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LABOUR MARKET ASSESSMENT REPORT

JORDAN

February 2026

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ACRONYMS LIST

AQAC	Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
ILO	International Labour Organization
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LMA	Labour Market Analysis
NOS	National Occupational Standards
RBS	Research Break down Structure
RYSE	Resilient Youth, Socially and Economically Empowered
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Jordan continues to face significant labour-market challenges shaped by economic, demographic, and political factors, including the presence of one of the largest refugee populations globally relative to its size. Limited access to stable employment has contributed to high unemployment, underemployment, and persistent informality, particularly among vulnerable groups such as refugees, women, and youth. These challenges have been further intensified by regional and global shocks, including conflict, inflation, and market disruptions.

In response, the Labour Market Assessment (LMA), commissioned by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) under the EU-funded "Building Pathways to Sustainable Livelihoods" project, examined labour-market dynamics, employment opportunities, and livelihood strategies across Jordan. The assessment focused on identifying demand-driven sectors, analyzing employer recruitment practices, and assessing the role of informal employment and home-based businesses (HBBs) in supporting household livelihoods.

A distinctive feature of this assessment is its emphasis on resilience and adaptability. The analysis explored how workers, households, and businesses respond to external shocks—including inflation, market disruptions, and environmental pressures—and assessed the sustainability of these responses over time. Particular attention was given to skills and livelihood pathways that remain viable under uncertainty and that may support longer-term preparedness, including for Syrians considering voluntary return.

Government employment it did not emerge as a significant employment pathway in the primary data. As a result, it was not reflected as a key analytical theme. The report therefore focuses on private-sector and informal employment, based on the evidence generated rather than a predefined exclusion of public-sector employment.

Th Labour Market Assessment was conducted between September 2025 and January 2026, with primary data collection between 9 November and 4 December 2025 across all 12 governorates in Jordan. The assessment draws on a combination of literature review, employer and worker surveys, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions, providing an evidence-based understanding of current labour-market realities and constraints for Syrian refugees and vulnerable Jordanian host community.

Key Findings

The analysis confirms that employment opportunities in Jordan remain highly concentrated in labour-intensive sectors, including manufacturing, food processing, agriculture, construction, retail, and selected services. These sectors continue to absorb labour, though largely through replacement hiring driven by high turnover rather than sustained job creation. Employment stability is constrained by wage levels, working conditions, informality, and limited prospects for progression, particularly among SMEs. Collectively, these factors fall short of decent work standards, constraining job quality, worker retention, and long-term skills development.

Skills mismatches emerge as a persistent challenge. Employers consistently prioritize practical task readiness and work behaviors over formal qualifications, while training systems remain largely supply-driven and insufficiently aligned with verified labour demand. Where skills development is disconnected from specific occupations and job tasks, transitions into employment weaken.

Private sector engagement is shaped by risk management and cost considerations. Employers demonstrate openness to collaboration when hiring risks are reduced, and operational constraints are recognized, particularly in relation to supervision capacity, turnover, and administrative burden. Work-based learning is valued as a recruitment and screening mechanism, though its effectiveness depends on structure and alignment with actual job roles.

For Syrian refugees, findings indicate that return to Syria is viewed as a conditional and longer-term possibility, not an immediate option. Economic considerations, security, and access to housing dominate return decision-making. Skills that support income generation in Jordan while remaining transferable to a future Syrian context are perceived as most relevant.

Women's participation in the labour market is constrained primarily by operational and structural barriers, including transport, care responsibilities, and workplace arrangements—rather than lack of interest or capability. Home-based businesses play a significant role in enabling women's economic activity under these constraints.

People with disabilities also face challenges in accessing the labour market, with two thirds feeling that their participation is limited by lack of suitable positions. This was followed by workplace inaccessibility (24%) and other factors, such as employer perceptions about people with disabilities.

Home-based businesses are an important livelihood stabilization strategy, particularly for women and Syrians. These activities are concentrated in food production, tailoring, handicrafts, and personal services, selected due to low entry barriers and compatibility with home-based operations. HBB sustainability is limited by market access, income volatility, informality, and saturation, rather than by technical capacity alone.

Informality emerges as a defining characteristic of Jordan's labour market rather than an exception. Across labour-intensive sectors, informal employment functions as a key adjustment mechanism for both employers and workers, enabling income generation

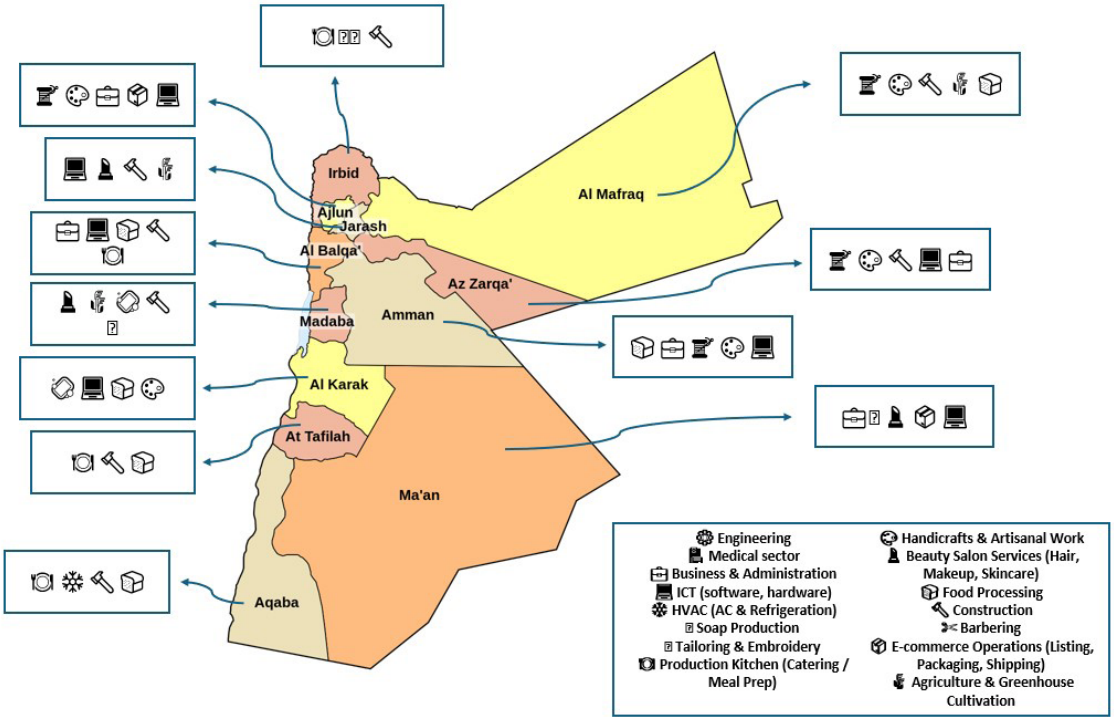
under conditions of regulatory complexity, cost pressure, and economic uncertainty. While informality facilitates labour absorption—particularly for Syrian refugees and low-wage workers—it also constrains job stability, social protection, and opportunities for skills development and progression.

Overall, the assessment identifies manufacturing, food processing, agriculture, construction, textiles, and selected services as the primary sectors shaping employment and livelihood opportunities across Jordan. While these sectors continue to absorb labour, they are characterised by high levels of informality, persistent skills mismatches, and variable job quality, which limit employment stability and progression. Employers report gaps in task-ready skills and work behaviours, while workers face structural barriers related to regulatory costs, limited access to formal employment, and uneven regional opportunities. Informal employment, home-based businesses, and short-term work arrangements therefore remain central livelihood strategies under current economic and regulatory conditions. Together, these findings underscore that labour-market outcomes are shaped not only by sectoral demand, but also by systemic challenges related to informality, skills alignment, and access to enabling conditions.

Regional Differences in Sectors in-Demand

The assessment presents a geographic synthesis of sectors with potential employment opportunities based on market demand across Jordan's 12 governorates. Figure 1 presents a map of each governorate with most high-demand sectors and vacancies based on the assessment findings.

Figure 1 Demand-Driven Employment Sectors and Vacancies by Governorate



The assessment mapped most in-demand employment sectors across Jordan's governorates, based on primary data findings. Karak and Balqa emerge as the governorates with the most diverse overall sectoral demand, as they demonstrate employment opportunities across the largest number of sector categories. Business, Services & Professional sectors are the most in-demand skills across the Kingdom, appearing in almost all governorates. Examples of jobs in this sector computer maintenance, mobile phone repair, graphic design and social media content creation. The second most in-demand sector category is Food Production & Agro-processing, with high demand indicated by employers across most governorates. Opportunities in this sector include, for example, bakery and pastry production, food preservation and pickling, and dairy and cheese production roles. Agriculture & Rural Skills, such as traditional farming skills, represent the least in-demand skill category, showing very limited demand across the analysed activities.

1.1 key recommendations

The assessment finds that labour-market constraints often overlap and reinforce one another, shaping access to employment and livelihood opportunities in cumulative ways. For example, women's participation is frequently constrained by the intersection of informality, transport limitations, and care responsibilities, which together limit access to jobs with fixed locations or working hours. Similarly, Syrian refugees experience layered barriers where informal employment, regulatory uncertainty, and sectoral concentration interact to restrict job stability and progression. These intersectional dynamics indicate that labour-market exclusion is rarely driven by a single factor; rather, it reflects the combined effects of structural, economic, and social constraints operating

simultaneously. Recognising these overlaps is critical to understanding why certain groups remain persistently excluded despite the presence of employment opportunities.

The assessment identifies distinct support needs across labour-market actors and population groups. These needs reflect structural constraints observed in the analysis rather than individual deficits.

Prioritized set of recommendations identified across key actors and population group:

1.1.1 Priority Level 1: Immediate Labour-Market Functioning

1.1.1.1 Employer-Centric Employment Facilitation

Target group: Private sector employers (SMEs)
Indirect beneficiaries: Jordanians & Syrians

Employers across labour-intensive sectors primarily require risk- and cost-reducing support rather than skills supply alone.

To enhance formal wage employment, employers should:

- Job-ready candidates with verified task competence
- Support during onboarding and early employment periods to reduce turnover
- Simplified engagement mechanisms that minimize administrative and compliance burdens
- Structured work-based learning arrangements aligned with production cycles

These needs are most pronounced among SMEs operating under tight margins and high workforce volatility.

1.1.2 Priority Level 2: Group-Specific Structural Barriers

1.1.2.1 Workforce / Jobseekers

Target group: Jordanians and Syrians

Workers and jobseekers require support that strengthens employability and income stability, rather than repeated generic training.

The government, non-governmental NGOs and donors should:

- Strengthen practical, task-based skills development initiatives aligned with real job roles.
- Foster exposure to real work environments through credible work-based learning.
- Provide clear information on employment conditions, wages, and expectations.
- Support addressing access barriers such as transport, documentation, and job matching.
- Address the administrative and permit-related barriers hindering access to formal employment.

1.1.2.2 Syrian Refugee Livelihood Resilience

Target group: Syrian refugees

The assessment finds that Syrians' support needs are closely linked to livelihood resilience under uncertainty. The government, non-governmental NGOs and donors should:

- Support access to skills that support income generation in Jordan while remaining transferable to a future Syrian context
- Support to reduce work-permit costs limiting Syrians' access to formal work
- Facilitate access to flexible employment and home-based livelihood options.
- Work to reduce exposure to regulatory and enforcement risks through clearer regulations, more accessible legal work pathways, and support for compliant home based and flexible livelihood options.

1.1.2.3 Women's Economic Participation

Target group: Jordanian & Syrian women

Women's participation from both refugees and host communities is constrained less by skills availability and more by operational and structural barriers.

Employers should:

- Adapt employment models to be more compatible with care responsibilities and limited mobility.
- Consider flexible working hours and consider facilitating transport solutions.
- Ensure safe and predictable work environments.

In addition, access to income-generating options that allow home-based or near-home participation can increase women's labour market participation.

1.1.2.4 INCLUSIVE EMPLOYMENT FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITY

Target group: Jordanian & Syrian People with disabilities

The assessment indicates that persons with disabilities face structural barriers to labour-market participation, primarily related to job design, workplace accessibility, transport, and employer uncertainty rather than lack of skills or willingness to work. While employers report general openness to inclusive hiring, practical constraints—such as limited capacity to adapt tasks, physical environments, and supervision models—restrict actual employment opportunities.

The government, non-governmental NGOs and donors should:

- Support employers in developing policies that enable adaption of job roles and fostering accessible workplaces
- Support intermediary-led matching that aligns individual capacities with feasible tasks within existing sector demand.

1.1.3 Priority Level 3: Home-Based Business (HBB) Sustainability

HBB operators require support focused on sustainability and income stabilization, not rapid growth. Key needs include:

- Improved access to local and extended markets beyond immediate social networks,
- Practical business skills (costing, pricing, basic financial management),
- Product quality, food safety, and basic marketing skills,
- Small-scale, credit-based financial support—potentially complemented by targeted in-kind inputs in clearly justified contexts—remains important for overcoming start-up and working-capital constraintsContext-sensitive guidance on compliance without imposing early formalization.

2. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

2.1 APPROACH

The Labour Market Assessment (LMA) was implemented using a mixed-methods design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to generate statistically robust and contextually rich evidence on labour market dynamics across Jordan's 12 governorates. This approach enabled triangulation between data sources and ensured balanced coverage of both labour supply and demand.

2.1.1 Study Design

The assessment consisted of:

- **Quantitative surveys** target workforce participants and employers to capture employment status, skills, labour demand, and market constraints.
- **Qualitative research** through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) to explore underlying drivers, perceptions, and structural challenges.

Literature review: The assessment included a desk review to analyse available secondary data, which was conducted using a range of credible online sources listed in the reference section. This desk review was conducted in parallel with the primary data collection to ensure continuous alignment between secondary and primary evidence. Findings from the desk review were subsequently compared and triangulated with results from quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, and were used to inform the analysis, interpretation of results, and final reporting.

This section also covered the Syrian labour market in recognition of the significant presence of Syrian refugees in Jordan and their integral role in the local labour force. Syrians constitute a share of workers in several labour-intensive sectors in Jordan, and their employment outcomes directly affect labour-market dynamics, service delivery, and social cohesion.

The assessment also reflects the study's dual perspective on Syrian refugees' future trajectories, including both continued stay in Jordan and potential return to Syria. It examines the skills, constraints, and labour-market barriers Syrians face in Jordan, as well as the types of skills likely to be required upon return in a post-conflict and recovery context.

2.1.2 Sampling Strategy

2.1.2.1 Quantitative Sampling

A representative sample design was applied for the quantitative component, at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error, the minimum statistically required sample size was 384 respondents, based on a national workforce population of approximately 7,079,705 individuals.

A dual-frame sampling approach was used to ensure representation of both labour supply and demand, Workforce Survey: 90% of the total sample, Employer Survey: 10% of the total sample

Although registered companies represent approximately 2.8% of the workforce population, employer representation was intentionally increased to 10% to strengthen demand-side analysis.

2.1.2.2 Qualitative Sampling

The qualitative component of the Labour Market Assessment complemented the quantitative survey and was designed to cover the key research themes and stakeholders within the labour market. A purposive sampling approach was applied to ensure representation across regions, nationalities, gender, and institutional roles.

The qualitative research consisted of 7 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and 7 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs).

2.1.3 Data Collection Methods

2.1.3.1 Quantitative Surveys

Structured questionnaires were administered digitally by trained enumerators to workforce participants and employers.

To strengthen outreach and increase participation rates, the assessment team conducted direct calls to the workforce database. For respondents who required support, enumerators administered the survey verbally by asking all questions and recording participants' responses directly into the digital system. This approach ensured the inclusion of individuals while maintaining data accuracy and respondent consent.

Within the workforce survey, a total of 402 responses were initially collected. Following data cleaning and quality checks, and to ensure the reliability and consistency of the dataset, 348 responses were retained for final analysis.

For the employer survey, 52 responses were initially received. Following data cleaning and quality assurance procedures, 41 responses were retained for final analysis to ensure data reliability and consistency.

2.1.3.2 Qualitative Methods

Qualitative data was collected through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) using a combination of face-to-face and online modalities. This blended approach ensured flexibility, accessibility, and broad geographic coverage while maintaining the quality of data collection.

All FGDs and KIIs were conducted using semi-structured guides, with informed consent obtained from all participants. Sessions were documented through recordings to support accurate transcription and subsequent qualitative analysis.

2.1.4 Data Analysis

- **Quantitative data** was analyzed using descriptive and comparative analysis to identify trends, gaps, and differences by gender, nationality, and location.

The quantitative analysis used digital analysis, as shown in the table below:

Table 3: Quantitative Data Analysis Tool

Analysis Type	Purpose	Indicators	Tool
Descriptive Analysis	Interpret the data characteristic	Mean, Median, Mode, Range, and Standard Deviation	Excel
Findings	Highlight general findings about market characteristics	Percentages reflected in Graphs regarding main research questions	Excel

Source: EDAMA, 2025

- **Qualitative data:** all interviews and focus group discussions were transcribed verbatim prior to analysis. The transcripts were then analyzed using MAXQDA software, applying a thematic coding approach to identify recurring patterns, key themes, and relationships across stakeholder groups and locations. Findings were triangulated with quantitative results to enhance the robustness of the analysis.

The quantitative data analysis went through the following stages.

Figure 2:Quantitative Data Analysis Stages

Source: EDAMA, 2025

2.2 Sampling Coverage

The assessment adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys, qualitative interviews, focus group discussions, and a literature review to ensure robust and representative findings.

The quantitative component covered all 12 governorates of Jordan, with samples distributed proportionally to population size to ensure national representativeness. A total of 389 valid responses were achieved following data cleaning and validation, comprising 348 workforce surveys and 41 employer surveys. The workforce sample was nearly evenly split by nationality (50.9% Syrian and 49.1% Jordanian) and gender (52.0% female and 48.0% male), allowing for comparative analysis across population groups. Minor reallocations across governorates were applied where response rates or refugee concentrations were lower, while maintaining overall geographic balance.

The qualitative component engaged 69 participants, including 7 key informant interviews (KIIs) with government institutions, private-sector employers, vocational training providers, and international organizations, and 7 focus group discussions (FGDs) with 62 jobseekers across Amman, northern and southern governorates, and a dedicated women-only group. This qualitative coverage enabled deeper exploration of labour-market dynamics, barriers, and employer perspectives.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were purposively selected to address specific research questions and to provide qualitative depth within a mixed-methods design. The objective of the KIIs was not statistical generalization, but to contextualize, interpret, and explain patterns emerging from the quantitative employer and workforce surveys and FGDs.

The employer survey served as the primary source of evidence on labour demand, recruitment practices, and skills needs. In parallel, three employer KIIs were conducted to capture deeper insights into employer decision-making, hiring constraints, and changes over time that cannot be fully explored through structured surveys alone. This included an interview with a Syrian-owned manufacturing firm to examine recent shifts in the hiring of Syrian workers from an employer perspective.

The garment sector training institution was selected because it represents one of the most actively hiring sectors identified across both the literature review and primary data. To complement this sector-specific perspective, a KII was also conducted with the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Center for Vocational Education and Training (AQAC-VET) to provide a cross-sectoral, system-level view on training quality, accreditation, and alignment with labour-market demand.

In this labour market assessment, disability is understood as long-term physical, sensory, intellectual, or psychosocial impairments which, when combined with societal, environmental, and workplace barriers, can limit an individual's participation in employment and economic activities. The assessment also recognizes self-identification, whereby individuals categorize themselves as having a disability based on their lived experience and perceived functional limitations.

In addition, a literature review was conducted in parallel with primary data collection, drawing on credible secondary sources. Findings from the desk review were systematically triangulated with quantitative and qualitative data to strengthen analysis, validate trends, and inform interpretation of results.

Detailed sampling tables and coverage by governorate, nationality, gender, and data-collection tool are provided in Annex

2.3 Constraints and Challenges Encountered and Mitigation Strategies

The implementation of the Labour Market Assessment faced a few operational and contextual constraints that are common in large-scale, nationwide labour-market studies conducted in complex and fluid environments. These challenges were addressed through adaptive strategies to ensure data quality, representativeness, and analytical validity.

2.3.1 Access and Response Constraints

Access to respondents varied across governorates and population groups, particularly in locations with lower population density or limited employer presence. In some areas, lower response rates were observed among specific respondent categories, including employers and formal-sector representatives, reflecting time constraints, survey fatigue, and operational pressures within businesses.

Mitigation Strategy:
To address these limitations, data collection efforts were adjusted through targeted follow-up, reallocation of outreach within governorates, and flexible scheduling. Minor reallocations were applied where necessary to maintain national representativeness while preserving proportional geographic coverage, as reflected in the final validated sample.

2.3.2 Employer Engagement Challenges

Engaging private-sector employers, particularly SMEs, presented challenges related to availability, reluctance to share information, and sensitivity around employment practices, wages, and informality. Some employers demonstrated limited willingness to participate in longer interviews or detailed surveys.

Mitigation Strategy:
Employer engagement was strengthened using experienced enumerators, clear communication on confidentiality and data use, and concise survey tools focused on operational realities rather than compliance. Key Informant Interviews were used to complement survey data and deepen understanding of recruitment practices and labour demand.

2.3.3 Representation of Vulnerable and Informal Workers

Capturing the experiences of informal workers, home-based business operators, and individuals engaged in irregular employment posed challenges due to the absence of formal records and hesitation to disclose sensitive livelihood information.

Mitigation Strategy:
Trust-building approaches were applied during qualitative data collection, emphasising anonymity and the non-regulatory nature of the assessment. Focus group discussions were used as a primary tool to capture nuanced livelihood strategies and coping mechanisms that are not easily reflected in quantitative surveys.

2.4 Secondary Research Findings (Summary)

A targeted literature review was conducted in parallel with primary data collection to contextualise the assessment and support triangulation. The review was structured thematically to capture both the structural features shaping Jordan's labour market and the population- and sector-specific patterns most relevant to the assessment objectives. It covered:

- Labour Market Context and Key Employment Trends
- Economic Drivers and Emerging Sectors
- Skills Demand and Workforce Readiness
- Population-Specific Challenges and Inclusion
- Regulatory & Policy Constraints
- Recommendations and Strategic Linkages to Enhance Employment
- Syrian Labour Market

The full secondary research synthesis and the literature source table are provided in Annex [8].

2.4.1 Alignment Between Secondary Evidence and Primary Findings

The literature review largely reinforces the key patterns observed in the 2025–2026 primary data and strengthens the credibility of the assessment's core conclusions.

Labour market pressure and exclusion patterns. Secondary sources confirm persistent unemployment dynamics and low participation, particularly for youth and women, driven by structural economic weaknesses, limited formal job creation, and restrictions affecting workforce entry. The literature also validates the assessment's observation that participation constraints are often multi-layered—combining economic need with practical barriers such as transport, care responsibilities, and limited access to enabling services.

Informality as the dominant employment modality. The literature strongly supports the assessment's findings on widespread informality across governorates and sectors. Importantly, sources distinguish that informality is not confined to "informal businesses," but is also present within formal sectors through arrangements such as lack of contracts, absent social security enrolment, and non-compliant employment practices.

Skills mismatch and training–market misalignment. The literature consistently validates the assessment's findings that skills mismatch remains a central constraint and that training interventions are more effective when linked to verified demand and clear job roles. Sources also reinforce that employer engagement is often late-stage and limited to placements, rather than early involvement in curriculum design or work-based learning models. This supports the assessment's emphasis on demand verification mechanisms, modular pathways, and employment-outcome KPIs over training completion metrics.

Syrian refugees: constrained formal access and sector concentration. Secondary findings strongly confirm that Syrians remain concentrated in labour-intensive sectors and continue to rely heavily on informal work. This aligns with the assessment's findings on administrative friction, employer reluctance to hire formally, and the resulting dependence on informal arrangements with higher vulnerability.

3. PRIMARY RESEARCH:

SUPPLY AND DEMAND ANALYSIS

(PRIVATE SECTOR & EMPLOYERS)

3.1 Growing and Emerging Economic Sectors

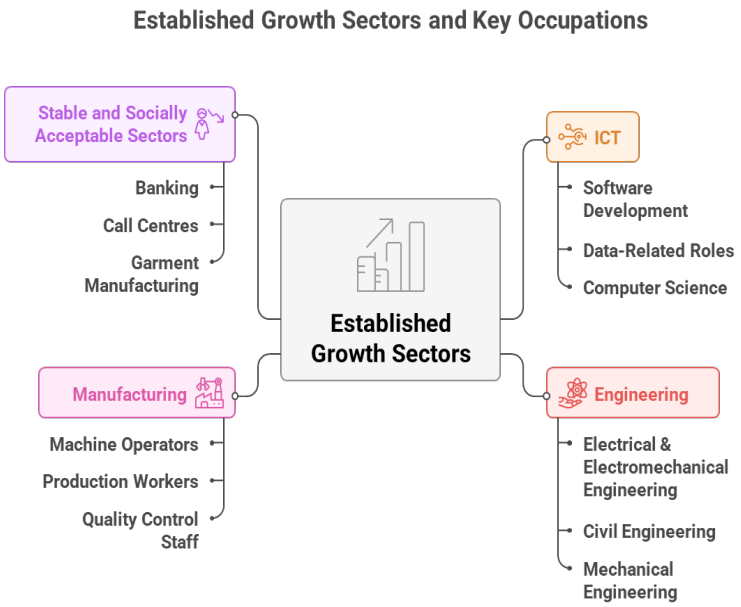
Labour demand in Jordan is unevenly distributed across sectors and population groups, reflecting differences in formality, regulatory access, and exposure to economic and external shocks. Findings point to a labour market characterised by a core of established growth sectors, a set of labour-intensive and accessible activities that absorb vulnerable workers, and a smaller group of emerging and green sectors that remain unevenly institutionalised. Together, these patterns illustrate how sectoral growth does not translate uniformly into employment opportunities for all groups

3.1.1 Established Growth Sectors in Jordan

The identification of established growth and demand sectors is based on triangulated evidence from multiple data sources. Workforce surveys and FGDs captured jobseekers' direct observations of available vacancies and employment opportunities they have accessed or encountered in the labour market, while employer surveys provided primary evidence on current hiring needs and demand. These findings were further validated through KIIs with employers, training institutions, and labour-market actors to contextualise trends and distinguish sustained demand from individual experiences. As such, the sectors identified reflect converging supply- and demand-side evidence rather than standalone perceptions.

Labour demand remains concentrated in several established sectors that continue to offer relatively stable employment opportunities, particularly for Jordanians in urban areas. These sectors are typically characterised by higher levels of formality, clearer occupational structures, and stronger links to infrastructure investment, industrial production, and institutional services.

Figure 3: Established Growth Sectors and Key Occupations



Across FGDs, Jordanian participants—(Employer and non-employer) especially youth and women in Amman—consistently identified information and communication technology (ICT), engineering, and manufacturing as sectors with sustained demand. ICT-related occupations, including software development, data functions, and computer science, were repeatedly described as expanding and increasingly institutionalised within the formal labour market (FGD1). Engineering disciplines—particularly electrical, civil, mechanical, and electromechanical engineering—were similarly associated with ongoing demand, driven by infrastructure projects and industrial activity.

Manufacturing and industrial production emerged as a major employment pillar from both worker and employer perspectives. Employers reported continued demand for machine operators, production workers, quality-control staff, and technical supervisors, particularly in large factories and industrial zones. Within this category, the garment sector remains a significant employer, especially for women, with factories and satellite production units continuing to absorb large female workforces (KII4). In parallel, Jordanian women identified banking, call centres, and non-governmental organisations as stable and socially acceptable employment options in urban contexts (FGD7), reflecting a preference for predictable working conditions and formal arrangements.

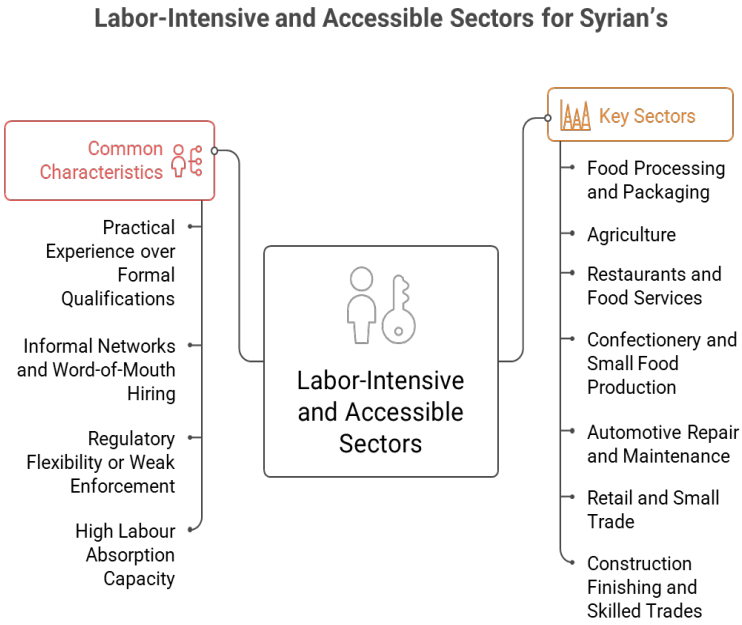
While these sectors contribute to labour-market stability, access remains uneven. Regulatory requirements, credential recognition, and formal recruitment practices largely restrict participation to Jordanians, limiting opportunities for Syrians despite overall market expansion. As a result, established growth sectors continue to reinforce labour-market segmentation by nationality and qualification level.

3.1.2 Labour-Intensive and Accessible Sectors

In contrast to the sectors prioritised by Jordanians, Syrians consistently associated labour demand with labour-intensive and lower-barrier sectors that rely on practical experience rather than formal qualifications and are more adaptable to restrictive work-permit frameworks.

Across FGDs in Amman, northern, and southern governorates, Syrian participants identified food processing, packaging, agriculture, restaurants, confectionery, automotive repair, retail, and construction maintenance as sectors with continuous demand (FGD2; FGD3; FGD6). These activities were perceived as accessible due to their reliance on informal recruitment channels and on-the-job learning. Agriculture and food-related work—both factory-based and home-based—were repeatedly described as fallback or survival sectors, particularly where permit enforcement is weaker or seasonal labour is tolerated. Construction-related activities, especially finishing, maintenance, and skilled trades, were also viewed as growing due to ongoing demand for manual labour, though typically accessed informally.

Figure 4 Labour Intensive and Accessible Sectors



These patterns suggest that labour demand for Syrians is shaped less by sectoral growth dynamics and more by regulatory flexibility and enforcement practices. Labour-intensive sectors function as absorptive spaces under constrained conditions, enabling livelihood continuity while simultaneously reinforcing informality, limited job security, and weak prospects for progression.

3.1.3 Emerging and Transitional Sectors

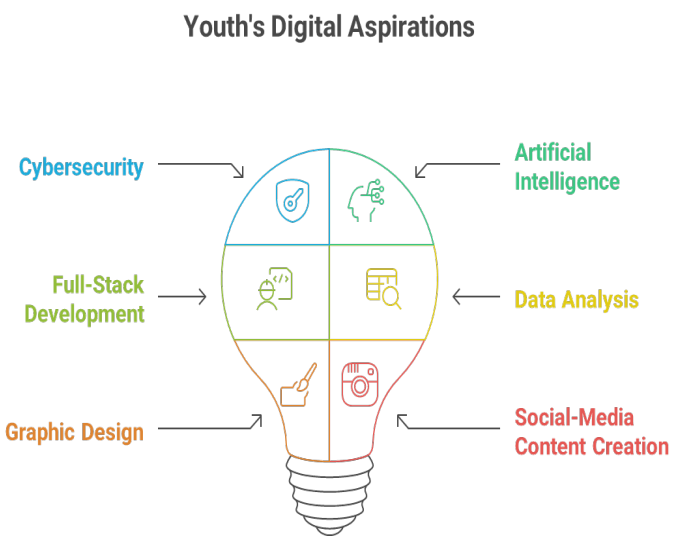
Emerging sectors in Jordan are closely linked to digitalisation, online services, and creative industries and are widely perceived—particularly by youth—as holding future employment potential. However, access to these sectors remains uneven and highly stratified across population groups.

Youth across regions highlighted cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, full-stack development, data analysis, graphic design, and social-media content creation as fields with growing visibility and perceived future relevance (FGD1; FGD3; FGD4; FGD6; FGD7). Jordanian women, in particular, identified social-media management and digital content services as expanding niches, driven by small businesses increasingly outsourcing online presence and marketing functions.

At the same time, FGDs pointed to substantial barriers to entry. For Jordanians, participation is constrained by skills gaps, high training costs, and weak school-to-work transitions. For Syrians, digital sectors were largely described as aspirational due to documentation requirements, Permits restrictions, and limited access to formal digital platforms. Instead, Syrians—particularly young men—reported engagement in informal online trading (stocks) and speculative digital activities as emerging but high-risk livelihood strategies (FGD2; FGD3).

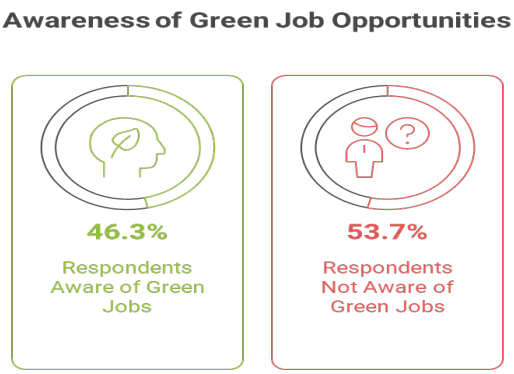
Employer and training-provider perspectives corroborated the emergence of creative industries and outsourcing services. Labour shortages were reported in film and media production, where international projects struggle to source locally trained technicians. Business-process outsourcing (BPO), including customer service and administrative support for international Companies with headquarters in Jordan was also identified as an expanding segment, although currently concentrated in urban centres and requiring language and digital competencies (KII5). Without clearer pathways for skills development and formal participation, these sectors risk remaining fragmented and exclusionary.

Figure 5: Youth's Digital Aspirations



3.1.4 Green and Climate-Related Sectors

Figure 6: Awareness of Green Hob Opportunities

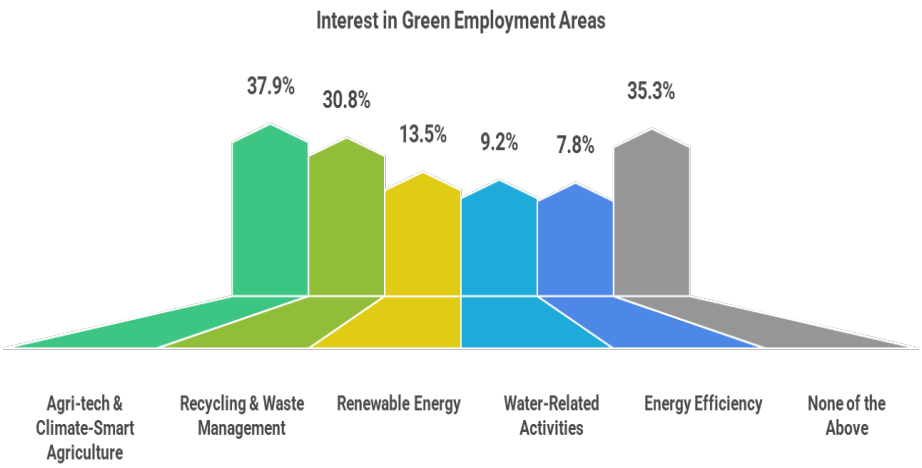


Green and climate-related activities are beginning to register within Jordan's labour market, but remain nascent, unevenly distributed, and primarily visible through practical, low-barrier activities rather than fully developed green industries.

Survey data indicate moderate awareness of green employment opportunities: 46.3% of respondents reported having knowledge of green jobs, while 53.7% indicated no awareness.

Interest was highest in Agri-tech and climate-smart agriculture (37.9%) and recycling (30.8%), suggesting that green jobs are most associated with agriculture-related innovation and waste management. Interest in renewable energy (13.5%), water-related activities (9.2%), and energy efficiency (7.8%) was notably lower, while 35.3% of respondents selected none of the listed green options, reinforcing the still-nascent nature of this employment space.

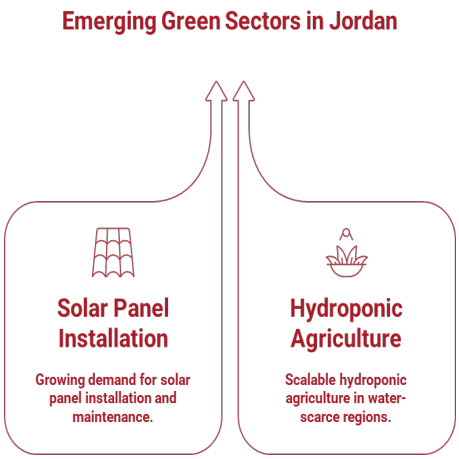
Figure 7 Interest in Green Employment Areas



FGDs help explain these patterns. Jordanian youth frequently cited solar-panel installation and maintenance as one of the most visible and expanding green job areas, particularly in urban and peri-urban settings (FGD3; FGD4; FGD7). Hydroponic and climate-resilient agriculture was discussed as a scalable alternative to traditional farming in water-scarce regions and perceived as more attainable than technology-intensive green roles (FGD3; FGD5; FGD6). Syrian participants, particularly in southern governorates, described engagement in recycling, waste sorting, and material recovery as common livelihood activities. These roles provide income opportunities but remain informal, labour-intensive, and low-skilled, offering limited prospects for advancement.

Institutional stakeholders similarly noted that growth in waste management, composting, recycling, and renewable-energy value chains is often driven by donor-supported initiatives rather than sustained private-sector investment (KII2; KII3). As a result, while green sectors offer emerging livelihood options, their current contribution to inclusive employment remains constrained.

Figure 8: Emerging Green Sectors in Jordan



3.2 Sectors Currently Offering Vacancies

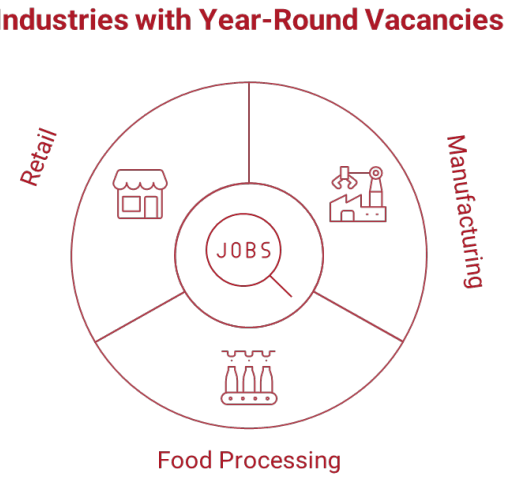
While the sectoral patterns outlined in the previous section highlight where economic activity and growth are concentrated, they do not fully capture where job vacancies materialise in practice. Evidence from FGDs, KIIs, and survey data indicates that vacancies in Jordan are not evenly distributed across the labour market but instead concentrate in a limited number of labour-intensive sectors characterised by high turnover, seasonal demand, and flexible or informal employment arrangements. Although vacancies are frequently reported in these sectors, they rarely translate into stable or protected employment, particularly for Syrian workers.

3.2.1 Sectors with Ongoing, Year-Round Vacancies

A small group of sectors—most notably manufacturing, food processing, and retail—were consistently described as offering year-round vacancies. These vacancies are driven less by sustained expansion and more by continuous production pressures, labour turnover, and the need to replace exiting workers rapidly.

Manufacturing and industrial production were repeatedly characterised in FGDs as sectors where vacancies are "always open," particularly for production-line workers, packaging staff, machine operators, and basic administrative roles. Participants noted that recruitment often continues even when firms are not formally expanding, reflecting persistent labour demand linked to production targets and high turnover. This perception aligns with workforce survey findings, where 23.3% of respondents identified manufacturing as offering the best employment opportunities in their area. Employer data further reinforces this pattern, with 50% of manufacturing firms expecting hiring to increase and 33% anticipating stable staffing levels.

Figure 9 Industries with Year-Round Vacancies



Food processing similarly emerged as a sector with persistent vacancies across Amman and the northern and southern governorates. FGDs described frequent recruitment in bakeries, dairy plants, confectionery factories, catering facilities, and packaging workshops. Participants consistently attributed this demand to physically demanding work, low wages, and high worker turnover rather than to growth in production capacity. From the workforce perspective, 20.7% identified agriculture and food processing as leading sources of employment opportunities, while employer data show that 40% expect increased hiring and a further 40% anticipate stable staffing levels.

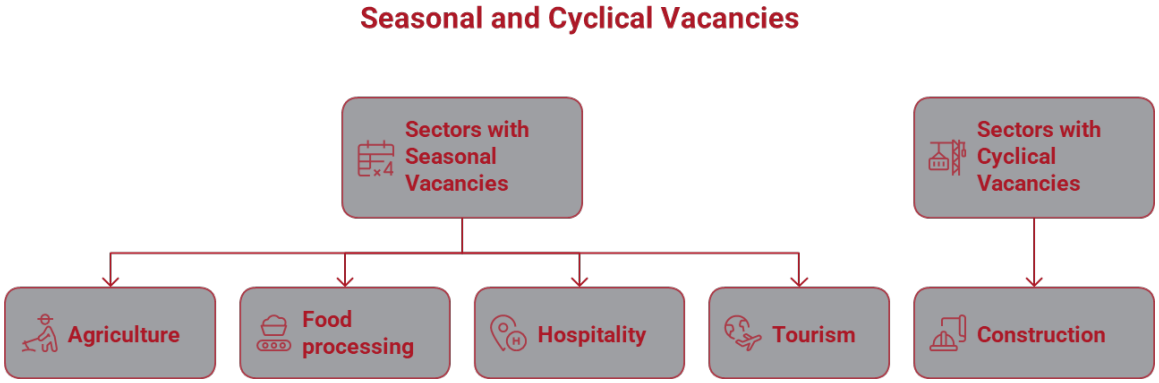
Retail and small commercial shops were also identified as providing ongoing vacancies, particularly in urban neighbourhoods and market areas. FGDs highlighted that shop work is often accessed informally through personal networks, with employers hiring quickly to replace departing workers. Although only 6.3% of workers identified trade as offering strong employment opportunities, employer expectations suggest steady recruitment, with 33% anticipating increased hiring and 33% expecting stable employment.

Taken together, these findings indicate that year-round vacancies are concentrated in sectors where employment is sustained through continuous replacement rather than long-term retention. While these sectors provide important entry points into work, their reliance on high turnover limits their contribution to employment stability and decent-work outcomes.

3.2.2 Sectors Offering Seasonal or Cyclical Vacancies

Other sectors were characterised by seasonal or cyclical vacancy patterns, with hiring closely tied to agricultural cycles, project timelines, and fluctuations in consumer demand.

Figure 10 Seasonal and Cyclical Vacancies



Agriculture was consistently described as the most predictable source of seasonal employment. FGDs detailed recruitment peaks linked to planting, harvesting, and food-processing cycles, particularly in olive picking, vegetable farming, and fruit sorting. Workers emphasised that jobs are "always available at certain times," but income remains short-term and insecure, reinforcing agriculture's role as an accessible but unstable livelihood option rather than a pathway to sustained employment.

Construction was described as cyclical rather than seasonal, with hiring patterns closely linked to project lifecycles. Employer KIIs indicated that workers are typically recruited for fixed periods and return to unemployment once projects conclude. Although only 2.0% of workers identified construction as offering strong employment opportunities, employer data show that 67% of construction firms expect hiring to increase. KIIs clarified that this demand is driven primarily by shortages in engineers and skilled technicians and is geographically concentrated around Amman and major infrastructure projects, rather than reflecting broad-based access for jobseekers across governorates.

Hospitality and tourism were described as highly sensitive to external shocks. FGDs noted that restaurants and hotels recruit actively during peak seasons but reduce staffing rapidly when demand declines. Despite this volatility, 9.5% of workers identified hospitality as offering employment opportunities, reflecting its short-term absorptive capacity rather than employment stability.

Overall, seasonal and cyclical sectors play an important role in absorbing labour during peak periods but offer limited predictability or income continuity, particularly for households already exposed to economic shocks.

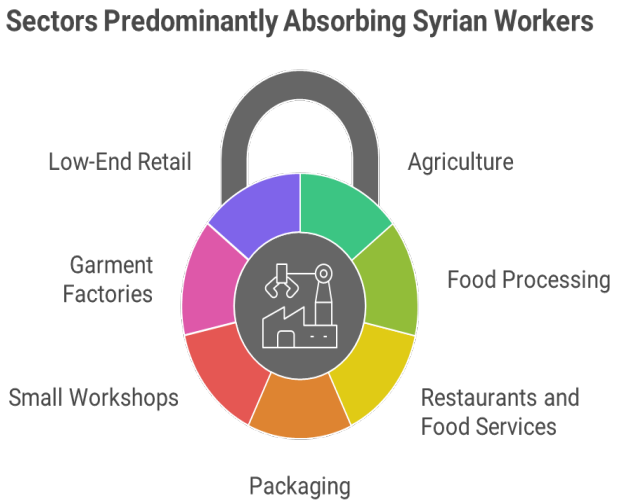
3.2.3 Sectors Predominantly Absorbing Syrian Workers

Vacancy patterns accessible to Syrian workers are highly concentrated and segmented, with employment opportunities largely confined to labour-intensive sectors characterised by high turnover, informality, and flexible hiring arrangements.

Across FGDs, Syrian participants consistently identified agriculture, food processing, restaurants, packaging, small workshops, and low-end retail as the primary sectors where vacancies are realistically available. These vacancies were described as frequent but unstable, driven primarily by rapid worker turnover rather than by expansion or improved working conditions.

Employer survey data partially corroborate these patterns while also highlighting sectoral variation. Overall, 39.0% of surveyed employers reported currently employing Syrian workers, compared to 61.0% who do not. Disaggregated by sector, agriculture and food processing emerged as the most accessible, with 80% of surveyed employers reporting Syrian employment. Manufacturing and industrial production showed partial absorption, with 50% of manufacturers indicating the employment of Syrians. A small number of technical and maintenance services also reported employing Syrians, underscoring the role of skills-based, workshop-level trades.

Figure 11 Sectors Predominantly Absorbing Syrians workers



By contrast, several sectors—including trade, ICT and digital services, business and administration, education and training, and public administration—reported no Syrian employment among surveyed firms. These findings are consistent with qualitative evidence pointing to regulatory barriers, work-permit constraints, and formal recruitment practices as key exclusion mechanisms. FGDs further indicated that Syrians access manufacturing—particularly garment factories and production workshops—through roles prioritising practical experience over formal credentials, while agriculture remains the most accessible sector due to seasonal demand and comparatively relaxed enforcement.

These patterns indicate that Syrian workers operate within a narrow vacancy landscape shaped by regulation and informality rather than by overall labour demand. Even where vacancies are frequent, they are concentrated in sectors offering limited protection and progression, reinforcing labour-market segmentation.

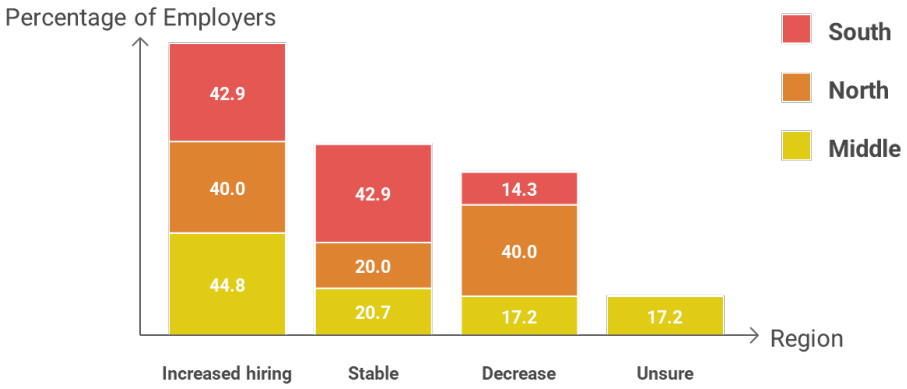
3.2.4 Geographic Patterns in Vacancies

Vacancy availability varies significantly by location, reflecting differences in sectoral concentration, infrastructure investment, and regional exposure to economic shocks. Evidence from FGDs, KIIs, and employer survey data indicates that labour demand is spatially uneven, with distinct vacancy dynamics across the Middle, Northern, and Southern regions.

As shown in figure 1, the Middle region—particularly Amman and surrounding industrial zones—concentrates the highest volume and diversity of vacancies, driven by manufacturing, food processing, retail, and services operating year-round. Employer expectations for the next 6–12 months suggest a moderately optimistic but cautious outlook, with 44.8% anticipating increased hiring, 20.7% expecting stable employment, and 17.2% anticipating a decline. The relatively high level of uncertainty (17.2%) reflects cautious planning and sensitivity to market conditions rather than clear expansion commitments.

In the North, vacancy patterns appear more volatile and uneven. FGDs highlighted reliance on agriculture-linked activities, food processing, and small workshops, resulting in intermittent hiring. Employer expectations are sharply polarised, with 40.0% anticipating increased hiring and an equal share (40.0%) expecting a decline, while 20.0% foresee stability. This split suggests uneven sectoral performance rather than a uniform regional trend.

Figure 12 Employer Hiring Expectations



Employer Hiring Expectations by Region For the Next 6–12 Months

The South shows the most stable outlook. Employment opportunities are concentrated in agriculture, food processing, and selected services, and employer expectations reflect relative confidence: 42.9% expect stable employment and an equal share (42.9%) anticipate growth, with only 14.3% expecting a decline.

Across regions, Syrian participants noted that vacancy access by is shaped by the concentration of Syrian workers in specific areas and by local enforcement practices, with agriculture, food processing, and low-end services more accessible in areas with higher Syrian concentrations and less stringent permit enforcement. Overall, regional vacancy dynamics point to cautious growth in the Middle and South, contrasted with greater volatility and divergence in the North.

3.3 Recruitment Practices, Job Requirements, and Hiring Barriers

This section examines how employers recruit, screen, and select workers, and the barriers shaping hiring decisions across sectors and regions. Evidence from employer surveys, FGDs, and KIIs indicates that recruitment practices in Jordan prioritise speed, flexibility, and risk minimisation. While this approach sustains continuous hiring in labour-intensive sectors, it reinforces informality, limits entry-level access, and disproportionately constrains youth, women, Syrian workers, and persons with disabilities.

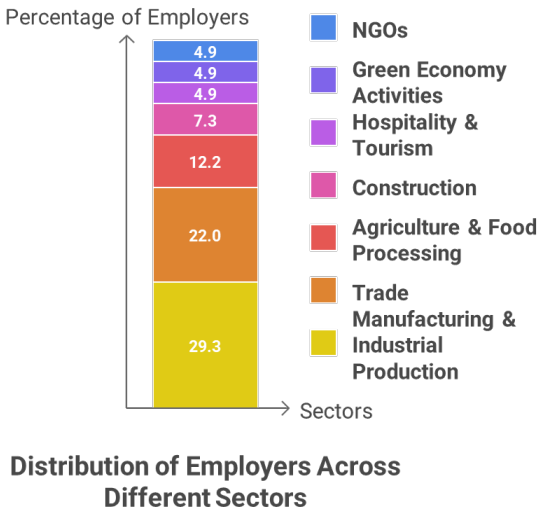
3.3.1 Employer Profile and Demand Characteristics

The employer survey reflects a geographically and sectorally diverse sample, with firms primarily located in Amman (43.9%), followed by Balqa and Karak (12.2% each), Zarqa (9.8%), and representations from northern and southern governorates. This distribution captures labour demand across central, northern, and southern regions, with a stronger weighting toward urban and peri-urban markets.

Sectorally, employers are concentrated in manufacturing and industrial production (29.3%), trade (22.0%), and agriculture and food processing (12.2%), aligning closely with sectors identified earlier as driving both growth and vacancies. Smaller shares operate in construction (7.3%), hospitality and tourism (4.9%), green economy activities (4.9%), and NGOs (4.9%), while ICT, education and training, technical services, business and administration, and public administration remain marginally represented.

Firm structures are dominated by small and medium enterprises. Nearly half of employers operate as limited liability companies (46.3%), while 36.6% are sole proprietorships. Most firms employ between 6 and 49 workers (56.1%), with a further 19.5% employing 50–249 workers. Workforce gender composition varies markedly: 41.5% of firms report very low female representation (0–9%), and only a minority report gender-balanced or female-dominated workforces, reflecting persistent sectoral and structural barriers to women's employment.

Figure 13 Distribution of Employers Sectors

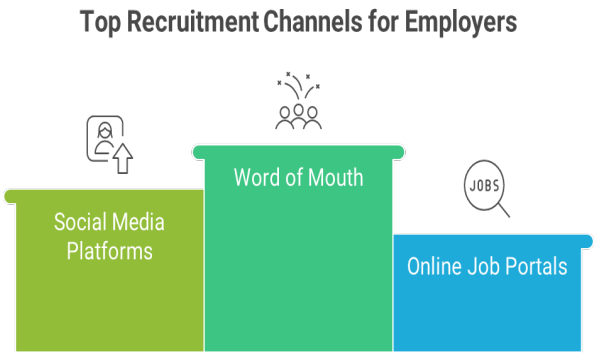


3.3.2 Recruitment Channels and Hiring Practices

As shown in figure 2, recruitment is heavily reliant on informal and semi-formal channels. Word of mouth is the most commonly used hiring mechanism (68.3%), followed by social media (53.7%) and online job portals (43.9%). Formal labour-market intermediaries play a limited role, with only 17.1% of employers using AQAC channels and fewer than 10% engaging public employment services, universities, or NGOs.

FGDs confirm that Syrians rely primarily on Facebook and WhatsApp groups to access jobs in production, packaging, agriculture, and small workshops, enabling rapid matching but offering little transparency or protection (FGD2; FGD6). In agriculture and seasonal work, recruitment is often organised through informal team leaders who negotiate directly with employers, operating outside formal systems.

Figure 14 Top Recruitment Channels for Employers



Screening practices reflect employers' emphasis on immediate productivity. CV screening (73.2%) and skills testing (70.7%) are the most common selection steps, followed by trial days (48.8%).

In practice, FGDs indicate that screening in labour-intensive sectors is often minimal, with trial days serving as a key risk-shifting mechanism, particularly where formal probation arrangements are absent.

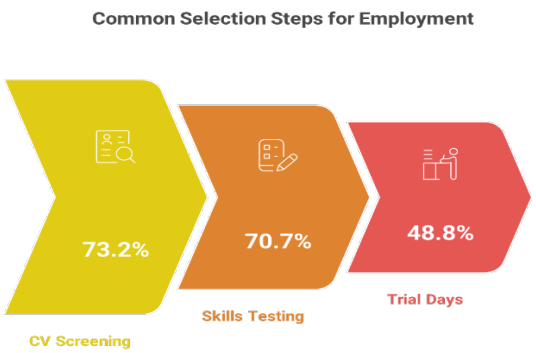
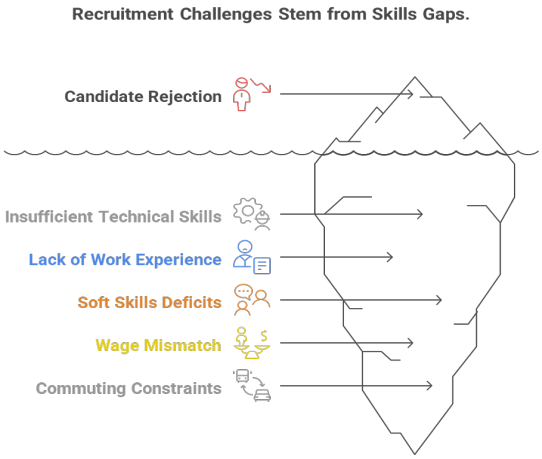


Figure 15 Recruitment Challenges Stem from Skills Gaps



3.3.3 Job Requirements and Reasons for Rejection

Job requirements are predominantly practical rather than credential based. Employers most frequently cited insufficient technical skills (68.3%), lack of experience (53.7%), and soft-skills gaps (39.0%) as reasons for rejecting candidates. Wage mismatch (26.8%) and shift or commuting constraints (29.3%) further indicate misalignment between job offers and candidates' financial or logistical realities.

Qualitative findings highlight exclusionary effects. Jordanian women reported repeated rejection from formal roles due to employers' preference for mid-level experience, limiting access for fresh graduates (FGD7). Syrians described work-permit requirements as a decisive exclusion factor in regulated sectors, regardless of skills, effectively channelling them into informal employment (FGD6). In technical and service trades, employers' expectation of immediate hands-on competence reflects the absence of structured entry-level or trainee pathways.

3.3.4 Hiring Barriers for Syrians, Women, and Persons with Disabilities

Regulatory constraints are the primary barrier to hiring Syrians. Among surveyed employers, 61.1% cited permit fees as the main challenge, followed by process complexity (33.3%), sectoral restrictions (25.0%), and sponsorship requirements (22.2%). Issues related to renewals (16.7%) and mobility (13.9%) further limit access, explaining Syrians' concentration in informal and low-regulation sectors.

Barriers to women's employment are largely practical rather than attitudinal. Employers most frequently cited transport constraints (43.9%), inadequate facilities (26.8%), care responsibilities (19.5%), and shift systems (17.1%). Social norms were cited far less frequently (4.9%), suggesting that operational and logistical factors are more frequently cited than social norms in shaping employers' hiring decisions for women.

Figure 16 Barriers to Hiring Syrians Workers

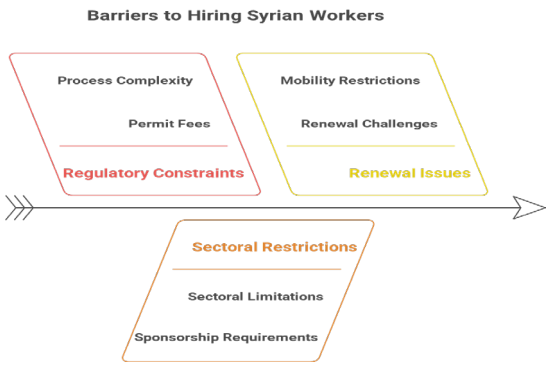
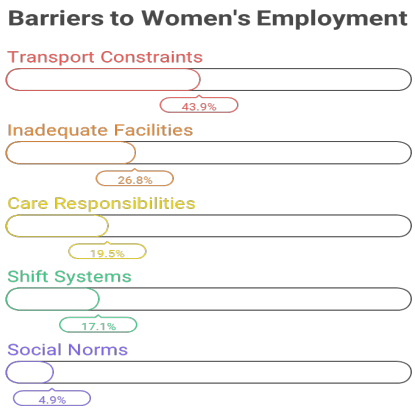


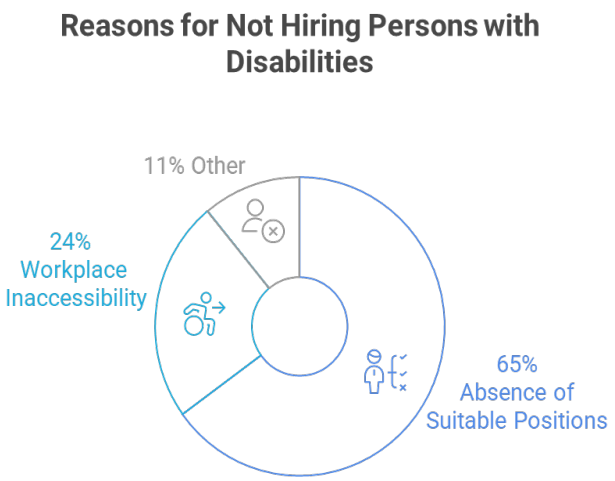
Figure 17 Barriers to Women's Employment



With respect to persons with disabilities, 39.0% of employers currently employ PwDs, while 19.5% report that hiring is under consideration. Among employers not hiring PwDs, the dominant reasons cited were the absence of suitable positions (65%) and workplace inaccessibility (24%).

Qualitative evidence suggests these barriers are largely structural. Employers in industrial sectors noted that production environments often involve heavy materials, fast-paced lines, or hazardous machinery, making job adaptation necessary but currently limited in practice (KII5). Overall, exclusion appears driven more by job design and physical environment than by unwillingness to hire.

Figure 18 Reasons for Not Hiring Persons with Disability



3.4 SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES DEMANDED BY EMPLOYERS

This section examines the skills and competencies that employers currently demand when making hiring decisions. Evidence from employer surveys and KIIs indicates that labour demand in Jordan is shaped less by formal qualifications and more by immediately applicable technical skills, practical work readiness, and core behavioural competencies. Across sectors, employers emphasised the ability of candidates to contribute productively from the first day of work, reflecting limited capacity for prolonged onboarding and training within most firms.

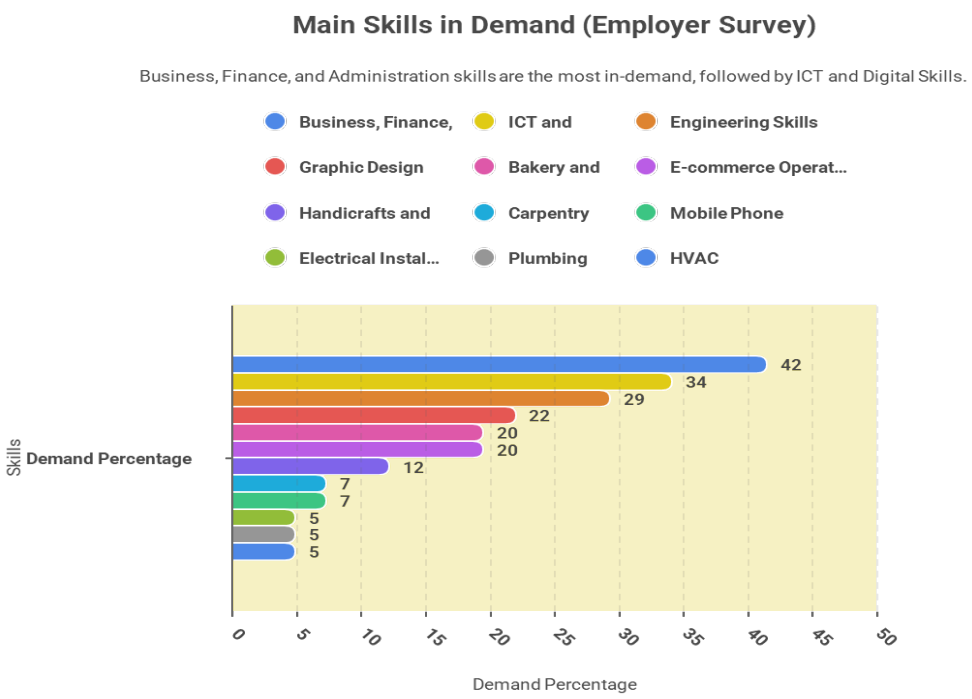
3.4.1 Technical Skills in Current Demand

Employer survey results show that demand is concentrated in a defined set of functional skill clusters linked to operational needs across both productive and service sectors. Business, finance, and administration skills were identified as the most in-demand (41.5%), reflecting sustained recruitment for clerical, coordination, and basic supervisory roles across manufacturing, trade, services, and NGOs. These roles typically require familiarity with documentation, basic financial tracking, inventory systems, and internal coordination processes.

ICT-related skills ranked second (34.1%), encompassing system use, basic programming, digital operations, and technical support functions. KIIs clarified that demand is strongest for applied digital skills rather than advanced specialisation, particularly in roles supporting production systems, administration, customer management, and online operations (KII5). Employers consistently stressed functional digital literacy as a baseline requirement across an expanding range of occupations.

Engineering skills (29.3%) also featured prominently, driven by demand in construction, manufacturing, and infrastructure-related activities. KIIs indicated that employers prioritise task-specific engineering competencies—such as machinery operation, maintenance, and site-based problem solving—over theoretical credentials, particularly in industrial and project-based environments (KII7).

Figure 19 Main Skills in Demand



Mid-level production and service skills continue to play an important role in labour demand. Employers reported ongoing need for bakery and pastry production (19.5%), e-commerce operations (19.5%), graphic design and social-media content (22.0%), and handicrafts and artisanal work (12.2%), reflecting a mix of formal enterprise requirements and market-oriented small-business activity. Demand for vocational trades—including carpentry (7.3%), electrical installations (4.9%), plumbing (4.9%), HVAC (4.9%), and mobile-phone repair (7.3%)—remains steady but highly sector- and location-specific, often shaped by local market conditions rather than national hiring trends.

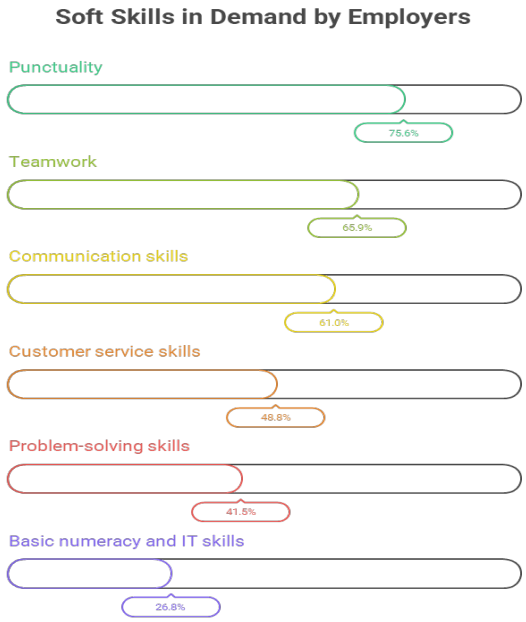
Across sectors, KIIs confirm that formal qualifications are valued where regulation requires them, but are frequently secondary to demonstrated competence, practical experience, and immediate task readiness (KII5; KII7).

3.4.2 Soft Skills as Core Hiring Filters

Soft skills function as essential hiring filters across sectors, shaping employer assessments of work readiness alongside technical competence. Employer survey data show that punctuality (75.6%), teamwork (65.9%), and communication (61.0%) are the most consistently required behavioural attributes. Problem-solving (41.5%) and customer-service skills (48.8%) are particularly important in service-oriented roles, while basic numeracy and IT skills (26.8%) are treated as minimum expectations rather than differentiating factors.

KIIs indicate that employers prioritise soft skills primarily as a risk-management measure. Employers reported that weak punctuality, poor communication, and limited teamwork increase supervision burdens, disrupt workflows, and contribute to early turnover—costs that are difficult to absorb in small and medium enterprises with limited managerial capacity (KII5). In industrial and construction environments, employers further emphasised compliance with instructions, coordination with team members, and basic safety awareness as critical to maintaining productivity and preventing operational disruptions (KII7).

Figure 20 Soft Skills in Demand by Employers



In service, retail, and administrative roles, employers highlighted communication, responsiveness, and customer-handling skills as central to service quality and organisational reputation. Several KIIs noted that while technical competencies can often be developed on the job, behavioural attributes and work attitudes are far more difficult to correct post-hiring, making soft skills a decisive factor in recruitment decisions.

3.5 Opportunities for Work-Based Learning (WBL)

Against this demand-side skills profile—where immediate task readiness, practical competence, and behavioural reliability outweigh formal credentials—employers increasingly view work-based learning (WBL) as a critical mechanism for skills acquisition and recruitment. WBL enables firms to assess candidates in real production environments, mitigate hiring risk, and compensate for gaps between training outputs and workplace requirements. Evidence from employer surveys, FGDs, and KIIs indicates strong recognition of WBL as a preferred skills-development and recruitment mechanism. However, actual implementation remains uneven and highly conditional, shaped by operational capacity, cost considerations, and system-level coordination gaps.

3.5.1 Role of Qualifications, NOS, and Work-Based Learning

The use of formal qualifications and National Occupational Standards (NOS) varies considerably across sectors. Employers in regulated industries and larger firms—particularly manufacturing, construction, and ICT—reported stronger reliance on certified skills and standardised competencies to reduce operational risk and ensure productivity (KII1; KII5; KII7). At the same time, many employers indicated that existing training outputs do not consistently align with workplace requirements, especially for mid-skill technical roles.

Against this backdrop, WBL is widely viewed as a more effective mechanism for bridging skills gaps, particularly for candidates lacking prior experience.

Note: Employers described trial days, on-the-job training, and short practical placements as essential tools for assessing suitability and translating theoretical knowledge into operational competence. WBL was consistently described as most effective when embedded in real production environments with clearly defined tasks, rather than delivered as unpaid or purely observational training.

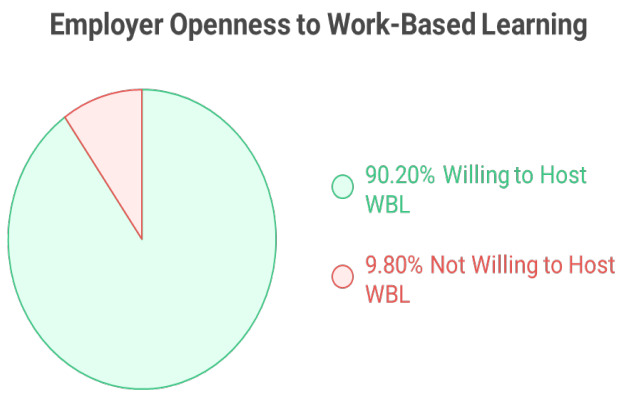
While occupational standards are developed systematically and aligned with labour-market needs, AQAC , Jordan's national commission tasked with strengthening and regulating technical and vocational skills development to ensure high-quality training and workforce readiness that aligns with labour market need, emphasised that skills mismatches arise primarily at the training-delivery level, particularly where providers lack equipment or deviate from approved WBL methodologies.

3.5.2 Employer Willingness to Host WBL Placements

Employer survey data indicate high stated openness to WBL: 90.2% of surveyed firms reported willingness to host internships, apprenticeships, or on-the-job training. This reflects strong recognition of WBL as both a recruitment pipeline and a cost-effective skills-development strategy. However, qualitative evidence highlights a gap between willingness and sustained implementation.

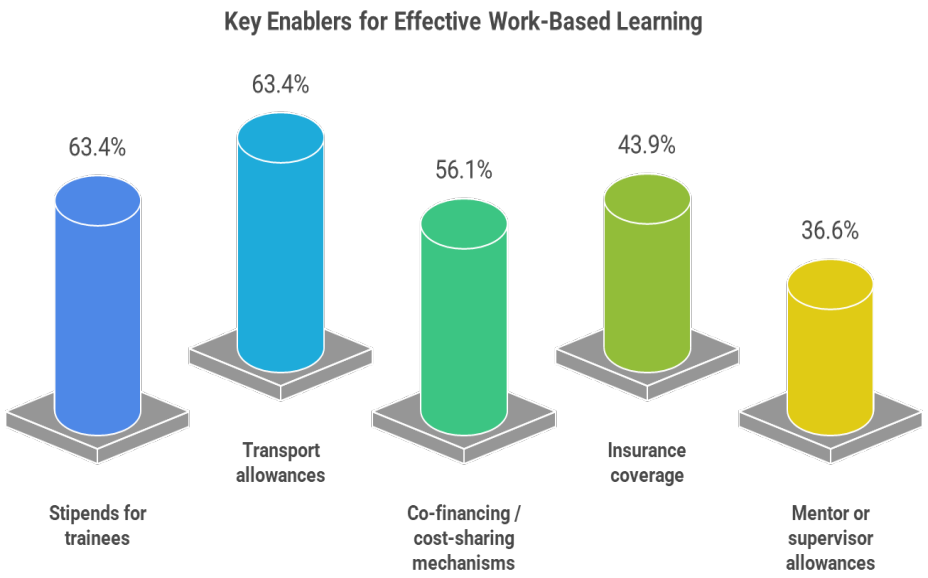
Employers emphasised that hosting trainees is viable only when risks and costs are shared. The most frequently cited enablers for effective WBL include stipends for trainees (63.4%), transport allowances (63.4%), and co-financing or cost-sharing mechanisms (56.1%). Insurance coverage (43.9%) and mentor or supervisor allowances (36.6%) were also identified as important, reflecting the real workload and liability implications of supervision. Administrative or legal facilitation—such as permits or formal MoUs—was requested by 26.8% of employers, particularly where formal placements are required.

Figure 21 Employee Openness to Work- Based Learning



FGDs reinforce these findings. Jordanian youth and Syrian participants alike described unpaid internships or placements without transport support as financially exclusionary, particularly for low-income households (FGD1; FGD2). Participants noted that even modest financial and logistical support significantly improves attendance, continuity, and completion of training periods.

Figure 22 Key Enablers for WBL



3.5.3 Conditions Shaping WBL Feasibility at the Workplace Level

Across FGDs, WBL effectiveness was shown to depend less on programme design and more on workplace readiness. The presence of a competent and committed supervisor was consistently identified as the single most important determinant of whether WBL leads to meaningful skill acquisition (FGD2; FGD5). Where supervision is structured and intentional, trainees gain practical exposure; where supervision is weak or competitive dynamics exist, trainees are often left to self-learn, undermining outcomes.

Employers confirmed that operational constraints limit WBL uptake. KIIs indicate that in manufacturing, garment, and construction sectors, WBL must align with production cycles and staff availability. Construction employers, in particular, noted that placements are feasible only during active project phases when engineers have time to supervise; outside these windows, placements are declined regardless of employer intent (KII7). Similar constraints were reported in service sectors, where supervision can disrupt core operations (FGD1).

3.5.4 Sectoral, Regional, and Equity Considerations

Opportunities for WBL are unevenly distributed across sectors and regions. Manufacturing, garments, food processing, construction, and selected service industries were identified as the most suitable sectors for WBL, given their reliance on practical skills and task-based learning. By contrast, access to structured WBL in professional and digital sectors remains limited and geographically concentrated.

FGDs revealed strong regional disparities. Participants in southern governorates reported that most structured training and employer-linked placements are concentrated in Amman, limiting access without transport or accommodation support (FGD6). For Syrians, WBL is often confined to short, informal onboarding periods rather than structured apprenticeships, reflecting legal, administrative, and sectoral constraints (FGD2; FGD6). Women participants also raised concerns about internships being used as unpaid labour—particularly in administrative and NGO settings—reducing trust in WBL arrangements and discouraging participation (FGD7).

3.5.5 System-Level Constraints Affecting WBL and National Occupational StandardsImplementation

KIIs consistently highlighted the absence of a fully institutionalised apprenticeship system in Jordan, alongside weak coordination between TVET institutions, universities, and employers, resulting in fragmented placements and variable quality (KII1; KII4).

AQAC further noted that the high cost of equipping training workshops to mirror real workplace technologies limits the effectiveness of both institutional training and WBL integration, particularly in technical and industrial occupations.

4. PRIMARY RESEARCH:

SUPPLY ANALYSIS

(WORKFORCE)

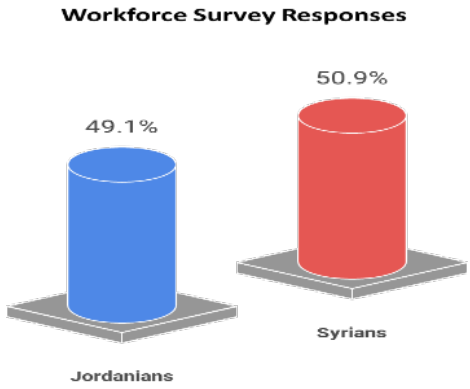
4.1 Workforce Profile

The workforce survey captured responses from 348 individuals, almost evenly split between Jordanians (49.1%) and Syrians (50.9%). Among Syrian respondents, the majority (80.1%) reside outside formal refugee camps, while 19.9% live inside camps, indicating that most Syrians in the sample have access tohost-community labour markets. Women constituted 52.0% of respondents and men 48.0%, resulting in a broadly balanced gender representation.

The sample is predominantly young. Respondents aged 20–24 represent the largest share (27.9%), followed by those aged 25–29 (23.0%). Together, individuals under 30 account for over half of all respondents, It highlights the sampling.

Smaller proportions fall within the 30–34 (13.2%), 35–39 (10.1%), and 40–44 (8.9%) age groups. Very young respondents (15–19) account for 5.2%, while those aged 45 and above each represent less than 6% of the sample.

A meaningful minority of respondents (11.2%) reported having a disability or long-term health condition affecting daily activities or work capacity. Most reported conditions are physical, particularly musculoskeletal limitations that restrict mobility and endurance. Others cited visual or hearing impairments and chronic illnesses underscoring the presence of health-related constraints within the labour supply.



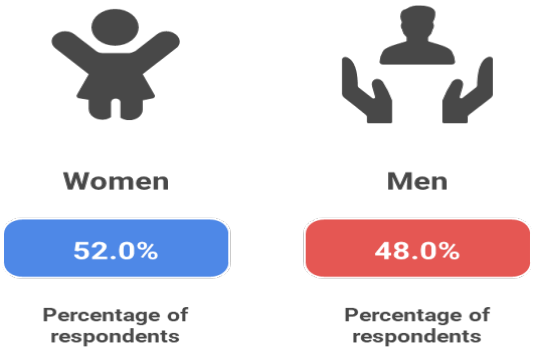
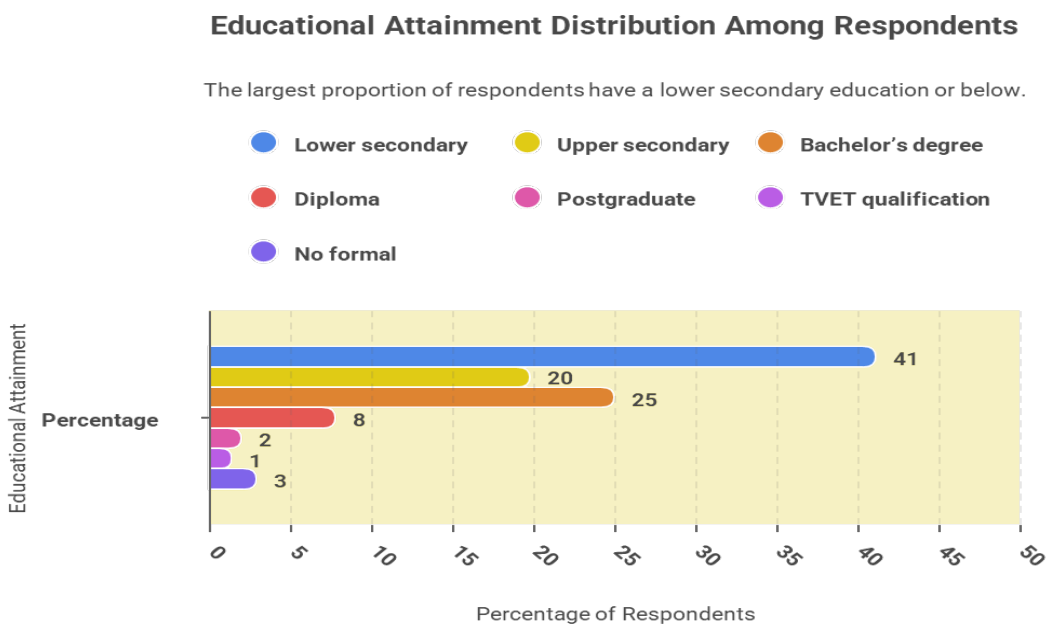


Figure 23 Educational Attainment Distribution



Educational attainment varies widely. Around 41.1% of respondents have not progressed beyond lower secondary education, while 19.8% completed upper secondary. A quarter of respondents (25.0%) hold a bachelor's degree, representing the largest single educational group. Smaller shares reported diploma-level education (7.8%), postgraduate studies (2.0%), TVET qualifications (1.4%), or no formal education (2.9%), pointing to a bifurcated workforce with limited penetration of formal vocational pathways.

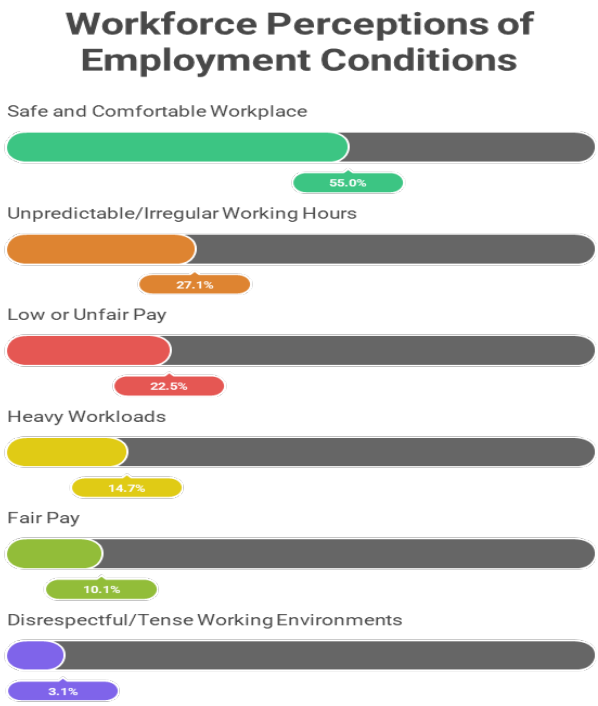
Labour-market status reflects significant supply pressure. Nearly half of respondents are unemployed (46.5%), while 26.2% are employed and 18.1% engaged in self-employment or home-based work. Students account for 9.2% of the sample.

4.2 Employment Conditions and Job Quality

Employment quality in Jordan is uneven, with basic physical safety often co-existing alongside low wages, long hours, and weak employment stability. While 55.0% of respondents described their workplaces as physically safe, other indicators reveal structural deficits in decent-work conditions. More than a quarter reported irregular or unpredictable working hours (27.1%) and heavy workloads (14.7%), and 22.5% experienced low or unfair pay during the past year. Only 10.1% considered their pay to be fair. Qualitative evidence confirms that 10–12-hour workdays are routine across manufacturing, hospitality, food services, and retail, often without overtime compensation and with little schedule predictability, indicating that physical safety does not translate into broader employment quality.

Low and unstable wages are the primary driver of poor job quality and labour turnover. Survey results show that 81.4% of respondents identified low or delayed wages as the main reason people leave jobs, followed by long or inflexible working hours (56.6%). FGDs reinforce this pattern, with Jordanians reporting entry-level wages typically ranging between 260 and 400 JOD, and women in professional roles citing slightly higher starting salaries (350–500 JOD) that remain insufficient relative to living costs. Salary delays were repeatedly described, sometimes extending to the sixth or seventh day of the following month, creating financial stress and forcing reliance on borrowing and informal coping strategies.

Figure 24 Workforce Perceptions of Employment



Informality significantly intensifies income volatility and weakens protection, particularly for Syrian workers. Syrian participants consistently described verbal or short-term pay arrangements based on daily, weekly, or output-linked rates. In food processing, agriculture, and small workshops, monthly earnings ranged between 300 and 450 JOD under productivity-based systems, while daily wages as low as 5–7 JOD were reported in restaurants and car-washing jobs. These arrangements combine long hours with highly unpredictable income and no protection against wage delays, illness, or sudden job loss, reinforcing informality as a persistent labour-market condition rather than a transitional phase.

Job turnover reflects push factors linked to unsustainable conditions rather than voluntary mobility or opportunity-driven change. Beyond wages, 24.0% of respondents cited poor treatment by supervisors and 17.8% cited lack of career growth as reasons for leaving jobs, while 16.3% identified seasonal or temporary employment as a key source of instability. Only 3.9% reported satisfaction with their current job. Qualitative evidence shows that workers frequently leave employment due to exhaustion, delayed pay, inconsistent scheduling, or lack of respect, often without alternative opportunities available, indicating that turnover is driven by deteriorating conditions rather than labour-market dynamism.

Occupational risks are evident but systematically underreported in quantitative responses. Although only 9.3% cited unsafe conditions as a reason for leaving jobs, qualitative evidence reveals routine exposure to hazards in construction, manufacturing, food processing, and small workshops. Reported risks include machinery-related injuries, electrical hazards, chemical exposure, and chronic fatigue linked to extended hours. Syrian workers described disproportionate exposure to unsafe conditions, including injuries in food-processing facilities and prolonged exposure to chemical fumes in plastics and chemical-materials manufacturing, often in the absence of safety training or protective equipment. The normalisation of risk reflects weak oversight and the prevalence of informal employment arrangements.

Workplace relations are shaped by power asymmetries that suppress reporting rather than eliminate mistreatment. While survey responses indicate low reporting of overt harassment or discrimination, FGDs point to more subtle but pervasive forms of poor treatment, including dismissive management practices, refusal of leave, and lack of consideration for family or health needs. Women raised additional concerns related to dignity and safety in male-dominated environments. These patterns suggest underreporting driven by fear of retaliation, job loss, or—among Syrians—permit-related consequences.

Awareness of labour rights is moderate but uneven, and rarely translates into effective access to redress. While 64.1% of respondents reported knowing their basic labour rights and 65.8% stated they know how to file complaints, awareness is substantially lower among women (51.9%) than men (78.4%), and among Syrians (52.0%) compared to Jordanians (76.6%). Regional disparities are also pronounced, with awareness lowest in southern governorates (48.8%). Importantly, nearly one-third of respondents (30.8%) reported not knowing where or how to report workplace violations, and formal mechanisms—such as labour inspectors, unions, or digital platforms—were rarely selected. FGDs explain this gap: fear of retaliation, job loss, and—among Syrians—permit-related consequences deter reporting, while informality and dependency on employers undermine confidence in formal redress pathways.

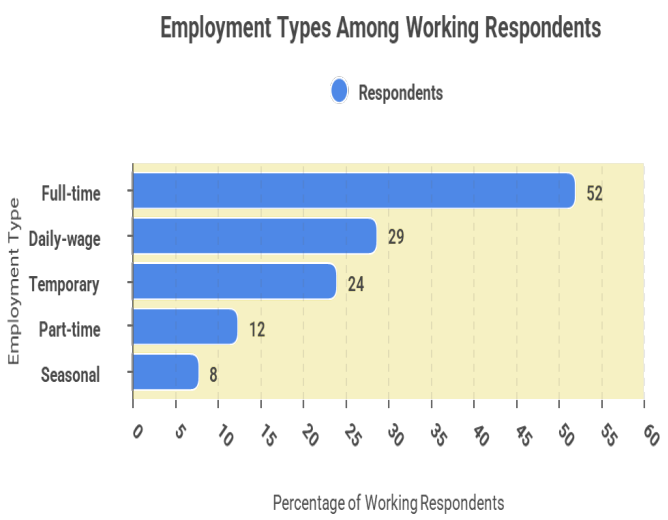
4.3 Job Search Behaviour and Access to Employment

4.3.1 Labour Market Access and Employment Structure

Access to employment among surveyed populations remains **both limited and highly precarious**, shaping how individuals engage with the labour market from the outset. Only 37.1% of respondents reported being currently employed, while nearly two-thirds (62.9%) were not engaged in paid work. Even among those working, employment is dispersed across a narrow set of sectors, led by manufacturing (21.7%), followed by agriculture and food processing (9.3%), NGOs (8.5%), construction (7.8%), education (6.2%), health care (5.4%), and transport and logistics (5.4%). Participation in higher-value or more regulated sectors—such as ICT, technical trades, creative industries, and public administration—remains marginal, indicating limited access to diversified employment pathways.

Employment quality further constrains effective labour-market participation. Only half of working respondents (52%) hold full-time jobs, while a substantial share relies on daily-wage work (28.7%), temporary contracts (24.0%), part-time arrangements (12.4%), or seasonal labour (7.8%).

Figure 25 Employment Types Among Working Respondents



Qualitative evidence reinforces this pattern: Syrians consistently described dependence on daily labour with unpredictable hours, wages, and no protection, while Jordanians reported a growing shift toward short-term and renewable contracts following COVID-19, reflecting employers' preference for flexibility under economic uncertainty (FGD1; KII7). Participants also reported employers substituting regular workers with trainees during downturns, offering stipends or transport instead of wages as a cost-saving strategy, further eroding job stability (FGD1).

Contractual and social protection deficits deepen this precarity. Survey data show that 41.9% of workers operate without written contracts, relying on verbal agreements that provide no clarity on wages, hours, or entitlements. FGDs confirm that such informal hiring is the norm for Syrians across construction, retail, food services, and workshop-based activities, including prolonged probation periods without guarantees even when permits are promised (FGD2; FGD3; FGD4; FGD6). Fixed-term contracts account for 40.3% of employment, while only 17.8% of workers benefit from open-ended arrangements. As a result, more than half of employed respondents (56.6%) are not registered with social security, leaving many—particularly Syrians—excluded from injury compensation, sickness benefits, and paid leave (FGD2; FGD6). Employers acknowledged avoiding registration due to cost pressures, especially following changes in Syrian work-permit fees (KII6).

Figure 26 Obstacles to Employment

Obstacles to Employment

Obstacle	Percentage
Lack of Job Opportunities	78.2%
Work-Permit Restrictions	31.9%
Experience Gaps	22.1%
Low Wages	21.6%
Transport Challenges	19.5%
Skills Gaps	17.8%

These structural features translate into **systemic barriers to employment access**. Quantitative findings show that the most widely reported obstacle is the lack of available job opportunities (78.2%), followed by work-permit restrictions for Syrians (31.9%), experience gaps (22.1%), low wages (21.6%), transport challenges (19.5%), and skills gaps (17.8%). Taken together, the evidence points to a labour market where limited demand, informality, and regulatory constraints shape not only who can access work, but also the types of jobs that are considered viable setting the conditions under which job search behaviour and sector preferences must be understood.

4.3.2 Job Search Behaviour and Sector Preferences

Within this context of limited job availability, high informality, and weak employment protection, **Job search behaviour is shaped primarily by perceived accessibility rather than aspiration,** pushing jobseekers toward sectors, locations, and channels that minimise risk, reduce entry barriers, and offer the fastest access to income**.** Survey findings show that jobseekers concentrate their search in a narrow set of sectors associated with faster entry, lower regulatory barriers, and continuous demand. Manufacturing and industrial production emerged as the most frequently targeted sector (15.2%), followed by education and training (10.9%) and agriculture and food processing (10.3%). These sectors align with roles that rely less on formal credentials, offer informal or semi-formal entry points, and are perceived as more resilient to economic fluctuations.

Figure 27 Jobseekers Sectors Preference

Jobseeker Sector Preferences

Sector	Percentage
Manufacturing & Industrial Production	15.2%
Education & Training	10.9%
Agriculture & Food Processing	10.3%

Preferences for flexible and small-scale work reflect adaptive livelihood strategies rather than sectoral ambition. A notable share of respondents reported seeking opportunities in home-based and online businesses (8.1%) and creative industries or handicrafts (7.8%). These pathways are particularly relevant for individuals facing mobility constraints, caregiving responsibilities, or exclusion from formal employment. Moderate interest in technical and maintenance services (5.5%) and health and care services (5.5%) further indicates demand for practical, skills-based roles that can be accessed through experience rather than extended formal training.

Low job search interest in high-skill or regulated sectors reflects access barriers rather than lack of demand. Construction and contracting (3.2%), hospitality and tourism (3.2%), trade (3.5%), NGOs (3.7%), and business, finance, and administration (4.9%) attracted limited active search. Interest was particularly low in ICT and digital services (1.2%), engineering (2.0%), transport and logistics (1.7%), public administration (0.6%), and the green economy (0.3%). FGDs clarify that these low figures do not indicate disinterest. Jordanian youth described ICT and digital careers as aspirational but largely inaccessible due to gaps between university education and entry-level skill requirements (FGD1). Syrian jobseekers reported that legal feasibility and income urgency override sector preference, directing them toward agriculture, small workshops, and daily-wage trades where work permits are less strictly enforced and entry is faster (FGD2; FGD6).

Geographic immobility further narrows feasible job options. Over two-thirds of respondents (67.8%) expressed a preference to work within their own governorate, underscoring the importance of proximity in employment decision-making. Transport costs, time burdens, and household responsibilities—particularly for women and low-income households—significantly constrain willingness and ability to commute. This reinforces concentration in nearby, often informal, employment even where opportunities may exist elsewhere.

Job search channels are overwhelmingly informal, reinforcing segmented access to employment. FGDs across all regions confirm that word-of-mouth remains the dominant pathway into work, with vacancies circulating through friends, relatives, and colleagues already embedded in specific sectors (FGD1–FGD7). Social media platforms—especially Facebook and WhatsApp, and community pages—play a central role in connecting jobseekers to opportunities in low-wage and informal segments of the labour market.

Formal digital platforms are used selectively and unevenly. LinkedIn and online job portals are primarily accessed by educated, urban jobseekers, while references to ministry platforms or labour-market portals remain limited (FGD1; FGD4; FGD5; FGD7). For many Syrians, NGOs function as key intermediaries, linking training to employment opportunities or supporting navigation of work-permit processes (FGD2; FGD3). However, reliance on intermediaries does not consistently translate into stable employment, reinforcing dependence on informal networks.

4.3.3 Barriers to Employment Access and Retention

Despite active job search and widespread reliance on informal networks, employment outcomes remain constrained by a set of interlocking structural, legal, economic, and social barriers. These barriers help explain why job search behaviour is concentrated in low-entry sectors, informal channels, and geographically proximate opportunities, and why such strategies frequently result in precarious, unstable employment rather than sustained labour-market integration. The constraints identified below operate both at the point of labour-market entry and across job retention, producing high informality, limited mobility, and unequal outcomes across nationality and gender.

Figure 28 Barriers to Employment

1. Wage Pressures, Economic Viability, and Skills Mismatch

Economic viability is a major barrier to both entry and retention. 21.6% of respondents identified low wages as a barrier, while 17.2% reported pressure to accept pay below acceptable levels. FGDs link these pressures to inflation, rising utility costs, and transport expenses, noting that wages have not kept pace with living costs. During downturns, Syrians reported wage reductions and staff cuts, intensifying competition for fewer positions.

Skills mismatch further constrains access, particularly for youth. Jordanian graduates expressed frustration that university programmes do not provide applied competencies needed for ICT and digital roles, while Syrians pursuing higher education reported difficulty securing part-time work compatible with study schedules.

2. Mobility and Transport Constraints

Transport functions as a cross-cutting barrier affecting job access, job choice, and retention. Nearly 70% of respondents rated their access to transport as moderate or poor. From the employer perspective, 43.9% identified transport as a key factor limiting the hiring of women, underscoring its gendered impact.

FGDs illustrate how distance between residential areas and industrial zones—particularly in northern and southern governorates—combined with weak public transport networks, restricts access even where jobs exist. Rising fuel prices and taxi costs further erode the viability of low-wage employment, as commuting absorbs a disproportionate share of earnings. Employers confirmed that transport difficulties contribute directly to absenteeism and early drop-out, reinforcing reliance on nearby, informal, or home-based work.

3. Care Responsibilities and Household Obligations

Care responsibilities represent one of the largest non-regulatory barriers to labour-force participation, particularly for women. 24.4% of respondents reported childcare constraints, rising 22.7% when broader family obligations are included. Employers recognise this from the demand side as well, with 19.5% identifying care responsibilities as limiting women's employment.

Qualitative findings show how care burdens translate into exclusion. Syrian women described factory schedules extending beyond school hours, making paid work incompatible with childcare. In southern governorates, the absence of affordable nurseries—combined with weak transport—further narrows feasible job options. Employers confirmed that women's retention improves only when flexible scheduling or childcare support is available, highlighting care as a systemic constraint, not an individual choice.

4. Legal and Regulatory Barriers: Work Permits as a Primary Gatekeeper

For Syrian workers, work permits constitute the single most decisive barrier shaping access to employment. Qualitative evidence across FGDs consistently described permits as "THE FIRST OBSTACLE" preventing entry into factories, workshops, and formal service-sector jobs. This is reinforced by employer perspectives, which confirm that permit-related constraints are structural rather than marginal.

High permit costs, combined with administrative requirements such as valid passports, housing contracts, and medical tests, make formalisation financially unattainable for many Syrians. Several participants noted that renewing a Syrian passport—often costing around **200 JOD**—is a prerequisite they cannot meet before even initiating a permit application. Permit application costs around 500 JDs. Employers, meanwhile, cited fears of fines reportedly reaching **800 JOD** for employing undocumented workers, increasing reluctance to hire Syrians formally.

A particularly restrictive dimension is **retroactive enforcement**. Syrians who worked informally for years reported being asked to pay accumulated penalties—sometimes exceeding **1,500 JOD**—a practice repeatedly described as "A DISASTER" that locks workers into continued informality rather than incentivising legalisation (KII2). Sponsorship arrangements further intensify vulnerability, as employers often require months of informal work before initiating permits, leaving workers exposed to dismissal without pay. Sectoral enforcement disparities compound this dynamic, with agriculture frequently cited as a fallback sector where permit requirements are more loosely enforced.

5. Gender Norms, Social Expectations, and Safety Concerns

Gender norms continue to shape women's employment pathways in indirect but powerful ways. While 14.1% of respondents explicitly cited cultural restrictions, qualitative evidence shows that norms strongly influence acceptable job types, locations, and working hours. Employers echoed this, with 4.9% identifying social norms as a barrier to hiring women.

FGDs reveal restrictions on evening shifts, mixed-gender environments, and long commutes—particularly for Syrian women in conservative contexts. Jordanian women similarly described certain service-sector roles as socially inappropriate or unsafe regardless of pay or qualifications. These norms intersect closely with transport and care constraints, narrowing women's employment options and reinforcing concentration in home-based or nearby work.

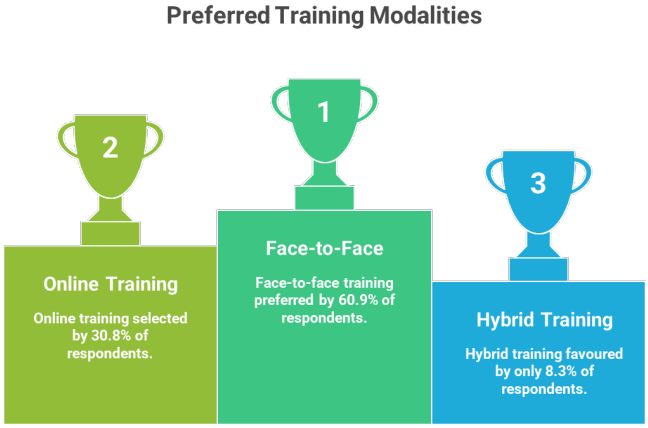
Barriers for persons with disabilities (PwDs) are comparatively under-reported in survey data, with only 5.5% identifying disability as a constraint. However, qualitative evidence points to deeper structural limitations. KIIs highlight that many TVET centres and training facilities lack basic accessibility features such as ramps, lifts, or adapted equipment, restricting access to skills development before labour-market entry (KII1). These barriers emerge upstream of employment and help explain the low visibility of PwDs within the workforce despite expressed willingness to work.

Finally, smaller shares of respondents reported discrimination (6.3%), inadequate facilities for women (1.4%), harassment or stigma (0.9%).

4.3.4 Training Pathways and Conditions for Effective Labour-Market Entry

Willingness to retrain is high, but learning preferences are shaped by credibility, feasibility, and perceived returns rather than openness to innovation. Survey findings show a strong preference for in-person training modalities, with 60.9% of respondents identifying face-to-face training as their preferred option. Online training was selected by 30.8%, while only 8.3% favoured hybrid formats. This distribution reflects a labour-market context in which effective learning is closely associated with physical presence, hands-on practice, and direct supervision—particularly for vocational and technical skills that are expected to translate quickly into income generation.

Figure 29 Preferred Training Modalities



Qualitative evidence explains why digital or blended models remain secondary. FGDs across regions indicate that in-person training is perceived as more credible and practical, especially for skills linked to production, maintenance, or service delivery. Online training was viewed as appropriate mainly for basic digital skills or theoretical components, but insufficient for building confidence in applied tasks. Limited access to devices, unstable internet connectivity, and low familiarity with digital learning platforms further constrain the perceived usefulness of online or hybrid models, particularly outside major urban centres. These findings suggest that modality preference reflects structural constraints and trust in learning outcomes, rather than resistance to digital approaches per se.

Work-based learning (WBL) is widely recognised as a critical entry mechanism into employment, but confidence in its implementation is uneven. Across FGDs, internships, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training were consistently described as among the few viable pathways for youth and first-time jobseekers to bridge the gap between education and employment. Jordanian participants in Amman highlighted structured field training linked to universities as one of the only mechanisms enabling transition into formal employment, provided placements involve real tasks and recognised employers (FGD1). Syrian participants similarly valued short, workplace-based introductory training—particularly when facilitated through NGOs or employers—as these placements support adaptation to production environments, workplace routines, and employer expectations (FGD2). However, trust in WBL as a pathway to stable employment remains fragile. Women in Amman and youth across several regions reported that some employers use interns as unpaid labour, cycling through trainees without offering contracts, skill progression, or genuine learning opportunities (FGD7).

However, trust in WBL as a pathway to stable employment remains fragile. Women in Amman and youth across several regions reported that some employers use interns as unpaid labour, cycling through trainees without offering contracts, skill progression, or genuine learning opportunities (FGD7). These practices undermine confidence in internships and apprenticeships as legitimate labour-market entry routes and reinforce perceptions that WBL can reproduce exploitation rather than reduce exclusion.

Participation in work-based learning is highly conditional, with feasibility shaped by transport, income security, and training quality. FGDs consistently indicate that willingness to engage in WBL does not translate into participation unless basic enabling conditions are met. Transport emerged as a central determinant, particularly for youth in rural areas and Syrians in southern governorates, where industrial zones and training facilities are located far from residential communities (FGD5; FGD6). Without transport support or proximity to training sites, even motivated participants reported being unable to attend placements consistently.

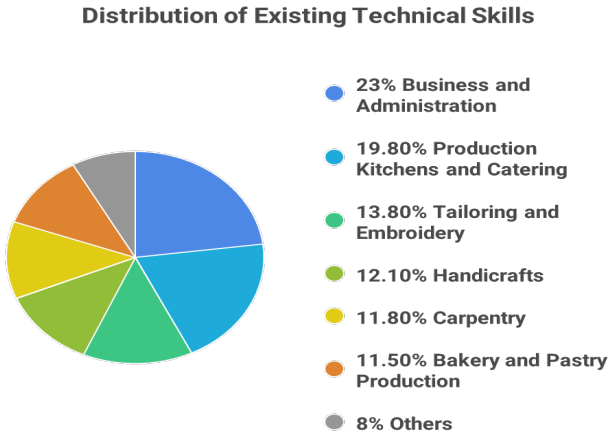
Financial accessibility further conditions participation. Participants emphasised that unpaid or high-cost placements effectively exclude low-income youth and refugees, while even modest stipends or cost coverage can make participation viable (FGD2). Trainer competency and willingness to teach were repeatedly identified as decisive quality factors: placements with engaged supervisors were described as transformative, while those with disengaged trainers were viewed as ineffective regardless of duration (FGD2; FGD5). Predictable schedules and clear training hours were also highlighted as essential, particularly for women with caregiving responsibilities and for participants dependent on daily income (FGD5; FGD7).

4.4 Skills, Qualifications, and Training Gaps

4.4.1 Existing Technical Skills Profile

The existing skills profile reflects structurally differentiated labour-market positioning rather than individual choice. Survey data show a workforce with a broad but uneven distribution of technical skills, concentrated primarily in labour-intensive, small-scale, and livelihood-oriented activities that allow relatively rapid entry into income generation. The most reported skills include business and administration (23.0%), production kitchens and catering (19.8%), tailoring and embroidery (13.8%), carpentry (11.8%), handicrafts (12.1%), and bakery and pastry production (11.5%). These skills align closely with sectors characterised by informality, household-based production, and low regulatory barriers, indicating adaptive responses to constrained labour-market access.

Figure 30 Distribution of Existing Technical Skills



Clear divergence emerges when skills are disaggregated by nationality, reflecting structurally distinct labour-market pathways. Jordanian respondents are disproportionately represented in formal, credential-dependent, and higher-productivity skill areas. More than two-fifths reported competencies in business and administration (42.7%), compared to only 4.0% of Syrians. Similar gaps appear in ICT (15.8% vs. 1.7%), engineering (12.3% vs. 1.7%), and health-related skills (11.1% vs. 0.6%). These patterns correspond to sectors that require formal education, certification, and access to regulated professions, reinforcing Jordanians' relatively stronger positioning within formal employment segments.

By contrast, Syrian respondents show higher concentration in production-based, labour-intensive, and home-oriented skills. They report greater engagement in production kitchens and catering (27.1% vs. 12.3%), tailoring and embroidery (18.6% vs. 8.8%), dairy and cheese production (15.3% vs. 1.8%), carpentry (14.7% vs. 8.8%), and agriculture (10.7% vs. 5.9%). These skills align with sectors that remain comparatively accessible under existing work-permit frameworks and are compatible with informal or home-based work, underscoring the role of legal and regulatory constraints in shaping skills accumulation.

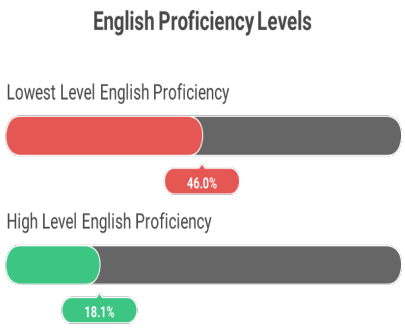
Table 4 Competency Comparison

Competency Comparison: Jordanian vs. Syrian

Competency Area	Business & Administration	ICT	Engineering	Health-Related	Production Kitchens & Catering	Tailoring & Embroidery	Dairy & Cheese Production	Carpentry	Agriculture
Jordanian	42.7%	15.8%	12.3%	11.1%	12.3%	8.8%	1.8%	8.8%	5.9%
Syrian	4.0%	1.7%	1.7%	0.6%	27.1%	18.6%	15.3%	14.7%	10.7%

Across both groups, participation in certified technical trades remains limited. Skills in electrical installations (6.0%), plumbing (3.5%), HVAC (1.7%), and welding (1.7%) are reported at low levels, indicating weak penetration of advanced or formally certified industrial skills. Qualitative evidence reinforces this pattern: Syrian skills are predominantly acquired through informal, on-the-job, or household-based learning, while Jordanians more frequently report skills gained through formal education or structured training pathways. This divergence reflects differential access to training systems rather than differences in motivation or capability.

Figure 31 English Proficiency Levels



Language skills further shape employability. Arabic proficiency is nearly universal and does not constitute a barrier to employment or training participation. English proficiency, however, is sharply constrained: 46.0% rated their English at the lowest level, and only 18.1% reported high proficiency. This deficit restricts access to higher-skilled employment, digital work, and internationally linked sectors, reinforcing segmentation between low-productivity livelihoods and more formal labour-market opportunities.

4.4.2 Demand for Technical Skills and Training Aspirations

Demand for technical skills reflects pragmatic adaptation to labour-market constraints rather than aspirational career planning. Survey findings show strong demand for practical, income-generating skills that can be deployed within informal, home-based, or small-enterprise settings. The most frequently requested skills include tailoring and embroidery (19.5%), business and administration (18.1%), handicrafts (17.0%), carpentry (16.7%), and bakery and pastry production (13.2%). These preferences indicate a clear orientation toward skills that support self-employment and locally accessible livelihoods in a context of limited formal job creation.

Across both groups, participation in certified technical trades remains limited. Skills in electrical installations (6.0%), plumbing (3.5%), HVAC (1.7%), and welding (1.7%) are reported at low levels, indicating weak penetration of advanced or formally certified industrial skills. Qualitative evidence reinforces this pattern: Syrian skills are predominantly acquired through informal, on-the-job, or household-based learning, while Jordanians more frequently report skills gained through formal education or structured training pathways. This divergence reflects differential access to training systems rather than differences in motivation or capability.

content creation, while 11.5% identified e-commerce skills. FGDs suggest that digital skills are increasingly perceived as a potential pathway for income diversification, particularly where local labour markets are saturated. However, these aspirations remain constrained by uneven access to devices, connectivity, training opportunities, and—especially for Syrians—regulatory and financial barriers that limit practical engagement in digital livelihoods.

Demand for skilled trades exceeds current engagement levels, indicating latent labour-market potential. Electrical installations (11.5%), welding (9.2%), plumbing (8.6%), and HVAC (8.1%) all feature prominently among desired skills. FGDs confirm that these trades are perceived as offering more stable income opportunities in construction, maintenance, and services. At the same time, limited access to certified training and high entry costs constrain uptake, preventing this demand from translating into employable capacity. Training demand varies systematically by nationality.

Figure 32 Most Frequently Requested Trainings

Most Frequently Requested Trainings by Respondents

Training Category	Percentage
Tailoring and Embroidery	19.5%
Business and Administration	18.1%
Handicrafts	17.0%
Carpentry	16.7%
Bakery and Pastry Production	13.2%
ICT, Graphic Design, Digital Content Creation	13.8%
E-commerce	11.5%
Electrical Installations	11.5%
Welding	9.2%
Plumbing	8.6%
HVAC	8.1%

Jordanian respondents prioritise professional, administrative, and digital skills, with strong interest in business and administration (32.8%), ICT (23.4%), graphic design (20.5%), and e-commerce (18.1%). FGDs frame this demand as an attempt to overcome the education-to-employment gap and access more formal or higher-productivity roles, particularly among youth and recent graduates.

Syrian respondents, by contrast, prioritise vocational and production-based skills aligned with legal feasibility and immediate income generation. High demand is observed for tailoring and embroidery (28.3%), handicrafts (22.6%), production kitchens and catering (15.8%), dairy and cheese production (14.1%), soap production (17.0%), and food preservation. FGDs consistently frame these skills as compatible with home-based or informal work and less exposed to work-permit and mobility constraints.

Gender further structures training demand. Women predominantly prioritise flexible and home-based skills—such as tailoring and embroidery (34.8%), handicrafts (26.0%), production kitchens (21.6%), bakery and pastry (22.7%), beauty services (23.8%), and soap production (18.2%)—reflecting care responsibilities, mobility limitations, and prevailing social norms. At the same time, FGDs with Jordanian women reveal growing interest in business, ICT, and digital skills as pathways to flexible or remote income. Men, by contrast, concentrate demand in manual and technical trades, including carpentry (33.5%), electrical installations (22.8%), plumbing (18.0%), welding (18.6%), and HVAC (15.6%), reflecting perceived earning potential and clearer pathways into construction and maintenance work.

Figure 33 Jordanian Respondents Skills Properties

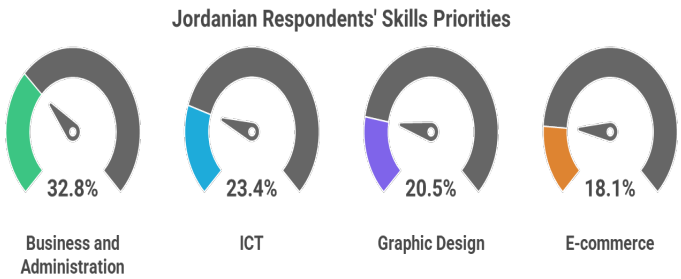


Figure 34 L Syrians Respondents Skills Priorities

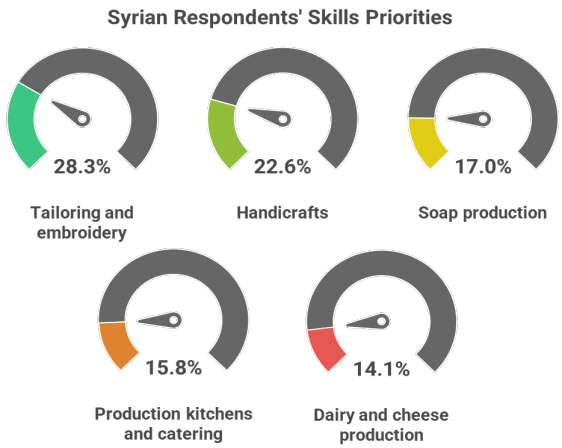


Figure 35 Women Respondents Skills Priorities

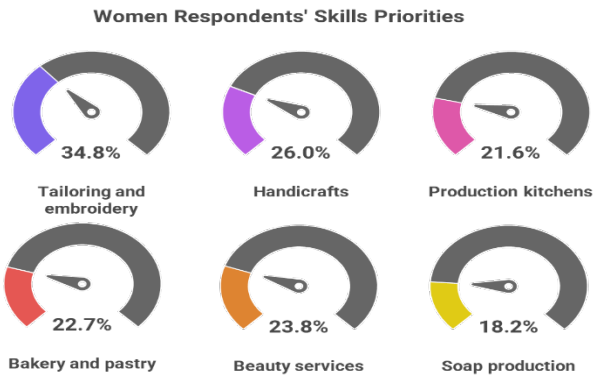
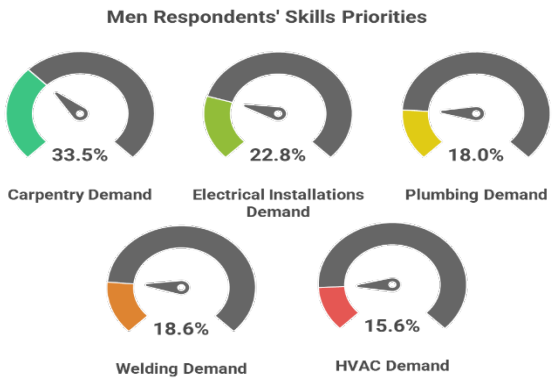


Figure 36 Men Respondents Skills Priorities



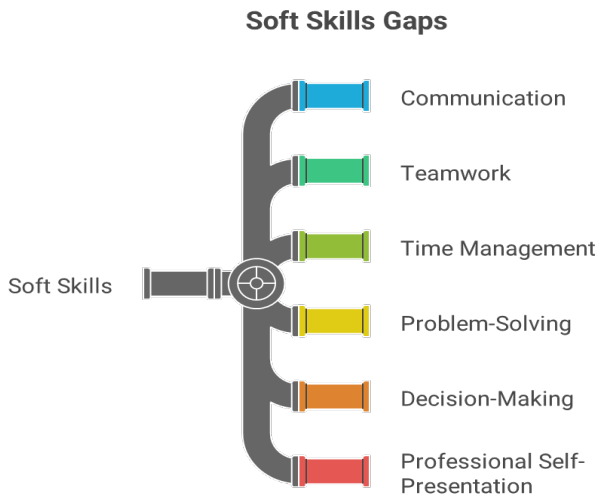
4.4.3 Soft Skills Gaps

Soft skills emerge as a cross-cutting determinant of employability across all groups. Nearly one-third of respondents (29.0%) identified soft-skills development and interview coaching as critical to accessing job opportunities, indicating that employability constraints extend beyond technical capacity. FGDs consistently highlight gaps in communication, teamwork, time management, problem-solving, and decision-making as key barriers to recruitment, retention, and workplace integration.

Women—particularly in urban contexts—emphasised interpersonal communication, professional self-presentation, and confidence as decisive for navigating recruitment processes and customer-facing roles. FGDs suggest that weak communication or low confidence can override technical qualifications, particularly in service and administrative jobs.

Syrian participants framed soft-skills needs through a psychosocial lens. FGDs revealed challenges related to confidence, assertiveness, and self-advocacy linked to prolonged displacement, repeated labour-market exclusion, and unstable working conditions. In this context, employability is shaped not only by skill availability but also by individuals' capacity to engage with employers, negotiate conditions, and sustain participation in demanding work environments.

Figure 37 Soft Skills Gaps



4.4.4 Digital Skills Needs

Digital skills function as an enabling—but unevenly accessible—factor for labour-market entry. One in five respondents (20.7%) identified basic to intermediate digital skills as facilitating access to employment. Qualitative findings show wide variation in digital capacity, ranging from limited computer literacy to advanced ICT competencies, with pronounced differences by region, gender, and nationality.

Jordanian youth, particularly in Amman, expressed strong interest in advanced digital skills such as programming and digital design, reflecting efforts to align with emerging sectors and compensate for gaps in formal education. In contrast, FGDs from southern governorates highlight widespread deficits in basic computer literacy among both Jordanians and Syrians, directly limiting access to administrative, clerical, and service-sector roles.

Women across regions consistently identified proficiency in Microsoft Office—particularly Excel and PowerPoint—as a minimum requirement for administrative and coordination jobs. Limited access to affordable training, devices, and reliable internet remains a binding constraint, especially outside major urban centres.

Syrian participants in northern Jordan highlighted digital marketing and e-commerce as potential livelihood pathways under conditions of restricted mobility and formal employment. However, FGDs emphasise that regulatory barriers, banking requirements, and limited platform access constrain the practical realisation of these opportunities.

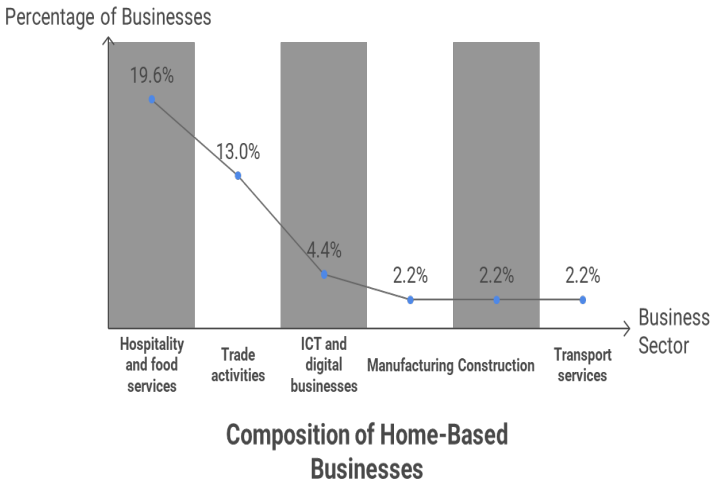
4.5 Home-Based Businesses and Self-Employment

4.5.1 Structure and Sectoral Composition of Home-Based Businesses

Home-based businesses (HBBs) constitute a significant and adaptive component of the labour-market supply, particularly for women, Syrians, and individuals facing barriers to formal employment. Survey data indicate that HBB activity is concentrated in a narrow set of low-capital, labour-intensive sectors that align with household resources, social norms, and local demand. Hospitality and food services, personal and household services, and creative industries and handicrafts each account for 19.6% of reported HBB activity, reflecting the prominence of home kitchens, catering, beauty services, and craft-based production. Agriculture and food processing represent a further 17.4%, primarily through home-based dairy production, pickling, and small-scale food preparation. Trade activities account for 13.0%, while ICT and digital businesses remain limited at 4.4%. Capital-intensive or highly regulated sectors—including manufacturing, construction, and transport—each account for only 2.2%, underscoring the structural limits on sectoral diversification within the HBB landscape.

Qualitative evidence illustrates how these patterns manifest across regions and nationalities. In Amman, Jordanian participants described small online businesses focused on accessories, crafts, and customised products, often supported by basic branding elements such as logos and packaging. Syrian participants in the capital reported food-related HBBs—particularly dairy production, home kitchens, and small clothing businesses combining resale and tailoring. In northern governorates, HBBs cluster around food preparation, sweets, pickles, catering, and home-based beauty services, largely among women. In southern governorates, both Jordanians and Syrians reported food production, home catering, crafts, and made-to-order production kitchens operating at small scale. While most HBBs remain subsistence-oriented, qualitative data also point to a small but notable group of digital HBBs, including a Syrian-led home-based software and IT business serving clients in Jordan and abroad, illustrating that where skills, connectivity, and market access exist, HBBs can extend beyond survival activity.

Figure 38 Composition of HBB

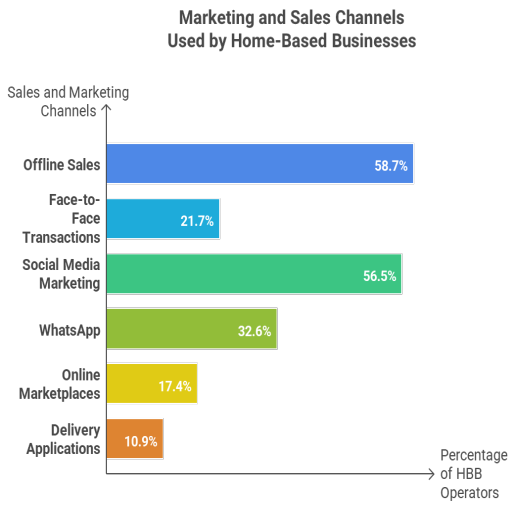


4.5.2 Market Demand and Customer Reach

Demand for HBB products and services is predominantly local, informal, and relationship-based, shaping both sales volumes and growth potential. Survey findings show that 58.7% of HBB operators rely on offline sales channels, with 21.7% depending specifically on face-to-face transactions. Digital tools complement these channels but rarely replace them: 56.5% use social media for marketing, while WhatsApp plays a central role (32.6%) in repeat orders and neighbourhood-based sales. More formal digital channels remain marginal, with only 17.4% using online marketplaces and 10.9% relying on delivery applications.

FGDs reinforce this pattern, showing that most HBBs sell primarily to neighbours, relatives, schools, and community networks. Women described selling food products through teachers, parents' groups, and local WhatsApp circles, creating relatively stable but geographically limited customer bases. Social media—particularly Facebook and Instagram—was widely cited as essential for visibility and product showcasing, with some Jordanian women in Amman and the north reporting the use of paid advertisements to expand reach. However, cost was consistently identified as a constraint. Regional disparities further shape demand: participants in southern governorates highlighted lower purchasing power and higher price sensitivity, which compress margins even when products are well received. Payment remains largely cash-based, though a small number of Jordanian women reported using digital wallets, indicating slow and uneven movement toward more formal transactions.

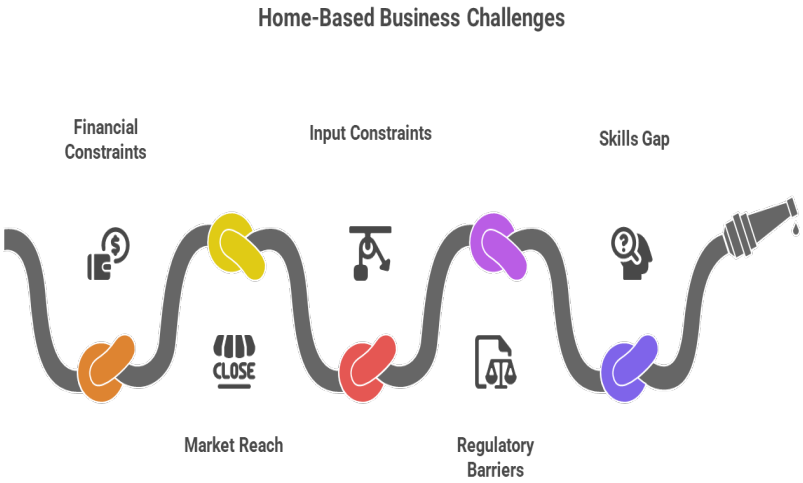
Figure 39 Marketing and Sales Channels used by HBBs



4.5.3 Constraints and Risks Facing Home-Based Businesses

HBBs operate under interlinked financial, operational, market, and regulatory constraints that limit sustainability, scalability, and formalisation. Financial constraints are the dominant barrier across regions and nationalities, with nearly 70% of HBB operators identifying lack of finance as their primary challenge. Qualitative evidence shows that most businesses start with minimal household resources—basic kitchen equipment, personal tools, or small quantities of raw materials—restricting production volume, quality, and consistency, and preventing reinvestment or expansion.

Figure 40 HBBs Challenges



Market access and marketing limitations represent a second critical constraint. Half of surveyed HBB operators identified marketing as a key barrier. FGDs reveal heavy reliance on word-of-mouth and small social-media pages, alongside limited skills in pricing, product presentation, photography, and customer targeting. Weak marketing reduces visibility and undermines the perceived value of products, even where quality is high.

Input and logistics constraints further undermine viability, particularly outside Amman. Limited access to affordable raw materials, packaging, and delivery services—combined with high transport costs—erodes margins in price-sensitive local markets. Women in southern governorates reported that delivery costs often eliminate profits altogether, while weak logistics restrict access to higher-value markets in central governorates.

Regulatory and permit-related barriers affect a smaller but significant subset of HBBs, particularly Syrians. Survey and qualitative data point to uncertainty around registration requirements, fear of inspection, and lack of clarity on allowable activities, discouraging engagement with formal systems even where supportive policies exist.

Skills and mentorship gaps cut across all sectors: while technical production skills are often strong, participants identified weaknesses in business planning, costing, customer management, and growth strategies. The absence of ongoing guidance increases the risk of stagnation or closure, particularly for women balancing business activity with unpaid care work.

4.5.4 Opportunities for Support and Gradual Formalisation

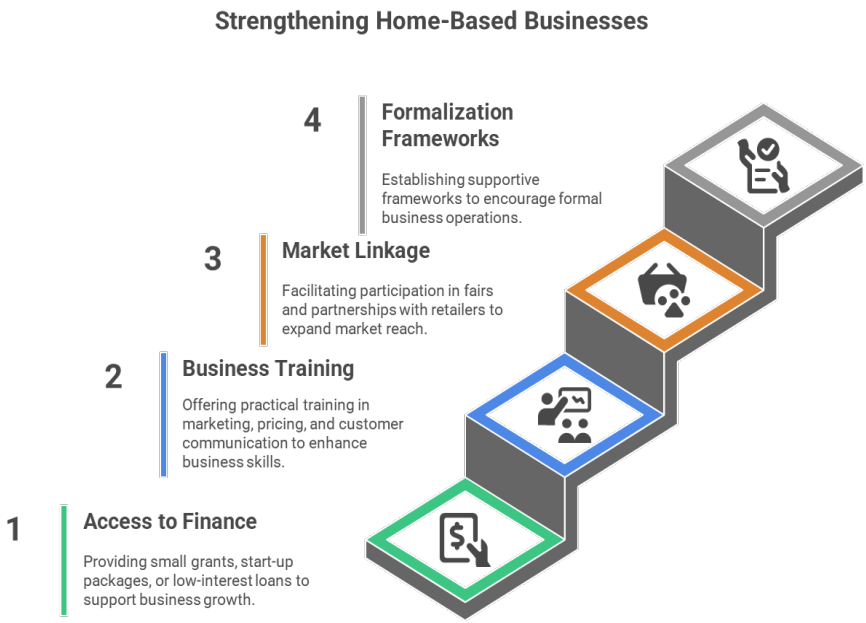
Evidence points to a coherent set of interventions that could strengthen HBBs while preserving the flexibility that makes them viable. Access to finance emerges as the most critical entry point. Participants consistently prioritised small grants, start-up packages, or low-interest loans to purchase equipment, secure raw materials, and improve packaging. FGDs suggest that even modest capital injections could stabilise production and shift activity from seasonal to year-round operation. Some participants explicitly linked access to microfinance or government-backed loans to the possibility of opening small adjacent shops, enabling gradual transitions toward semi-commercial enterprises.

Business-oriented training represents a second high-impact opportunity. Survey and qualitative data highlight strong demand for practical support in marketing, pricing, cost calculation, record-keeping, and customer communication. Sector-specific technical training—particularly for food production, beauty services, and crafts—was also identified as essential for improving quality, safety, and diversification. Participants cited integrated programmes combining vocational skills, business coaching, and psychosocial support as particularly effective.

Market-linkage support constitutes a third priority. FGDs—especially in southern governorates—highlight demand for collective marketing mechanisms, participation in fairs or pop-up markets, and partnerships with retailers in higher-purchasing-power areas such as Amman. For food-based HBBs, trusted distribution channels and shared branding were seen as ways to overcome individual logistical constraints and build consumer confidence beyond neighbourhood networks.

Formalisation frameworks function as enabling rather than primary incentives. While immediate registration is not a priority for all HBB operators, KIIs indicate a gradually more supportive policy environment. Measures introduced by the Ministry of Industry and Trade—including fee and tax exemptions for women-led home-based enterprises—reduce the cost of registration and can unlock access to tenders, contracts, and larger markets. When combined with financial, skills, and market-linkage support, such frameworks offer viable pathways toward sustainability without undermining household-level resilience.

Figure 41 Strengthening HBBs



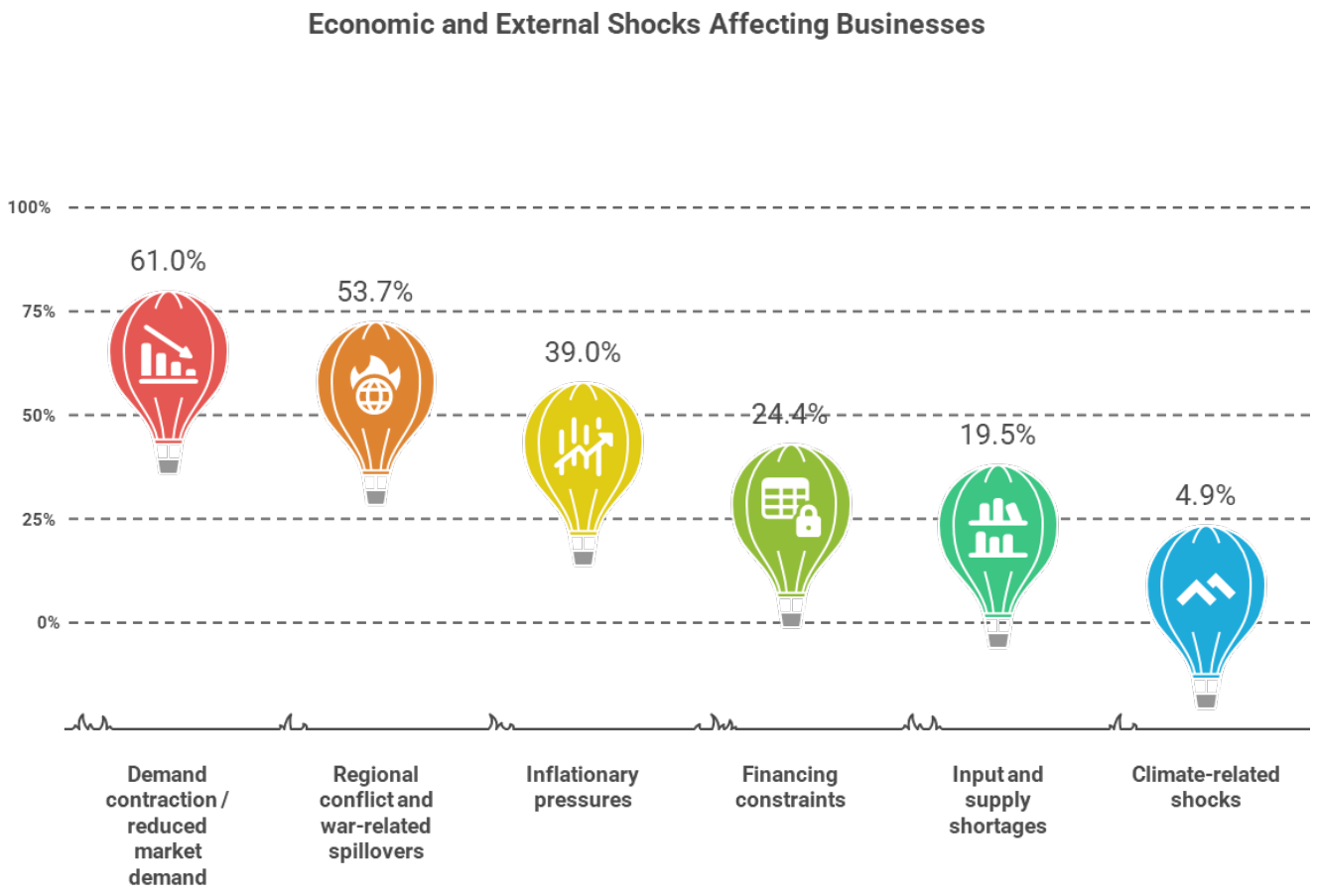
4.6 Coping Strategies and Livelihood Resilience

Livelihood resilience among surveyed populations is shaped by prolonged exposure to overlapping economic, employment, and contextual shocks that constrain both labour-market stability and household coping capacity. Rather than isolated or short-term disruptions, respondents described a sustained environment of uncertainty in which external shocks repeatedly translate into employment instability, income volatility, and erosion of household wellbeing. The analysis below examines the shock environment affecting livelihoods, the mechanisms through which shocks are transmitted to households, and the coping strategies adopted—highlighting the limits of resilience under prevailing labour-market conditions.

4.6.1 Shock Environment Affecting Livelihood Stability

Survey data and employer perspectives indicate that livelihoods are embedded in a persistently adverse shock environment, primarily driven by economic contraction and regional instability. From the employer side, demand contraction was the most frequently reported shock, cited by 61.0% of firms, reflecting reduced purchasing power and market uncertainty. Regional conflict and war-related spillovers were reported by 53.7% of employers, underscoring the sensitivity of Jordan's economy to geopolitical developments. Inflationary pressures affected 39.0% of firms, while financing constraints (24.4%) and input shortages (19.5%) further limited operational stability. Climate-related shocks were reported by a smaller share (4.9%), but qualitative evidence suggests their indirect effects are more significant than headline figures imply.

Figure 42 Economic and External Shock Affecting Businesses



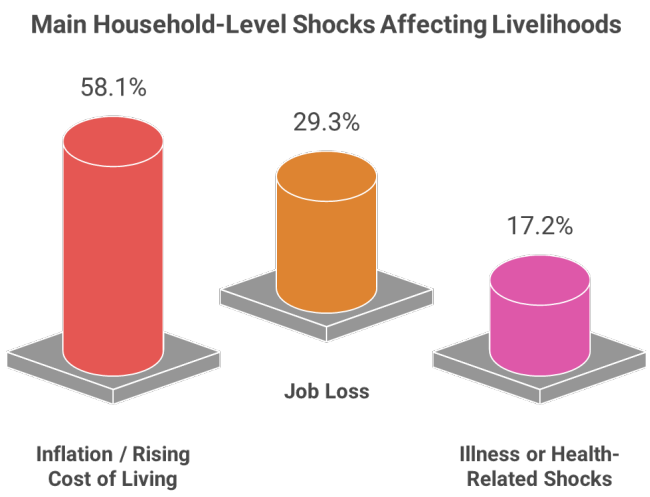
KIIs help explain how these shocks reshape labour demand and employment practices. Construction-sector employers described a project-driven operating environment, where hiring expands and contracts in line with tender cycles rather than long-term planning, increasing employment volatility (KII7). Manufacturing and garment-sector employers similarly reported fluctuating demand and rising costs, reinforcing cautious expansion strategies and reliance on flexible labour arrangements instead of permanent workforce growth (KII4; KII5). These firm-level responses form the structural backdrop against which household vulnerability and coping behaviour must be understood.

4.6.2 Transmission of Shocks to Households and Employment Outcomes

At the household level, shocks are experienced primarily through economic and employment channels. Survey findings show that inflation is the most widespread shock, affecting 58.1% of respondents, followed by job loss (29.3%) and illness (17.2%). Only 18.4% reported experiencing none of the listed shocks, indicating that instability is the norm rather than the exception across surveyed households.

FGDs consistently reinforced inflation as the most destabilising force shaping employment decisions and livelihood sustainability. Jordanian participants described a widening gap between wages—particularly the minimum wage—and actual living costs, explaining that transport, food, and utilities often render employment financially unsustainable even when jobs are available (FGD1).

Figure 43 Main Household- Level Shocks Affecting Livelihoods



Syrian respondents reported a sharper inflation burden due to structural exclusions, including lack of access to government subsidies for electricity and water, which substantially increases monthly expenses (FGD2; FGD6). In this context, inflation functions not only as a cost-of-living shock, but as a constraint on labour-market participation itself.

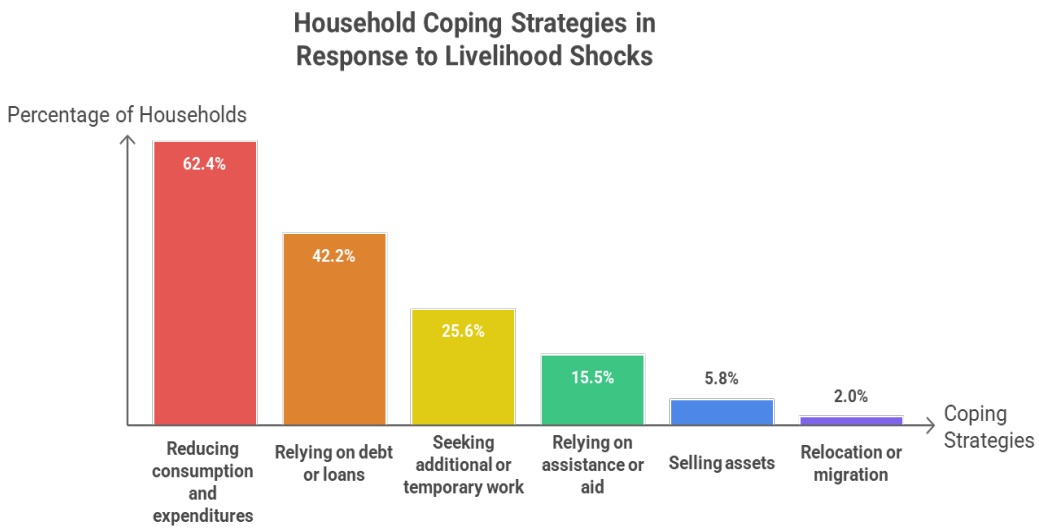
Employment instability emerged as a central transmission mechanism linking macro-level shocks to household vulnerability. FGDs described widespread workforce reductions, intensification of workloads for remaining employees, and increasing reliance on unpaid or underpaid trainees as firms attempt to manage declining demand and rising costs (FGD1; FGD6). In southern governorates, Syrian participants reported cases where businesses reduced staff from ten workers to as few as three, with remaining workers expected to perform multiple roles without additional compensation (FGD6). Jordanian participants in Amman similarly described employers replacing experienced workers with lower-paid new hires to reduce wage bills (FGD1). Syrian-owned businesses—particularly in food processing and small retail—were described as especially vulnerable, with reports of closures and relocation back to Syria due to declining consumer demand and rising operational costs (FGD3). These adjustments reduce job availability, intensify competition for remaining positions, and normalise precarious employment arrangements.

4.6.3 Household Coping Strategies and Trade-Offs

Household responses to livelihood shocks are dominated by short-term, survival-oriented coping strategies rather than adaptive or resilience-enhancing measures. Survey data indicate that reducing consumption is the most common response, reported by 62.4% of respondents. This is followed by reliance on debt or loans (42.2%) and seeking additional work (25.6%). Smaller but significant shares reported reliance on assistance (15.5%), asset sales (5.8%), and relocation (2.0%), signalling deeper vulnerability among specific sub-groups.

Qualitative findings illustrate the concrete trade-offs embedded in these strategies. Jordanian households described cutting services such as home internet, delaying healthcare, and shifting children from private to public education to manage rising costs (FGD7). Syrian households reported more severe adjustments, including relocating to cheaper and overcrowded neighbourhoods with weaker services and sending adolescents into informal work to supplement household income (FGD6). Participants consistently emphasised that unstable employment transforms temporary shocks into chronic hardship, particularly for households managing illness, disability, or high dependency ratios.

Figure 44 Household Coping Strategies



Across nationality and region, respondents stressed that many coping strategies would be unnecessary if stable, predictable employment were available. This underscores that observed coping behaviours reflect constrained choice rather than adaptive resilience, and that vulnerability is driven less by household decision-making than by structural labour-market instability.

4.6.4 Climate Stress and Environmental Pressures as Multiplier Risks

Although climate-related shocks were reported by a relatively small share of survey respondents, FGDs indicate that environmental stress increasingly compounds economic vulnerability. Syrians with agricultural backgrounds described significant losses due to drought, heat waves, and irregular rainfall, undermining both income and food security (FGD2). Jordanian participants in southern governorates highlighted how extreme heat reduces productivity in outdoor and manual labour, contributing to fatigue, health risks, and declining earnings (FGD5).

Participants also linked climate stress to rising food prices, noting that crop losses and supply disruptions contribute to inflationary pressures affecting households beyond agricultural communities (FGD5). In this way, climate stress operates as a multiplier risk, weakening both labour supply and labour demand while intensifying existing cost-of-living pressures.

4.6.5 Differential Resilience and Structural Constraints for Syrians

For Syrian households, exposure to shocks is amplified by legal and administrative constraints that significantly limit coping capacity. FGDs highlighted persistent barriers, including inability to obtain driving licences, restricted freedom of movement, and difficulties renewing passports—constraints that also block access to SIM cards, internet services, online job search, and digital livelihoods (FGD2).

Participants described these restrictions as creating a form of economic and psychological confinement, where mobility-based coping strategies—such as relocating for work, diversifying income sources, or accessing higher-paying opportunities—are largely unavailable. As a result, Syrians are more likely to absorb shocks through informal employment, debt accumulation, and consumption reduction, reinforcing long-term vulnerability rather than recovery.

4.7 Informal Employment Patterns and Pathways to Formalisation

Informal employment remains a defining feature of labour-market participation among both Jordanians and Syrians, though its drivers, persistence, and implications differ markedly by nationality. Evidence from the survey and qualitative data indicates that informality is not primarily the result of individual choice, but rather a structural outcome shaped by regulatory frameworks, sectoral practices, and sustained economic pressure. Across groups, informal employment functions less as a transitional phase and more as an embedded labour-market condition.

Survey findings show that only 27.0% of respondents reported that their current or most recent job was formal. This aggregate figure masks a pronounced nationality gap: just 13.0% of Syrians reported formal employment, compared to 41.5% of Jordanians. A further 25.3% reported working informally, while 47.7% selected “not applicable,” reflecting unemployment, student status, or temporary withdrawal from the labour force. Among those engaged in work, these patterns point to a labour market in which informal arrangements are widespread and often constitute the default mode of employment rather than an exception. FGDs confirm that informal work spans multiple sectors, including construction, agriculture, manufacturing, retail, hospitality, and personal services, underscoring its systemic nature.

4.7.1 Drivers of Informal Employment

The primary drivers of informality relate to both the nature of employment and employer practices. Nearly half of respondents engaged in informal work (49.5%) cited the absence of a written contract as the defining feature of informality, followed by seasonal or irregular work patterns (44.0%). FGDs reinforce that short-term, daily-wage, or task-based arrangements are widely perceived as incompatible with formal contracting, particularly in sectors characterised by fluctuating demand.

Employer-driven factors are also significant. Almost one quarter of respondents (23.1%) attributed informality directly to employer preference. Qualitative evidence confirms that employers rely on informal arrangements to manage demand volatility, reduce financial exposure, and avoid administrative and cost burdens associated with social security contributions, severance liabilities, and contract termination procedures (FGD1; KIIs). These practices are particularly prevalent in low-margin sectors such as manufacturing, agriculture, and services.

Figure 45 Main Drivers for in formal Employment

Drivers of Informal Employment

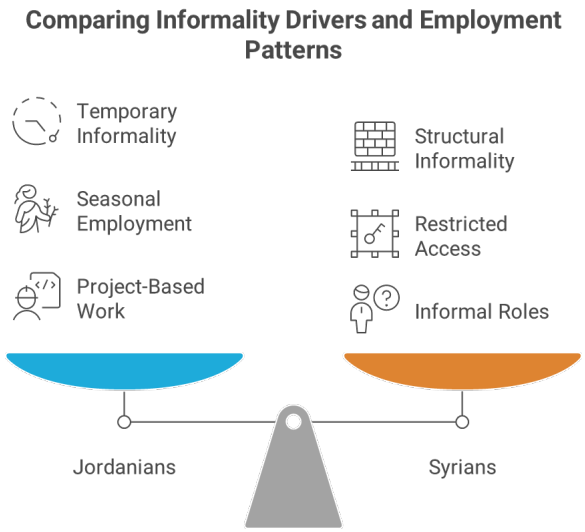
Driver	Percentage
Seasonal or irregular work patterns	44.0%
Work-permit constraints (primarily affecting Syrians)	36.0%
Employer preference for informal arrangements	23.1%
Social security costs and registration requirements	18.7%

For Syrian workers, work-permit constraints represent a central and structurally distinct driver of informality. More than 36% of informal workers cited permit-related issues as the reason for working informally. FGDs across all regions consistently describe how rising permit costs, documentation requirements, and enforcement practices have displaced Syrians from formal employment into daily-wage or unregistered work. Many participants reported that they previously held formal jobs but lost them when employers became unwilling or unable to cover permit-related expenses, forcing a shift into informality (FGD2-Amman; FGD6-South).

Social security costs further reinforce informality. Nearly one-fifth of respondents (18.7%) identified social security as a contributing factor, particularly from the employer perspective. Employers noted that formal registration increases operating costs in already constrained business environments, discouraging compliance even where demand for labour exists (KIIs).

Nationality-based differences are pronounced. For Jordanians, informal employment often functions as a temporary or strategic arrangement, used to manage seasonality, trial workers before formal hiring, or accommodate students and youth whose employment is short-term or incompatible with social security registration. In construction and maintenance trades, daily-wage work remains structurally informal due to the project-based nature of demand.

Figure 46 Comparing Informality Drivers And Employment Patterns



For Syrians, by contrast, informality is more entrenched and frequently unavoidable. FGDs consistently show that rising permit costs, the withdrawal of subsidised permit schemes, and retroactive penalties have pushed many previously formal workers into informal arrangements. Participants described shifting into agriculture, day labour, or nightshift work where enforcement is weaker, while employers reported assigning Syrians to informal or off-hour shifts to reduce inspection risk, reinforcing labour-market segmentation.

4.7.2 Permit and Documentation Constraints Shaping Informality

Survey data confirm that work permits and documentation requirements remain a central constraint shaping access to formal employment, particularly for Syrians. The most frequently cited challenge relates to permit fees, reported by 79.6% of respondents, highlighting the financial burden of legalisation. Administrative complexity follows closely, with 50.6% citing procedural difficulty, while issues related to renewals (33.5%), employer sponsorship requirements (31.3%), and mobility restrictions (28.4%) further constrain workers' ability to obtain or maintain valid permits.

The permit process itself is perceived as fragmented and employer driven. Nearly half of respondents (48.3%) reported that permit applications were submitted through employers, while only 18.8% engaged directly with the Ministry of Labour. Very small proportions reported direct engagement with labour directorates (4.0%) or involvement in renewals (2.8%), indicating limited continuity and stability in formal employment relationships. Required steps—such as medical checks (13.1%), submission of identification documents (8.0%), and payment of fees (8.0%)—add cumulative procedural and financial pressure, even where each step individually affects a minority.

Responsibility for permit costs is unevenly distributed. While 26.9% reported that employers covered fees, 30.8% relied on NGOs or support programmes, and 15.4% shared costs with employers. Only 11.5% paid independently, underscoring workers' limited capacity to absorb permit costs without external support. Despite this, only 21.4% reported facing direct challenges during application or renewal, suggesting that deterrent effects operate well before formal obstacles are encountered.

FGDs provide critical context. Participants consistently described a sharp shift from earlier, low-cost permit arrangements to the current system, with reported fees ranging from 500–700 JOD and reaching 750–1,000 JOD in locations such as Aqaba (FGD2-Amman; FGD6-South). These costs are compounded by requirements for valid passports, housing contracts, medical tests, and annual renewals tied to the calendar year rather than issuance date. For individuals with expired passports, renewal costs—reported at approximately 200 JOD—constitute an additional barrier before permit applications can even begin (FGD3-North).

Retroactive enforcement further discourages formalisation. Syrians who worked informally for extended periods reported being required to pay accumulated fines for each year without a permit, with totals reaching 1,500 JOD or more. Participants described this practice as effectively locking workers into informality, as entering the formal system risks triggering unaffordable liabilities.

Sectoral enforcement disparities compound these dynamics.

4.7.3 Structural and Sectoral Barriers to Formalisation

Beyond permit-related issues, Syrians face structural exclusion from specific sectors due to closed-profession regulations and security requirements. FGDs in southern governorates highlighted exclusion from tourism, hospitality, and gated economic zones, where Syrians reported being denied access regardless of skills or experience (FGD6-South). Administrative and accounting roles were also described as legally inaccessible under existing regulations (FGD3-North).

Even when employment is facilitated through international or NGO-supported pathways, regulatory procedures can override placement decisions. One FGD described a case in which a Syrian woman placed in a garment factory was dismissed after one day due to delayed security clearance, illustrating how access to formal work is determined by administrative processes rather than qualifications (FGD6-South).

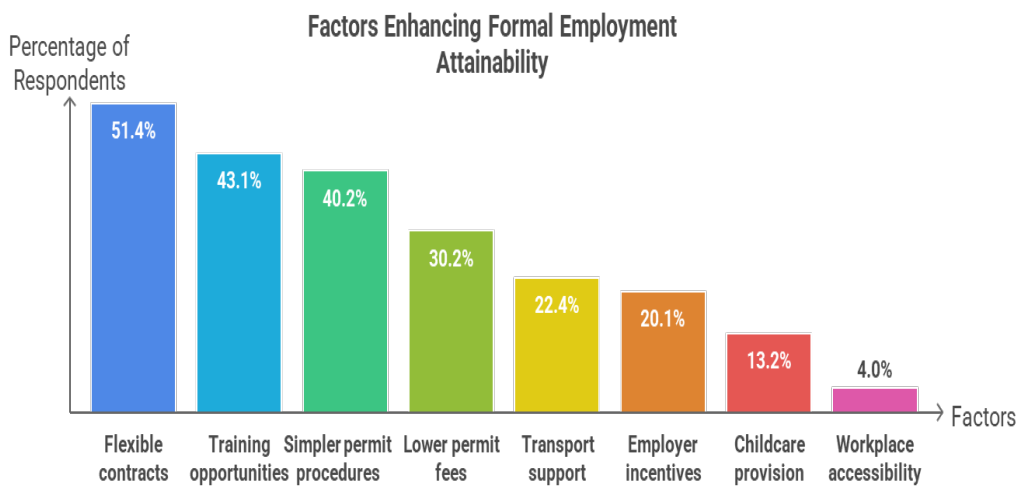
Employers confirmed that uncertainty around regulations governing Syrian labour—particularly concerning injury compensation, leave entitlements, and social security obligations—creates reluctance to hire Syrians formally (KII7). Employment-ratio requirements, such as the "4:1 rule," were also cited as limiting the number of Syrians employers are willing or able to hire formally (KII6).

Geographic and socio-cultural factors intersect with these regulatory barriers. Workers in rural or peripheral areas face limited access to industrial zones where formal jobs are concentrated, while women face additional constraints related to transport, childcare, and family approval. These conditions often conflict with rigid formal employment schedules, further narrowing pathways to formalisation (FGD6; FGD7).

4.7.4 Pathways and Incentives Toward Formalisation

Survey results indicate clear perceptions of what would make formal employment more attainable. The most frequently cited factor was flexible contracts (51.4%), followed by training opportunities (43.1%) and simpler permit procedures (40.2%). Lower permit fees (30.2%), transport support (22.4%), and employer incentives (20.1%) were also identified, while childcare provision (13.2%) and workplace accessibility for persons with disabilities (4.0%) emerged as priorities for specific subgroups.

Figure 47 Factors Enhancing Formal Employment Attainability



Gender-disaggregated findings reveal distinct priorities. Men emphasised flexible contracts (58.1%), simpler permits, and lower fees, reflecting higher exposure to enforcement and formal hiring processes. Women, by contrast, prioritised childcare and transport support (both 24.9%), underscoring the central role of care responsibilities and mobility constraints. Training ranked highly for both groups, but qualitative evidence shows that training alone is insufficient to enable women's formalisation without parallel support for childcare, transport, and working-hour flexibility.

Qualitative findings strongly reinforce the importance of subsidised and supported formal employment models. Participants consistently cited donor-funded schemes that covered medical tests, training, and initial wages as the only realistic pathway through which formalisation became feasible for both workers and employers (FGD2). Under such arrangements, financial risk was reduced and compliance became achievable.

Reducing or restructuring permit costs emerged as a decisive incentive. Participants repeatedly contrasted current fees with earlier UNHCR-supported permits costing approximately 10 JOD, during which formal employment was widespread and employer resistance minimal (KII2). Proposals such as instalment payments or sector-specific fee reductions were widely viewed as practical mechanisms to increase formalisation, particularly in labour-intensive sectors.

Employers emphasised the need for clearer and more predictable regulatory frameworks—comparable to those governing Egyptian labour—to reduce uncertainty and administrative risk (KII7). Others highlighted job-quality improvements, including stable wages, social security registration, and workplace safety, as essential to making formal employment both attractive and sustainable. Women specifically identified childcare access and safe transport as prerequisites for entering and remaining in formal employment, while several participants argued that more consistent labour inspection—particularly regarding social security compliance—would reduce unfair competition from informal hiring and incentivise formalisation across sectors (FGD7).

4.8 Return to Syria: Intentions, Constraints, and Economic Preparedness

Return to Syria among displaced Syrians in Jordan is shaped far more by structural constraints than by personal preference or short-term economic calculation. While emotional attachment to Syria remains present across respondents, current conditions—marked by insecurity, economic collapse, housing destruction, and weak institutional capacity—render return largely infeasible for most households in the foreseeable future. As a result, return functions as a conditional and distant option rather than an immediate livelihood strategy or a response to labour-market exclusion in Jordan.

4.8.1 Return Intentions Over the Next 12–24 Months

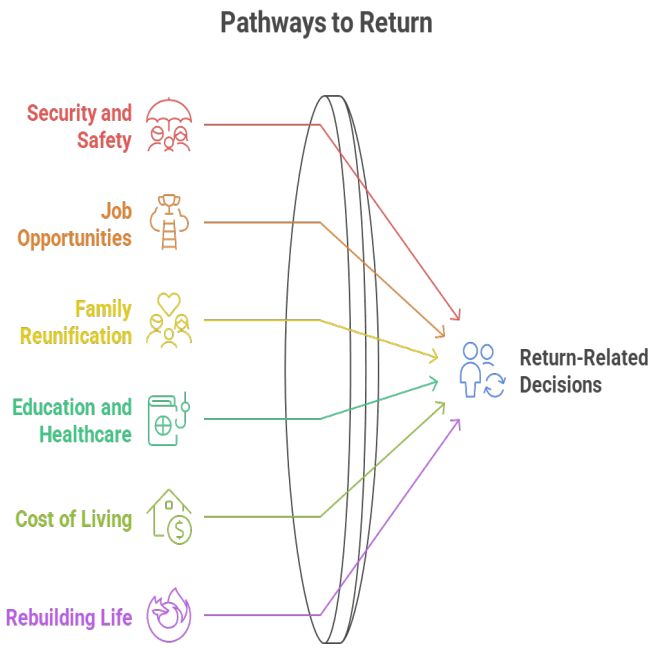
Survey findings indicate that near-term return remains a minority option. A clear majority of Syrian respondents (70.5%) reported plans to remain in Jordan over the next 12–24 months. Only 14.2% stated that they are considering voluntary return during this period, while 5.7% expressed interest in relocating to a third country and 9.7% remained undecided.

FGD findings strongly reinforce this pattern. Across locations, participants consistently described return as undesirable or practically impossible in the short term, even among those who expressed strong emotional attachment to Syria. Where return aspirations were voiced, they were framed as long-term and conditional, rather than as actionable plans within the next two years. Participants repeatedly emphasised that current conditions do not allow households to absorb the economic, security, and psychological risks associated with return.

4.8.2 Drivers Shaping Return and Non-Return Decisions

Survey responses show that security and safety considerations dominate return-related decision-making, cited by 55.1% of respondents as the primary influencing factor. Economic considerations also feature prominently, with 35.8% identifying job or income opportunities as influential. Family reunification (15.9%) and access to services such as education and healthcare (13.6%) play secondary roles, while cost of living in Jordan was cited by 9.1%. Notably, only 5.7% identified rebuilding life in Syria as a motivating factor, highlighting the limited role of reconstruction optimism in shaping current intentions.

Figure 49 Pathways to Return



FGDs add critical nuance. While a minority of participants expressed strong emotional desire to return—linked to dignity, belonging, or rebuilding family homes—these motivations were consistently described as insufficient in the absence of material feasibility. Participants repeatedly cited a combination of structural barriers, including widespread housing destruction and lack of affordable shelter; absence of employment opportunities and economic collapse; persistent insecurity and political instability; high financial costs of relocation; administrative and legal barriers such as missing documentation and fear of conscription; and concerns related to children's education and access to healthcare. Together, these barriers position return as a high-risk option that households are largely unwilling or unable to absorb.

4.8.3 Perceptions of Economic Opportunities in Syria

Perceptions of economic recovery in Syria are narrowly concentrated around reconstruction-related activities. More than half of survey respondents (53.4%) identified construction and contracting as the fastest-growing sector, followed by agriculture and food processing (19.9%). All other sectors—including services, ICT, health, education, and public administration—were selected by negligible proportions.

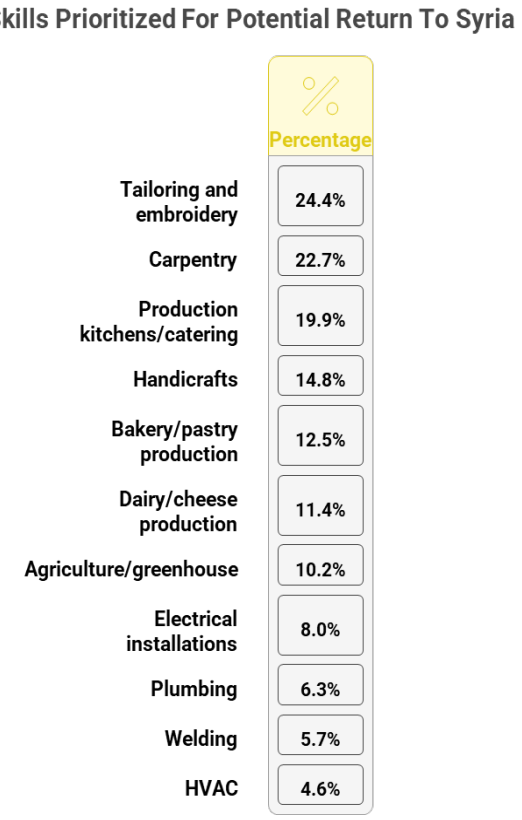
FGDs align closely with these perceptions. Participants widely described Syria's future labour demand as reconstruction-driven, manual, and resource-intensive rather than diversified or knowledge-based. However, they stressed that even these sectors remain largely inaccessible without capital, equipment, inputs, or local connections, limiting the practical relevance of perceived sector growth for most households.

4.8.4 Skills Prioritised for Potential Return

Skills respondents wish to acquire for potential employment in Syria are predominantly practical, livelihood-oriented, and compatible with small-scale or local economic activity. Survey data show highest interest in tailoring and embroidery (24.4%), carpentry (22.7%), production kitchens and catering (19.9%), handicrafts (14.8%), bakery and pastry production (12.5%), dairy and cheese production (11.4%), and agriculture and greenhouse cultivation (10.2%). Skills linked to construction sector (total of 24.6)—such as electrical installations (8.0%), plumbing (6.3%), welding (5.7%), and HVAC (4.6%)—also feature, though at more moderate levels. Interest in regulated or professional fields, including engineering, healthcare, and ICT, remains limited.

Qualitative findings help explain these patterns. Participants consistently framed skill preferences in terms of risk management and economic viability rather than long-term career planning. Skills related to home-based production, small workshops, and local reconstruction were described as more adaptable to unstable markets and less dependent on formal certification or functioning institutions. Respondents emphasised that such skills allow consistent income generation, participation of family labour, and flexibility in response to security, mobility, or market disruptions.

Figure 50 Skills Prioritizations for Potential Return to Syria



4.8.5 Future Trajectories: Stay, Move, or Conditional Return

Across FGDs, three dominant future trajectories emerged. The first is short-term stability in Jordan, with most participants intending to remain despite economic hardship, prioritising predictability over high-risk alternatives. The second involves aspirations for third-country relocation, particularly among youth and women, driven by limited prospects in both Jordan and Syria. The third trajectory frames return as a conditional, long-term possibility, contingent on substantial improvements in security, housing, services, and employment—conditions participants widely believe may take many years to materialise.

Overall, return to Syria does not currently function as a viable labour-market solution or coping mechanism. Instead, it remains a distant and conditional option shaped by structural constraints largely beyond household control. These findings underscore the continued relevance of host-country labour-market integration, skills development, and livelihood support, as return is neither imminent nor economically preparatory for most Syrian households.

4.9 Private Sector Engagement Opportunities

Evidence from FGDs and KIIs indicates that private-sector engagement in employment and skills programmes is both feasible and desired, but highly conditional. Employers across sectors demonstrate openness to collaboration where engagement reduces recruitment risk, lowers training costs, and delivers work-ready candidates. At the same time, sustained participation depends on the presence of credible intermediaries, clear role definition, and mitigation of cost and capacity pressures.

4.9.1 Employers' Readiness to Engage with Programmes

Employers' willingness to engage is strongest where programmes directly address operational constraints. Industrial and service-sector employers consistently emphasised the value of receiving pre-screened, pre-trained candidates aligned with sector needs, rather than being expected to absorb full training responsibilities internally (KII5). Readiness increases when programmes contribute to tangible outcomes such as reduced onboarding time, improved retention, or access to niche skills (e.g. electrical wiring, quality control, patternmaking).

From the workforce perspective, readiness is shaped by expectations of programme credibility and fairness. Jordanian youth in Amman highlighted interest in employer-linked programmes offering financial facilitation, incubation, and market access, citing limited capital and weak branding and customer acquisition skills as major barriers to sustaining enterprises. (FGD1). In southern governorates, Jordanians prioritised accredited training pathways that combine certification with hands-on experience, viewing employer recognition of credentials as critical for employability (FGD5).

Syrian participants framed readiness more explicitly around accessibility. Engagement with programmes is contingent on work-permit facilitation, NGO-supported job matching, and free or low-cost training. In peripheral areas, Syrians also emphasised proximity of training centres and childcare support as prerequisites for participation, given transport constraints and care responsibilities (FGD3; FGD6). These findings indicate that employer engagement is inseparable from parallel support systems that address regulatory and access barriers.

4.9.2 Entry Points for Partnerships

KIIs reveal multiple, sector-specific entry points for structured partnerships. At the institutional level, AQAC highlighted existing participatory mechanisms—particularly sector skills councils—as a foundation for validating occupational standards, curricula, and training relevance (KII1). These platforms provide an established channel through which employers can shape skills supply without bearing sole responsibility for delivery.

Employers also highlighted decentralised and place-based partnership models. IUCN proposed expanding satellite production units in governorates as a means of reducing geographic barriers, lowering transport costs, and widening access to employment in rural areas (KII3). In the garment sector, stakeholders cited ongoing collaboration with chambers, syndicates, and factories through job fairs, data sharing, and coordinated placement of graduates, illustrating how collective action can reduce individual employer burden (KII4).

Workers' perspectives reinforce the importance of governance within partnerships. Women participating in FGDs stressed the role of universities, professional unions, and training institutions in regulating training quality and preventing the misuse of interns as unpaid labour (FGD7). Calls for formal agreements guaranteeing meaningful learning outcomes align with employer views that clearer expectations and structured systems improve efficiency and reduce skills mismatches (KII5; KII7). Overall, the evidence points to demand for partnership models that combine employer input, institutional oversight, and NGO facilitation.

4.9.3 Role of NGOs and External Actors

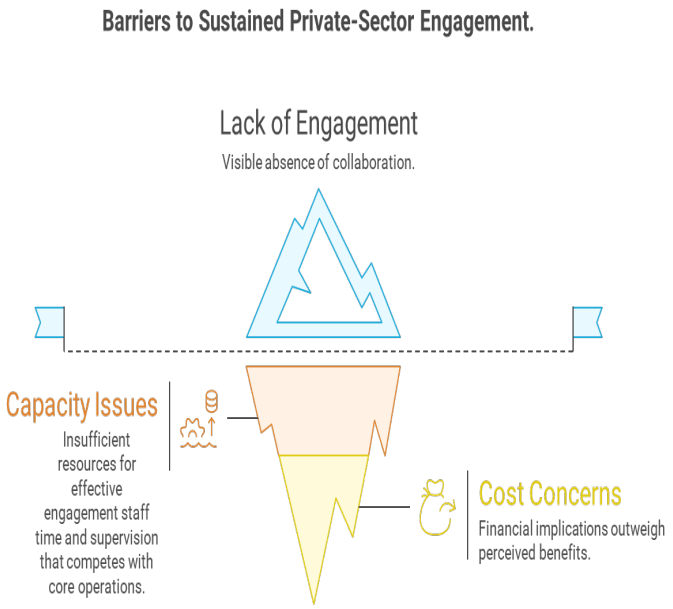
Across regions, NGOs are consistently positioned as critical intermediaries between jobseekers and employers. Their perceived value lies in reducing transaction costs on both sides: preparing candidates, facilitating permits and documentation, subsidising training costs, and coordinating placements. Employers explicitly identified NGOs as key actors in building candidate pipelines aligned with occupational standards and supporting upskilling linked to real vacancies (KII5).

AQAC reinforced this role, recommending NGO investment in occupational standards, curriculum development, work-based learning (WBL) design, and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as mechanisms to improve alignment between training outputs and labour-market demand (KII1). For Syrians in particular, NGOs are viewed as essential in navigating work-permit processes and enabling access to employment opportunities that would otherwise remain closed.

4.9.4 Barriers to Sustained Private-Sector Engagement

Despite general openness, several constraints limit sustained employer participation. Capacity and cost pressures are the most frequently cited. Employers noted that hosting trainees or contributing to curriculum development requires staff time and supervision that competes with core operations, particularly in small and medium enterprises. In construction, engagement is often limited to active project cycles, making continuous training pipelines difficult to sustain (KII1; KII5; KII7).

Figure 51 Barriers to Sustained Private Sector Engagement



Skills mismatches further constrain engagement. Employers expressed frustration with graduates who lack practical readiness, reducing willingness to invest additional time in on-the-job training (KII5; KII7). This reinforces demand for programmes that deliver job-ready candidates rather than generic training.

Structural limitations also affect engagement in specialised sectors. In industries such as plastics and chemicals, the small number of employers restricts representative participation in skills councils and forecasting exercises, limiting the effectiveness of standard-setting processes (KII1).

Finally, weak government–private sector coordination undermines scale and sustainability. While mechanisms such as sector skills councils exist, KIIs suggest that stronger policy alignment and clearer incentives are needed to encourage employer participation. Construction employers proposed formalising training pipelines through universities, incentivising hiring from certified programmes, and embedding placement requirements within national policy frameworks such as the National Labour Strategy (KII7). These insights underscore that private-sector engagement is most effective when embedded within a coherent ecosystem linking policy, employers, NGOs, and training institutions.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Demand-Driven Skills and Training Alignment

The literature review and empirical findings consistently indicate that misalignment between skills supply and labour demand remains a central constraint to employment outcomes. Evidence across employer surveys, FGDs, and KIIs suggests that training interventions generate stronger labour-market results when they are closely connected to verified demand, clearly defined job roles, and realistic entry pathways, rather than broad sectoral or qualification-based assumptions.

Below recommendations are general recommendations apply to Jordanians and Syrians.

Promote Transferable, Demand-Driven Skills for Syrian Refugees

Findings indicate that Syrian refugees largely view return to Syria as a conditional and longer-term possibility, rather than an immediate livelihood pathway. As a result, skills are primarily valued for their ability to generate income in Jordan while remaining adaptable to uncertain future contexts. Demand-driven skills and livelihood support for Syrians are therefore most effective when they focus on practical, market-relevant skills that are applicable in Jordan and retain potential relevance in a future Syrian context.

The assessment suggests that aligning skills programming with regular market assessments in both Jordan and Syria supports the identification of occupations and competencies that can function across contexts. Such an approach strengthens income opportunities in the short term while supporting longer-term livelihood preparedness, without assuming imminent return or sectoral recovery timelines.

Establishing a Demand Verification Mechanism Before Training Design

Evidence points to a need for a structured process that validates demand prior to launching training cycles. A practical approach emerging from the findings involves:

- Mapping vacancies and hard-to-fill roles by governorate and sector.
- Translating demand into priority occupations with clear entry roles.
- Updating priorities periodically to reflect seasonality and economic shifts observed in local markets.

This avoids reliance on assumptions and reduces the risk of training into saturated pathways.

Moving from Generic Training to Modular, Stackable Pathways

The analysis highlights heterogeneous participant constraints (time, mobility, care duties, income needs), which reduces feasibility of long training blocks. Modular pathways align better with observed realities:

- Short modules linked to discrete job tasks.
- Stackable progression (entry-level → intermediate) based on demonstrated performance.
- Exit points that still deliver usable competency (even if the full pathway is not completed).

This increases participation and reduces dropouts without diluting labour-market relevance.

Strengthening Employer Engagement Through Low-Burden Partnership Models:

The findings suggest that employer participation rises when engagement is practical and low friction. Effective partnership formats include:

- Sector/cluster-based engagement (industrial zones, value chain clusters) rather than isolated firm-by-firm outreach.
- Lightweight commitments rather than extensive co-delivery.
- Intermediary support that handles matching, follow-up, and coordination, reducing transaction costs for firms.

This aligns with private sector operational constraints highlighted in the analysis.

Vocational Training centers: Building Training KPIs Around Employment Outcomes, Not Attendance:

Literature and field evidence both indicate that training success is often overstated when measured via completion rates alone. A stronger accountability approach uses indicators such as:

- Job placement rate within a defined period after completion.
- Retention at 30/90 days (with reasons for separation captured).
- Employer satisfaction with task performance.
- Wage and hours alignment with minimum acceptable standards (where data allows).

This reframes training as a labour-market intervention rather than a service delivery output.

Balancing Targeted Adaptation with Labour-Market Coherence

Findings show that barriers differ by gender, nationality, and geography labour. A more effective approach keeps occupational pathways consistent while adapting delivery:

- Flexible timing/locations and supportive services where women's participation is constrained by transport and care responsibilities.
- Administrative and compliance facilitation where Syrians face work-permit friction.
- Region-specific occupation focus reflecting actual local demand rather than national averages.

This preserves coherence while responding to observed constraints.

5.2 Private Sector Engagement and Employment Opportunities

The labour market assessment findings point to a private sector that remains central to employment generation, yet constrained in its ability to offer stable, inclusive, and sustained jobs. The recommendations below are derived directly from observed employer behavior, sectoral dynamics, and workforce experiences, and are framed to align with existing private-sector capacity rather than idealized labour-market assumptions.

Anchor Employment Interventions in Sectors with Demonstrated Absorptive Capacity:

Evidence indicates that employment opportunities are concentrated in manufacturing, food processing, agriculture, construction, and retail. These sectors consistently absorb labour across regions, albeit under conditions of high turnover and variable job quality.

Targeting these sectors aligns interventions with actual hiring behavior.

Design Employment Support Around Employer Risk and Cost Structures:

Findings show that employers' hiring decisions are shaped primarily by risk management considerations, including wage costs, supervision capacity, turnover, and regulatory exposure. Private-sector engagement increases where these risks are mitigated.

Employment interventions gain traction when they incorporate:

- Cost-sharing mechanisms linked to onboarding and initial employment periods.
- Support for supervision and mentoring during early employment phases.
- Administrative facilitation related to contracts, permits, and compliance.

This approach reflects how employers already operate and reduces reliance on informal hiring practices driven by uncertainty.

Institutionalize Structured Work-Based Learning as a Risk-Reduction Tool for Employers

The assessment finds that employers—particularly SMEs—value work-based learning primarily as a screening and risk-management tool rather than as a corporate social responsibility activity. Short, structured, task-specific placements aligned with real job roles and production cycles were identified as most effective, particularly in labour-intensive sectors.

Positioning work-based learning as a pathway to recruitment, supported by light-touch onboarding and supervision, addresses employer concerns related to turnover and supervision costs while improving jobseekers' exposure to real work environments, especially for individuals with lower educational attainment.

Address Inclusion Barriers Through Operational Solutions

Barriers to women's employment, Syrian workers' participation, and inclusion of persons with disabilities are reported to be primarily operational rather than attitudinal.

Findings indicate that inclusion improves where employment models account for:

- Transport availability and proximity to workplaces,
- Shift design and working-hour flexibility,
- Administrative feasibility related to permits and documentation,
- Job design and workplace accessibility.

Embedding these considerations in inclusion programs and employer-engagement level supports wider participation without requiring fundamental changes to sectoral norms.

Apply a Regionally Differentiated Engagement Approach:

Private sector capacity and employment dynamics vary significantly by region. The Middle region concentrates on industrial and service employment; the North exhibits volatility linked to agriculture and small workshops; the South shows narrower employment structures.

Employment interventions are more effective where they reflect:

- Regional sectoral composition,
- Local labour availability and mobility constraints,
- Existing business ecosystems and infrastructure.

Region-specific engagement avoids uniform approaches that overlook structural differences in local labour markets.

Strengthening the Role of Intermediaries Labour in Employment Facilitation:

NGOs, training providers, and public institutions play a critical role in bridging gaps between employers and job seekers. Their effectiveness is highest where they function as labour-market intermediaries rather than training providers alone.

This includes:

- Translating employer needs into practical skill profiles,
- Preparing candidates to meet job-specific expectations,
- Supporting matching, onboarding, and early retention.

Such intermediary roles reduce transaction costs for employers and improve employment outcomes for jobseekers.

5.3 Home-Based Businesses (HBBs)

Findings from the literature review and the field analysis indicate that home-based businesses function primarily as a livelihood stabilisation mechanism rather than a pathway to full employment or rapid enterprise growth. Across population groups, HBBs are commonly adopted in response to mobility constraints, care responsibilities, regulatory barriers, and limited access to formal employment. The recommendations below reflect observed patterns of engagement, performance, and sustainability, and position HBBs within realistic livelihood trajectories rather than aspirational entrepreneurship narratives.

Use collective and group-based models to expand market access for small producers and HBBs

HBB operators struggle to reach markets beyond immediate social networks and face saturation risks. NGOs could support collective marketing, aggregation, or cooperative arrangements that enable small producers to access bulk buyers, institutional markets, or digital platforms without individual formalization or large capital investment. This approach strengthens bargaining power, reduces per-unit costs, and aligns with women's time and mobility constraints.

Gendered Dimensions and Household Considerations:

The analysis confirms that HBBs play a particularly important role in enabling women's economic participation. However, reliance on home-based activities can also reinforce income ceilings and isolation from wider markets.

Evidence suggests that HBBs contribute most effectively to livelihoods when:

- Positioned as part of a household income portfolio, rather than a sole income source,
- Combined with opportunities for seasonal work, subcontracting, or collective production,
- Supported in ways that recognize unpaid care responsibilities and time limitations.

5.4 Skills Preparedness and Livelihood Readiness in Relation to Potential Syrian Return

Findings from the literature review and primary data analysis indicate that return to Syria is currently viewed by most Syrians in Jordan as a conditional and longer-term possibility, rather than an immediate livelihood option. Many respondents expressed intentions to remain in Jordan over the next 12–24 months, with return decisions shaped primarily by security conditions, access to housing, and the availability of income-generating opportunities. Within this context, skills-related interventions linked to return are most effective when framed around preparedness and adaptability, rather than short-term repatriation planning.

Return as a Conditional Trajectory and Skills as Adaptive Assets:

Evidence suggests that Syrians approach return as a risk-sensitive decision, with economic feasibility outweighing emotional or social considerations. Skills development therefore emerges not as preparation for imminent return, but as a means of maintaining economic agency across uncertain futures. Skills that support livelihoods in Jordan while remaining applicable in a future Syrian context offer the greatest perceived value, particularly considering prolonged displacement and constrained mobility.

Skills Aligned with Anticipated labour Market Demand:

Perceptions of future economic opportunity in Syria are strongly concentrated in reconstruction-linked and basic production sectors, rather than in formal professional or institutional employment. Survey data and qualitative discussions consistently highlight construction, maintenance, food production, food processing, textile, small workshops, and agriculture as the sectors most likely to absorb labour in a post-return scenario.

Within this framing, practical skills related to construction trades, basic electrical and plumbing works, carpentry, welding, food processing, production of kitchens, dairy production, and small-scale agriculture are viewed as economically relevant. These skill areas are characterized by relatively low capital requirements, reliance on manual and practical competencies, and the ability to function in environments with limited institutional support.

Emphasis on Practical and Task-Oriented Skills:

Both the literature and field data point to a preference among Syrians for gaining hands-on, task-based skills over formal qualifications. Training pathways perceived as most useful are those that focus on demonstrable competencies and immediate applicability, rather than certification-heavy or academically oriented models. This reflects expectations that future labour markets in Syria may remain fragmented, informal, or project-based for an extended period.

Short, modular training formats and work-based learning approaches are perceived as more adaptable to these conditions, allowing individuals to acquire usable skills without long training interruptions or dependence on credential recognition systems.

Continued Relevance of Jordan-Based Livelihoods:

Given prevailing intentions to remain in Jordan in the short to medium term, skills programming retains immediate relevance where it supports current income generation. Skills applicable in agriculture, textile, food processing, small workshops, and home-based enterprises sectors that are also among the most highly prioritised in the Syrian context, continue to serve as primary livelihood pathways under existing regulatory and economic constraints.

Maintaining this dual relevance strengthens household resilience while keeping open the option of economic reintegration in Syria, should conditions evolve.

Strengthening Multi-Actor Coordination Across the Employment Ecosystem

Employment challenges cannot be addressed through isolated interventions. Evidence supports coordinated engagement among government institutions, the private sector, NGOs, training providers, and donors to improve labour-market matching, expand inclusive employment, and strengthen job sustainability. This aligns with primary findings highlighting the central role of intermediaries in translating employer demand into viable employment pathways.

Complement Technical Training with Career Guidance and Legal Awareness

Technical skills alone are insufficient to support sustainable labour-market integration. Career counselling, vocational guidance, and legal awareness are identified as essential complements, helping jobseekers navigate recruitment expectations, workplace norms, and regulatory requirements. This supports primary findings related to job readiness, employer expectations, and early job separation.

Shift Focus from Job Access to Job Sustainability

High turnover and early termination are highlighted across studies as signals of weak employment quality. The literature supports integrating job-retention skills, continuous upskilling, and Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) measures—particularly in manufacturing and labour-intensive sectors—to improve employment stability. This complements primary findings on employer risk management and supervision constraints.

Frame Syrian Return-Related Interventions Around Preparedness and Adaptability

In the Syrian context, return remains a conditional and longer-term trajectory. Skills programming is therefore most effective when framed around preparedness, adaptability, and cross-context relevance. Agriculture, construction, basic production, and small workshops emerge as priority sectors for eventual recovery, but require coordinated international support, infrastructure rebuilding, and investment to translate into employment at scale.

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DRC advocates for the rights of and solutions for displacement-affected communities, and provides assistance during all stages of displacement: In acute crisis, in exile, when settling and integrating in a new place, or upon return. DRC supports displaced persons in becoming self-reliant and included into hosting societies. DRC works with civil society and responsible authorities to promote protection of rights and inclusion.

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