

## JOBS OUTCOMES STORY

# ON THE JOB

## Expanding Economic Opportunities for Youth, Women, and Refugees in Jordan

### AT A GLANCE

**REGION/COUNTRY** Middle East and North Africa | Jordan

**PROGRAM/PROJECT** Economic Opportunities for Jordanians and Syrian Refugees P4R, Jordan Support to Private Sector Employment and Skills, Enhancing Women Economic Opportunities in Jordan Operation, and Jordan Youth, Technology, and Jobs Project

**FUNDING** \$887 million



### RESULTS



World Bank operations in Jordan are modeling good practice in **generating jobs and expanding economic opportunity** for youth, women, social assistance beneficiaries, and Syrian refugees.



To date, **48,000 Jordanians – 52% women and 11% social assistance beneficiaries – have secured formal-sector jobs and 30,000 are receiving on-the-job training.**



In the growing digital domain, over **4,000 individuals have been trained and more than 3,200 job opportunities** created.



In four years, the number of **work permits granted to Syrian refugees doubled**, and progressive flexible work permit schemes for refugees were introduced, for a total of **340,000 work permits** issued free of charge. By 2021, 162,000+ Syrian refugees were formally employed in Jordan.



Over the coming five years, **10,000 new income opportunities will be generated for youth**, including young women and Syrian refugees.



Eased restrictions in the tailoring, food, and crafts sectors led to over **4,900 new home-based businesses** – more than 2,800 owned by women – by the end of 2023.

### THE CHALLENGE

Economic growth and job creation remain key challenges for Jordan, where the economy has only grown by an annual average of 2.5 percent over the past decade. Unemployment is persistently high (22.3 percent in 2023), particularly for youth (46.1 percent). Women, too, face significant structural barriers to working, from legal restrictions to lack of childcare; at 13.5 percent, Jordan's female labor force participation rate is one of the lowest in the world. Adding to these challenges is Jordan's large Syrian refugee population, who numbered some 1.3 million in 2023. One of the government's main objectives under the Economic Modernization Vision is to create economic opportunities by improving the livelihoods of vulnerable groups, increasing labor force participation, encouraging entrepreneurship, and expanding vocational and technical education and training.

## WBG APPROACH

The World Bank is supporting Jordan in catalyzing growth by improving economic participation, especially for youth, women, the poor and vulnerable, and Syrian refugees. The World Bank is supporting both sides of the labor market: projects are incentivizing businesses to hire and train young workers, while job seekers are receiving on-the-job and classroom training, and young workers are benefitting from professional and digital skills programs and a technology curriculum in schools. Projects are also matching supply and demand, helping jobseekers and employers find each other.

Regulatory reforms have reduced segmentation in the labor market – including barriers related to gender and nationality – and expanded opportunities for women by improving workplace conditions, promoting safe public transport, and expanding women’s access to business credit, affordable quality childcare, and financial inclusion. Employment programs and upskilling efforts have focused on those excluded from the formal labor market, such as young jobseekers, poor households, and women. In several cases, P4R components have helped drive specific policy reforms, programs, and take-up. Together, these efforts are generating jobs, powering growth, and expanding opportunity for all.

## LESSONS LEARNED

A committed government partner is key to success. Jordan is actively engaged in boosting growth and reducing barriers for all workers, and the current Country Partnership Framework promotes inclusive, green growth and job creation, especially for youth and women. Another major lesson is the importance of combining policy and regulatory reforms with investment in programs that create job opportunities, such as through skills building and private-sector incentives.

## NEXT STEPS

With World Bank support, Jordan has made important strides in reducing barriers to women’s employment by expanding childcare and addressing social norms. The momentum will continue in a newly-approved project on women’s economic opportunities, supporting Jordan’s ambitious target to double female labor-force participation from 14 percent to 28 percent by 2033. The Enhancing Women Economic Opportunities project is the first of its kind in the region, and a similar engagement is now under development in Egypt. Meanwhile, the ongoing Support to Private Sector Employment and Skills project will scale up its support to social assistance beneficiaries, and a new social protection project will focus on economic empowerment.

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Through the National Employment Platform, I was able to find this opportunity. Today, I’m formally employed with a work contract. I was able to develop my skills, gain new abilities, and expand my expertise in media and social media. I was also able to become financially independent thanks to this opportunity.

— Rua’a Shaheen, Jordanian employee and beneficiary of the Support to Private Sector Employment and Skills project

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