

# DECENT WORK AND THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR IN JORDAN

EVIDENCE FROM WORKERS' AND EMPLOYERS' SURVEYS  
2018



International  
Labour  
Organization



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## SUMMARY

The agriculture sector in Jordan provides a critical source of sustenance and income, particularly for the poorest segments of society. Despite its relative level of importance, there is a lack of empirical evidence documenting employment and working conditions in the agriculture sector in Jordan. While small focus group discussions and anecdotal evidence suggest informality and unfavourable working conditions, little data exists to support these claims.

The ILO conducted a study, which provides an initial overview of employment and decent work in the agriculture sector from the points of view of 1,125 Syrian workers and their employers. It looks at workers' employment history, work permit status, working conditions and work arrangements.

The study falls under the Norwegian-funded project entitled 'Job creation for Syrian refugees and Jordanian host communities through green works in agriculture and forestry', which is in its second phase of implementation. It aims to promote better living conditions for Syrian refugees and Jordanians through increased decent work in the agricultural sector and an improved environment.



ROYAL NORWEGIAN EMBASSY

## RESULTS



49%

Workers believe Work Permit Provides More Job Opportunities

72%

Employers Reported Children U15 Worked In the Farms

- Syrians accounted for close to 70% of the total work force on farms included in this study.
- 95% of Syrian workers in the sector reported having a work permit, with female workers reporting lower rates (90%) compared to men (97%).
- 48% of Syrian agriculture workers reported using an informal labour broker, known as the "Shaweesh," to find work. A Shaweesh was also used by 70% of surveyed employers to help find workers.
- 78% of Syrian agriculture workers indicated that their place of work had never been visited by a labour inspector and 75% of surveyed employers reported the same.
- 76% of surveyed employers did not provide occupational safety and health training or equipment for agriculture workers on their farms.
- 83% of Syrian agriculture workers were not registered in social security, with an additional 10% unsure if they were registered or not.
- 50% of Syrian agriculture workers reported that children under the age of 15 were working with them in agriculture fields. 75% of Syrian agriculture workers with children did not have their children in school. 50% of agriculture workers reported that there was no school in their community.

## RECOMMENDATION

Employment service providers could consider the role played by informal labour brokers, known as Shaweesh, and assess their possible contributions to community based awareness raising and dialogue between workers and employers on minimum wage and working conditions.



Recommendation

The Ministry of Labour could clarify the minimum wage in agriculture for both migrant workers and Jordanians, taking into account hourly pay and variations in seasonal labour demand.

Labour inspectors could enhance the scope and frequency of labour inspections in the agriculture sector, including inspection of occupational safety and health measures.

The Ministry of Labour, together with the Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Education could support targeted interventions to combat child labour, including the installation of mobile schools, childcare facilities and awareness raising on the dangers of child labour.

The Ministry of Labour could support the elaboration of a model on labour compliance in the agriculture sector, reflecting occupational safety and health, wage protection and relevant international labour standards.

NGOs and UN agencies could initiate further research to better understand the state of living arrangements amongst agricultural workers, with a view to provide dignified shelter and living arrangements.