ON DECENT WORK,** including access to business development services, skills training, social protection, labour rights, gender equity and the promotion of social dialogue.
- **THE LED APPROACH IS AT THE CORE OF AN UPSTREAM/DOWNSTREAM APPROACH, WHERE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT GOES HAND-IN-HAND WITH POLICY ADVOCACY TO STRENGTHEN AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT** for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. This includes building the capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture centrally, along with the cooperatives and education departments, influencing the national employment policy, working on the legal status of employment services, and supporting ILO efforts to overcome any extant structural, policy or legislative barriers, such as promoting the ratification of the Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181), or reviewing the structure of National Employment Office (NEO) and the whole system of employment services⁵⁸.

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid.



3.3 SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

3.3.1 RECOGNIZING REFUGEES' SKILLS

40 PER CENT OF WORKING SYRIAN REFUGEES ARE EMPLOYED IN THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR (ILO/FAFO, 2015).

60 PER CENT OF SYRIAN REFUGEES HAVE NOT COMPLETED BASIC SCHOOLING, COMPARED WITH 42 PER CENT OF JORDANIANS.

CONTEXT

Some 60 per cent of Syrian refugees above the age of 15 years have not completed basic schooling, and only about 15 per cent have completed secondary education compared with 42 per cent of Jordanians in the same age range⁵⁹. Many Syrians sought refuge in Jordan and Lebanon without their certificates or evidence of qualifications; many had been working in Syria in the informal economy without a certificate in the first place. Moreover, because of the protracted nature of the conflict, skills erosion poses a tangible risk for refugees after more than 5 years in a host country with limited access to the labour market. It is also clear that reconstructing Syria will require numerous qualified workers. The “Building Back Better” concept that is being promoted will require a significant improvement of the skillset of workers involved in the reconstruction process.

STRATEGY

The ILO have implemented a skills training programme for Syrian refugees and Jordanians working in the construction sector in collaboration with the National Employment and Training Company (NET). The objective was to improve workers' employability in occupations that are subject to licensing through the completion of an ILO-supported RPL process⁶⁰. Most refugees and Jordanian workers have been working for several years informally in construction and have the competencies, but have never received a proper diploma or certificate. This was also the first time such a RPL process had been implemented in Jordan.

BOX 11: DEFINITION

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) gives credit for competencies gained through previous learning, other training, and work or life experience as part of skills assessment. It formally recognizes the skills and knowledge that a person already possesses against competencies in the National Training and Vocational Qualifications Framework.

Until October 2017, Syrian refugee applicants for work permits in construction needed to hold RPL certificates, which are obtained through the Centre for Accreditation and Quality Assurance (CAQA). This prerequisite was suspended by the MoL as of 1 October 2017 (see Emerging good practices 2.1.2), but all workers obtaining a work permit in the construction sector can apply to the RPL programme. This work on RPL was a prolongation of the ILO's previous technical support to CAQA on testing and certification, whereby ILO designed the CAQA methodology, contributed to the establishment of a test database, and designed the theoretical and practical tests for selected occupations⁶¹.

The training courses help refugees upgrade their technical expertise, gain knowledge on OSH, and obtain accredited skills certificates, which increases their employability – even if they return to Syria.

PROGRESS

- From September to December 2017, certificates were given to **9,200 workers in 14 occupations in the construction sector**⁶².



FROM SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 2017,
CERTIFICATES WERE GIVEN TO **9,200**
WORKERS IN 14 OCCUPATIONS IN THE
CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

- The month-long programme was aimed at upgrading workers' technical expertise and helping Syrian refugees formalize their employment status in the country.
- The Recognition of Prior Learning Certificate helps employers match job requirements to workers with the right skills.
- Workshops for Syrian and Jordanian workers were conducted by the GFJTU in three governorates – Amman, Irbid and Mafraq. They included such topics as labour rights, collective bargaining, sub-contracting, OSH and social security.

“These workers are already well-experienced, yet we need to help them upgrade their skills and knowledge through training” – **Zyad Haymoor, NET trainer**

61 ILO. (2015d).

62 ILO. (2018b)

3.3.2 IMPLEMENTING EMPLOYMENT SERVICE CENTRES ACROSS THE COUNTRY AND IN THE REFUGEE CAMPS

**80,000 PEOPLE LIVE
IN ZATAARI, THE
LARGEST REFUGEE
CAMP IN THE MIDDLE
EAST.
50 PER CENT ARE
WOMEN.
57 PER CENT ARE
UNDER 24 YEARS OLD.
SOURCE: UNHCR**

CHALLENGES AND NEXT STEPS

The commitment of the Government of Jordan to continue and scale up this approach exists, because the project demonstrated its impact in terms of work permits issued – which is directly related to Jordanian commitment under the Jordan Compact. Although work permit delivery is no longer compulsory, Syrian workers are still showing great interest in getting their skills certified. Therefore, the contractors' association, with ILO support, has also started offering RPL. Other agencies (e.g. GIZ) are also starting to work in partnership with the NET on RPL.

The Prime Minister of Jordan requested ILO to support the management of a vocational training centre for construction – not just for the local market but also for the future reconstruction of Syria. Building back better and greener will take a new set of skills. There is also a need to support private companies to improve their capacities to apply jointly to complex tenders, in Iraq, and later in Syria, in order to support job creation in the sector, but also for contractors to value their current Syrian workforces as an asset for future reconstruction contracts.

STRATEGY

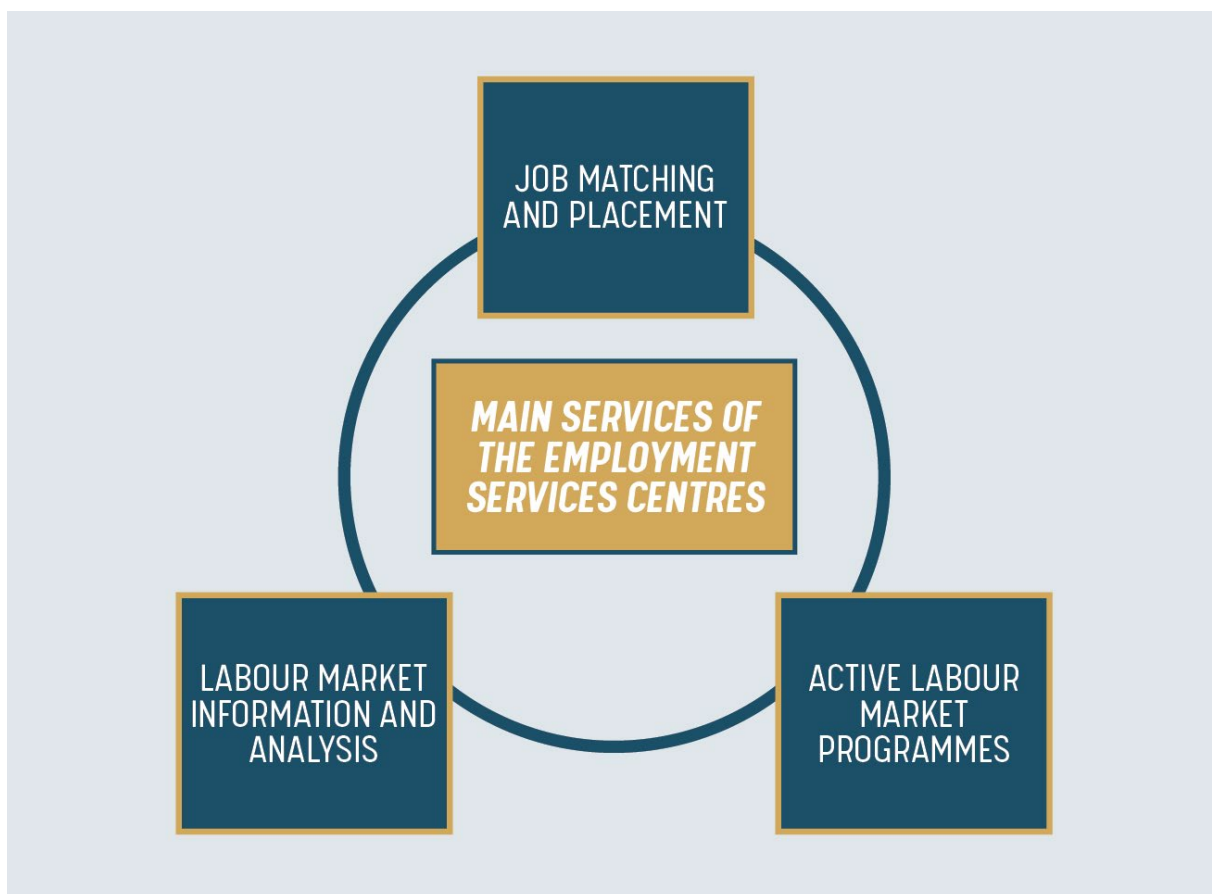
The ILO has set up nine Employment Service Centres (ESCs) hosted by the MoL directorates in Sahab, Madaba, Jarash, Karak, Zarqa, Mafraq, Dhulail, Irbid, and Alhassan Industrial City. In addition, two ESCs have been established in Za'atari and Azraq camps in collaboration with UNHCR. Furthermore, five Guidance and Support Offices (GSOs) were set up inside the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions.

In August 2017, The ILO and UNHCR, in coordination with the Government of Jordan, launched the Zaatari Office for Employment – the Arab region's first employment office for refugees – to help camp residents access formal work opportunities across Jordan. The Zaatari camp is in the Mafraq Governorate, close to Jordan's northern border with Syria, and has become emblematic of the displacement of Syrians across the Middle East following its establishment in 2012. The camp's informal market comprises approximately 3,000 informal shops and businesses⁶³. Following the same model, the Azraq centre for employment was opened in February 2018.

This centre provides employment services and facilitates the issuance of work permits for camp residents. It advertises job vacancies and training opportunities through job fairs, exhibits and other means. ESCs aim to link candidates with suitable employment opportunities, and refer them to potential employers for interviews. The centres also provide refugees with counselling services, information on labour rights, training opportunities and job-matching services.

The ESCs support the agreement between the EU and Jordan by helping Jordanian employers recruit the portion of Syrian labour required in the agreement (see section 5). They also contribute to the Jordan National Employment Strategy, especially regarding the parts that refer to the complementarity of Jordanian and non-Jordanian workforces. The ESCs take a pro-active approach to supporting the labour force participation of women and persons with disabilities.

63 UNHCR, Factsheet, Zataari camp, May 2017.



PROGRESS

In January 2017, the Government of Jordan announced that Syrians living inside refugee camps were entitled to obtain work permits and take up employment in areas outside camps in certain economic sectors open to non-Jordanians.

In Zaatari, a job fair was organized in partnership with the UNHCR, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and the Government's Syrian Refugee Affairs Directorate, and was attended by over 50 national and international companies from across Jordan. Companies advertised over 1,300 jobs for Syrian refugees, mainly in the industrial and agriculture sectors. Over 3,000 Syrian refugees⁶⁴ have already benefited from the initiative and over 350 work permits for the agriculture sector have been issued by the office⁶⁵. The Azraq Centre for Employment was inaugurated in February 2018, where 24 companies took part in a job fair, presenting over 850 job vacancies in manufacturing, agriculture and services.

A specific database programmed by UNHCR records the work permits and facilitates the movement of workers in and out of the camp, helping them make the most of their new jobs. The facility also allows refugees to receive employment advice, counselling and information from ILO officials located in the office daily⁶⁶.

Overall, the 11 employment centres conducted 944 visits to employers, identified 8,391 vacancies and 241 training opportunities, and provided services to 677 companies. The ESCs also provided 32 initial group counselling sessions, 33 job-search skills sessions, and organized 40 job fairs.

64 ILO, Internal report on Zataari ESC, August 2017.

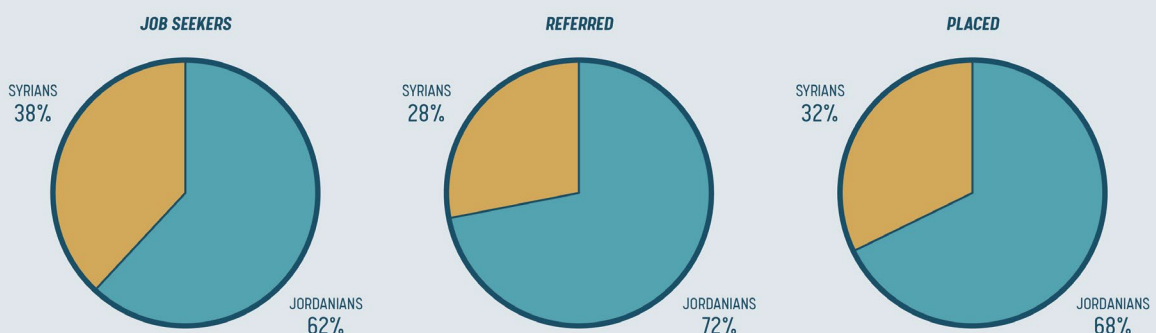
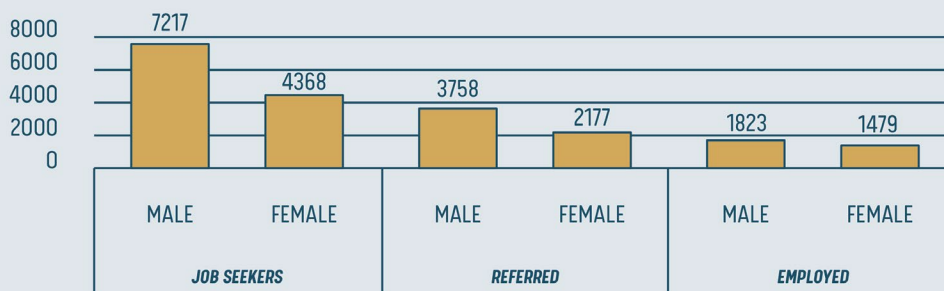
65 http://www.ilo.org/beirut/media-centre/news/WCMS_570884/lang--en/index.htm.

66 Ibid.



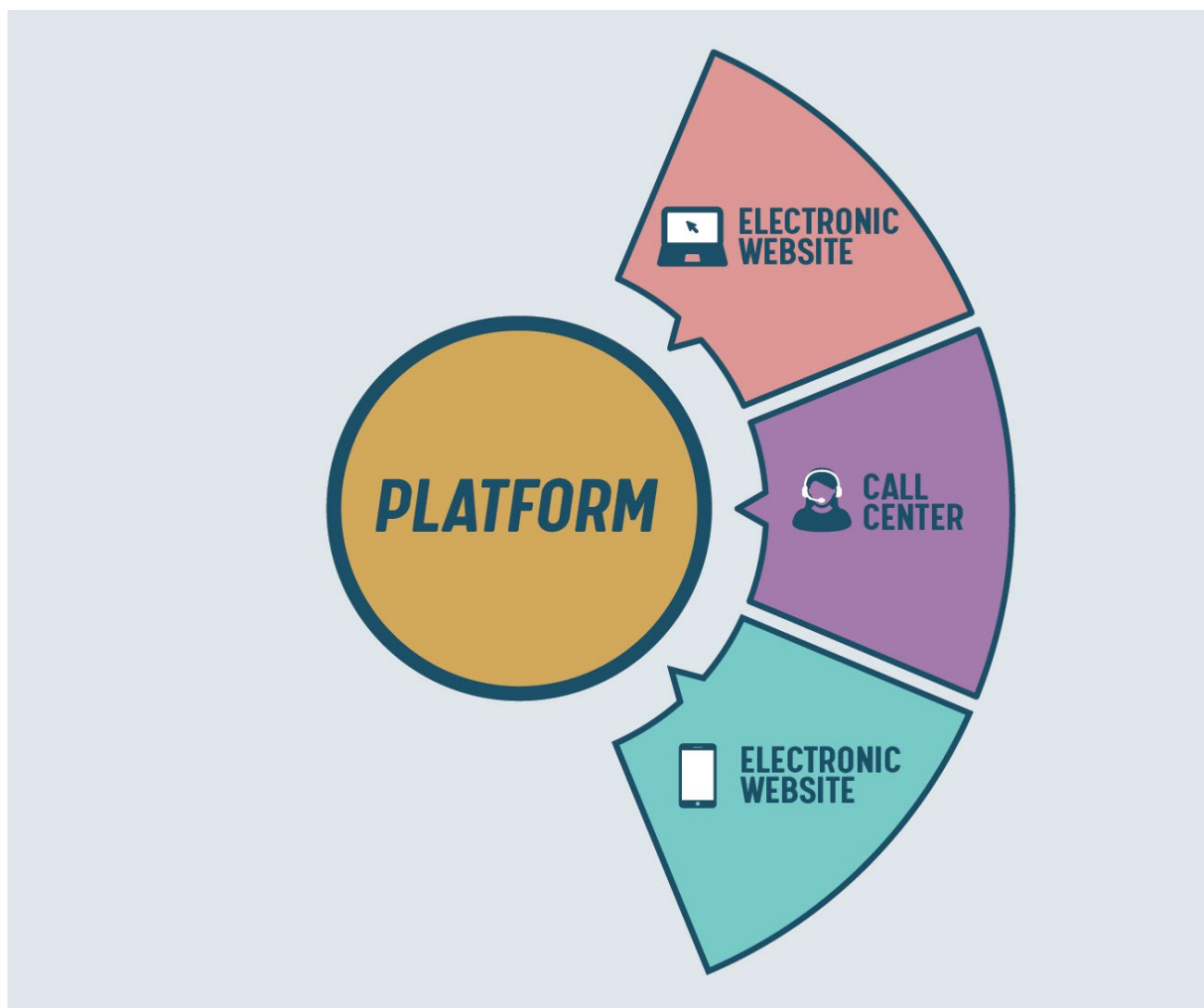
Through the centers, in September 2018, more than 3,300 Jordanians and Syrians have been placed in jobs, including 43% of women. The two employment centers inside Zaatari and Azraq camps helped more than 12,000 Syrian refugees to be matched with jobs, receive on the job training, and recognition of prior learning, as well as work permits in order to access to the labour market outside the camps. The GSOs have also helped deliver 16,000 work permits that formalize Syrians' employment in Jordan.

NUMBER OF JORDANIAN AND SYRIAN JOB SEEKERS BENEFITED THROUGH ESC'S



3.3.3 ESTABLISHING AN EMPLOYMENT COUNSELLING SYSTEM FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

The ILO has developed and launched an integrated employment service platform. Accessible by web and telephone, the platform offers Syrian and Jordanian job seekers enhanced access to job opportunities, trainings, internship and apprentices and career guidance. At the same time, it provides employers with direct access to job seekers and job matching services, facilitated through call support and in-person meetings with ILO's Employment Service Officers across Jordan.



3.3.4 LESSONS LEARNED

- **SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**, upgrading programmes and RPL for refugees have increased their employability in the host country, but also prepare them for their anticipated return to Syria.
- **ESCS OFFER A NUMBER OF CORE SERVICES** needed for registering and matching jobseekers and vacancies, referring affected populations to special employment programmes, such as public works, job training, social services and other relevant support initiatives and institutions, and collecting labour market information. They also link other programmes funded by various donors that will be implemented by UN agencies.
- **GENDER MAINSTREAMING** in vocational training and employment programmes needs to be strengthened and should focus on (a) selection of occupations that are directly available for women; and (b) championing the participation of women in non-traditional occupations.



CONCLUSION

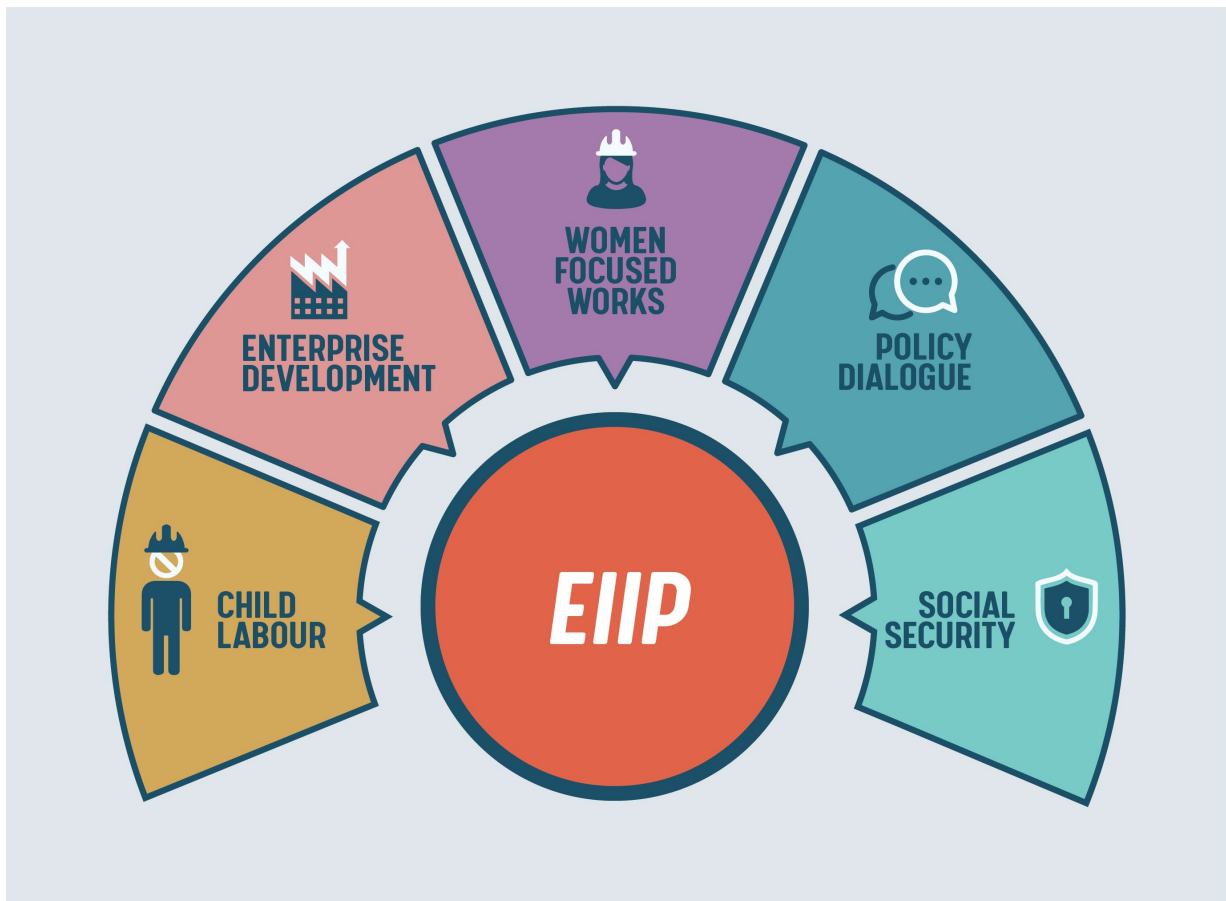
KEY LESSONS LEARNED ON THE ILO STRATEGIC APPROACH FOR REPLICATION

The ILO dramatically scaled up its refugee response intervention framework following the 2016 London Conference. Subsequently, a range of donors have shown increased interest in the ILO approach. Furthermore, trade incentives, such as the revised EU-Jordan Trade Agreement and the relaxation of the EU's RoO (linked to jobs for Syrian refugees), marked a further turning point in international interest in, and funding for, development-focused and employment-rich strategies, particularly in Jordan. In Lebanon, government institutions have become increasingly engaged and interested in the ILO's interventions.

Refugees are now in a better position to voluntarily repatriate in safety and dignity should this become possible. When the war in Syria ends, they will have more resources, skills and economic alternatives to start a new life upon return.

This collection of emerging good practices that support refugees' access to decent work aims to highlight promising initiatives that can be subsequently assessed in greater detail. Drawing on the lessons learned helps to adjust and enhance ongoing initiatives and guide future interventions in similar contexts in the region, such as in Syria, Yemen and Iraq, as well as other parts of the world.

- **EARLY INVOLVEMENT OF THE ILO THROUGH THE MOBILIZATION OF ITS INTERNAL RESOURCES** is crucial and the focus should be on evidence-based policy when advocating on decent employment.
- **THE ILO'S TRIPARTITE STRUCTURE, NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK AND DECENT WORK AGENDA CREATES A UNIQUE POSITION FOR THE ORGANIZATION** in the nexus between humanitarian action and development cooperation.
- **COLLABORATING WITH UN HUMANITARIAN INTER-AGENCY WORKING GROUPS** and clusters on livelihoods and ensuring a more development-oriented response from a very early stage will better contribute to national resilience and response plans from the outset of crises.
- **DEVELOPING AND PROMOTING A COMPREHENSIVE AND HOLISTIC DECENT WORK RESPONSE**, such as the ILO Programme of Support for the Jordan Compact, and targeting host and refugee communities, and aligning with national development strategies is key to ensuring sustainable outcomes and strengthening social stability.



LESSONS LEARNED FOR SCALING UP ACCESS FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES AND HOST COMMUNITIES TO THE LABOUR MARKET

- EIIPS PROVIDE A KEY ENTRY POINT TO CREATE IMMEDIATE EMPLOYMENT THROUGH A COMPREHENSIVE AND INTEGRATED LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND DECENT WORK APPROACH.** EIIPs create short-term decent employment through infrastructure maintenance work, but also trigger a medium-term spin-off effect to the local community, creating indirect employment through the revitalisation of micro and small enterprises⁶⁷. The EIIP spin-off effect is more efficient if it is included in a larger local economic development approach. New jobs will have a positive impact on poverty-reduction, increased purchasing power in affected communities, and reduce dependence on humanitarian aid. In addition, national assets will be safeguarded through the establishment, rehabilitation and maintenance of public, agricultural and environmental infrastructure.
- AN INTEGRATED AND COMPLEMENTARY APPROACH WITH OTHER UN AND ILO INITIATIVES WAS CRUCIAL FOR ENSURING ACCESS TO DECENT WORK THROUGH WORK PERMITS.** The support of the work permit process was complemented by interrelated initiatives to support job-matching, employment services and safer work places through the setting up of 11 employment offices, linking workers with farmers through the cooperatives, training private sector companies and workers applying for permits in OSH and linking workers with the employment-intensive infrastructure programme and other enterprises.
- THE APPROACH OF WORKING THROUGH NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS** from the beginning of a crisis is an efficient and effective way of working that ensures national ownership and sustainability of outcomes. However, early investment in institutional capacity building is critical.

67 ILO. (2010).

- **MORE EVIDENCE IS NEEDED FOR FURTHER POLICY ADVOCACY ON ACCESS TO THE LABOUR MARKET FOR REFUGEES.** Refugee access to the labour market through the work permit system is a highly politically sensitive issue. Therefore, some lessons learned and challenges still need to be analysed and addressed through further research. This research could be later fed into the ILO's continuing policy advocacy work in Jordan and other countries. More time is needed to study outcomes and trends through monitoring and evaluation frameworks to measure long-term impacts.

The 2015 assessment by the ILO and FAFO was instrumental in reaching a better understanding regarding the impact of the Syrian refugee influx on the Jordanian labour market. But the context is rapidly evolving, requiring more in-depth follow-up assessments on the employment outcomes of Syrians since 2015.

- **LEGAL ACCESS TO THE LABOUR MARKET DOES NOT ALWAYS LEAD TO DECENT EMPLOYMENT.** It will be important in the future to assess the advantages and disadvantages of untied/flexible work permits so that workers do not fall into an unprotected, albeit formal, category of workers. A joint ILO/UNHCR study found that having a work permit does not automatically mean decent working conditions. It is, however, a step towards formalizing workers and giving them access to better working conditions, in line with increased efforts to generally improve working conditions in the country. The same study found that having a work permit gave the majority of Syrian refugee workers in Jordan a sense of stability and security. These findings need to be further investigated and analysed in depth in order to be in a position to advocate for the MoL to not only increase the quantity, but also the quality, of jobs.
- **FURTHERMORE, UNDERSTANDING HOW MIGRANT WORKERS ARE IMPACTED BY WORK PERMIT REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES IS CRITICAL.** There is a dangerous competition between local workers, migrant workers, Palestinian refugees and Syrian refugees, with a downward impact on working conditions and wages. The 200,000 jobs to be created for Syrian refugees under the Jordan Compact will be secured through the formalization of existing jobs and the decrease of reliance on migrant workers in certain sectors, who might be consequently excluded from the labour market. The ILO interventions have to ensure that migrant workers are not adversely impacted in accordance with the ILO Fair Migration Agenda. Advocacy work will have to be conducted with other UN agencies and development partners.
- **INTERVENTIONS SHOULD FOCUS AND BUILD ON THE ILO'S COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE.** Employment creation in crisis settings is an area in which a number of other UN, international and national organizations are involved, and the value added by the ILO may be low if it is limited only to similar activities. It needs to identify and capitalize on its principal areas, namely the quality and quantity of employment. Therefore, interventions funded to support employment among Syrian refugees and host communities must be framed within the ILO's Decent Work Agenda, embracing social protection, international labour standards, social dialogue and employment promotion, with the participation of the tripartite constituents. This would entail further in-depth research on the impact of the enrolment of Syrian workers in social security, as well as the potential for the portability of social security benefits between Jordan, Lebanon and Syria (and places of possible resettlement of Syrian refugees).

It is also critical to develop forward-looking strategies that frame the medium and long-term labour market needs of the country. For example, in Jordan this should be integrated into the framework of the National Employment Strategy (NES), which provides a vision for an inclusive and productive labour market. In addition, it would be important for activities to include a focus on ratifying relevant conventions, such as the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122).

- **LEVERAGING EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE IN TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET), AND ACCREDITATION FRAMEWORKS THAT SUPPORT THE LABOUR MOBILITY OF REFUGEE AND NATIONAL WORKERS.** Both Syrian and host community workers employed under various sectors should have the opportunity to receive on-the-job vocational training or RPL certification. This will help to support exit strategies in broadening employability and employment opportunities. The ILO is undertaking advocacy efforts for the recognition of certificates obtained in Jordan by refugees returning to Syria.
- **GENDER RESEARCH AND SPECIFIC PROGRAMMES TO IMPROVE WOMEN'S ACCESS TO THE LABOUR MARKET AND GENDER EQUALITY NEED TO BE GENUINELY PLANNED AND CONDUCTED FROM THE OUTSET OF THE RESPONSE.** Gender analysis and impact assessments for evidence-based advocacy should begin from the start to make sure that women's concerns and needs are included in national and international frameworks and decent employment programmes, particularly in countries and communities that score low on gender-equality indicators, such as in Jordan. Proactive actions by the ILO are needed to tackle gender inequalities, which tend to be exacerbated in crisis situations. The participation of women in the agricultural and construction sectors remains a culturally sensitive issue in Jordan and Lebanon. Work still needs to be done to increase women's participation by: (a) providing the right conditions where women and their families feel they can engage in jobs (e.g. through the provision of transport, childcare centres etc.); (b) championing the participation of women in non-traditional occupations; (c) promoting pay equity; and (d) systematically tackling discrimination in the workplace.
- **STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF SOCIAL PARTNERS AND SOCIAL DIALOGUE IS KEY** in addressing the access of refugees to employment and labour markets and collective representation.
- **PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR SHOULD BE EMPHASIZED TO LINK LABOUR MARKET DEMAND WITH LABOUR SUPPLY.** Current training programmes can be further adapted and adjusted to simultaneously meet the needs of workers and employers.
- **THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES (PWD)** should be addressed and mainstreamed into ILO initiatives.
- **USING MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEMS AND RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES** is crucial for assessing the long-term impacts and extracting the lessons learned in order to scale up interventions. Furthermore, internal ILO administrative bottlenecks in responding to emergencies need to be addressed. For example, even though the ILO has been working in crisis response situations for decades, its administrative, procurement rules and financial systems are not always geared towards the kinds of quick delivery and emergency responses required in such contexts.

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