



Aspirations  
Versus  
Reality



# YOUTH ASPIRATIONS VERSUS REALITY IN JORDAN:

## ASSESSING YOUTH'S PATHWAYS TOWARDS EMPOWERMENT AND SELF-RELIANCE IN JORDAN.

Research Report

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With the prospect of returns to Syria appearing remote, significant numbers of Syrian refugees will likely remain in Jordan for the foreseeable future. As durable solutions are currently out of reach for most refugees, it becomes vital to support pathways toward solutions so that displaced people are able to take a voluntary and informed decision once solutions become available to them. Enabling the youth among Syrian refugee, vulnerable Jordanian and other refugee populations to live full and productive lives, through investments in and the building of linkages between education and livelihoods will not only allow them to fulfill their potential and achieve self-reliance, but it also promises wider benefits to Jordan's economy and society.

This research report is part of a larger research project known as Aspirations Versus Reality (AVR) – by the Durable Solutions Platform, the Jordan River Foundation and the Danish Refugee Council – which aims to assess pathways towards youth empowerment and self-reliance in Jordan. The overarching objective of this research is to explore displacement-affected young people's aspirations for their current and future education and livelihood options, and the reality of the choices they face in Jordan today.

On education, the primary motivation of youth respondents to pursue education was being able to access better future income-generation opportunities. However, the lack of financial means creates a burden for pursuing educational pathways for many youths, regardless of their nationality, and acts as a key reason for youth to withdraw from pursuing educational pathways. On more recent developments, the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted access to and the quality of education, across the youth of different nationalities.

While the government of Jordan provided education to Syrian refugee children in both host communities and camps through formal Ministry of Education schools, not all refugee children across different nationalities have had equal access to public schools, impacting their access to secondary education. On technical and vocational education and training, while the government is prioritizing the improvement of vocational training as a pathway for individuals to enter the labor market, specifically for the youth, and while vocational training is being invested in refugees, implementers are noticing limited opportunities to equip young people with vocational education for work opportunities, given that no clear employment pathways can be identified for youth who pursue vocational training.

On higher education, refugee populations face two concerns when thinking of enrolling in universities. The first is the high cost of enrollment fees, where refugees, but not Jordanian students, have to pay the expensive fees of international students. The second is related majors, as refugees might select their desired major but are allowed to work only in specific sectors that are considered low-skilled.

The study explored the different challenges and considerations faced by the youth that impact the bridging from education to livelihoods pathways. Restrictive policies

in accessing specific sectors for refugees not only limit access to livelihoods for the refugee youth, but also disrupt their selection of educational pathways. Despite the importance of career counseling in helping to identify future employment and educational pathways for young people, very few respondents were aware of such services. In addition, the majority of youth respondents across all nationalities considered training and skills-building as important to obtaining job opportunities.

The majority of youths considered education useful to getting a job. But, in practice, educational attainments were less helpful for displaced youths. Very few of the working youths had their first job in their field of study, especially Syrian refugee youths.

The study shed light on youth priorities and preferences when it comes to livelihoods. In their search for job opportunities, most youths prioritize salary over decent work conditions. Regarding self-employment, youths shared their interest in establishing their own business. But while the government has started placing high priority on self-employment and entrepreneurship as a solution for youth unemployment, establishing a business is considered a challenging experience for the youth. More than half of youth respondents showed an interest in the gig economy and freelance jobs. The study highlighted challenges, however, in seeking gig economy work, especially for refugees.

Youths in the study shared their considerations on decent work, highlighting significant barriers when entering the labor market, where refugees faced additional types of challenges related to decent work.

Displacement appears to play a significant role in the long-term aspirations of the youth in Jordan, with refugee youths less likely to have high ambitions or aspirations than their Jordanian counterparts. Moreover, Jordanian and refugee youths of other nationalities were more likely than Syrian refugee youths to aspire to a university degree (bachelor's) in a specific major. Taken together, the survey results demonstrate that young people in Jordan, regardless of nationality or residency status, are not very satisfied with their level of education. Youths of all nationalities in Jordan have high aspirations for sustainable livelihoods, but in practice struggle to make them a reality.

This research report has aimed to draw a picture of educational and livelihood pathways for young people in Jordan, and to indicate the challenges that prevent the bridging between education and the labor market. The target age group investigated in this study is either near or in the early stages of entering a challenging, limited and highly competitive labor market, where displacement adds another layer of vulnerability facing refugee youths specifically. Better supporting all young people in Jordan, by empowering and enabling them to achieve self-reliance, will create a positive medium- and long-term impact for both host communities and the refugee population, and Jordan as a hosting country.

# ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AVR</b>	Aspirations Versus Reality
<b>COVID-19</b>	coronavirus disease 2019
<b>DoS</b>	Department of Statistics
<b>DRC</b>	Danish Refugee Council
<b>DSP</b>	Durable Solutions Platform
<b>GCR</b>	Global Compact on Refugees
<b>GDP</b>	gross domestic product
<b>GoJ</b>	Government of Jordan
<b>HHs</b>	households
<b>ICT</b>	information and communications technology
<b>INGO</b>	International Non-Governmental Organization
<b>JRF</b>	Jordan River Foundation
<b>KIIs</b>	Key Informant Interviews
<b>MSMEs</b>	micro, small and medium-sized enterprises
<b>MoE</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>MoHE</b>	Ministry of Higher Education
<b>MoL</b>	Ministry of Labor
<b>MoY</b>	Ministry of Youth
<b>Mol</b>	Ministry of Interior
<b>MoDEE</b>	Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship
<b>NGO</b>	non-governmental organization
<b>PPS</b>	probability-proportional-to-size sampling
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>WANA</b>	West Asia-North Africa Institute

# INTRODUCTION

With the prospect of returns to Syria appearing remote, significant numbers of Syrian refugees will likely remain in Jordan for the foreseeable future. As durable options are currently out of reach for most refugees, it becomes vital to support pathways toward solutions so that displaced people are able to take a voluntary and informed decision once solutions do become available to them. Enabling the youth among Syrian refugee, vulnerable Jordanian and other refugee populations to live full and productive lives, through investments in and the building of linkages between education and livelihoods will not only allow them to fulfill their potential and achieve self-reliance, but also promises wider benefits to Jordan's economy and society. There is a continual need to identify the available options to support access to quality education and livelihoods services over the medium term.

There is a unique opportunity to advance a sustainable refugee response that strengthens national systems and supports the self-reliance and resilience of both displaced refugees and host communities through working with the Government of Jordan and its partners. This should focus strategically on the needs of refugees in development planning over the medium and longer term, while ensuring that all vulnerable youths are able to access quality education and can graduate from education into decent and meaningful work.

This research report is part of a larger research project known as Aspirations Versus Reality (AVR) – by the Durable Solutions Platform (DSP), the Jordan River Foundation (JRF), and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). This project aims to assess youth pathways toward empowerment and self-reliance in Jordan. The overarching objective of this research is to explore displacement-affected young people's aspirations for their current and future education and livelihood options, and the reality of the choices they are faced with in Jordan today. The AVR research project aligns with the United Nations Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) program of action to meet needs and support communities in education and livelihoods, with the focus on supporting the empowerment of the refugee and host community youth.<sup>1</sup>

The term displacement-affected young people in this research refers to youths in the age group of 15 to 24 years, including the Jordanian youth, the Syrian refugee youth (both out-of-camp and in-camp) and the refugee youth of other nationalities. The AVR project aims to answer the following key questions.

1. For the youth, what are their own lived experiences and aspirations regarding education and livelihood options in Jordan? What are their preferences, and the barriers and enablers of meeting those?
2. How can policy and programs be improved to support youths' choices over the medium term, including through strengthening linkages between sectors, and supporting national systems and capacities?

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1 United Nations (2018). Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: Part II Global compact on refugees, UN Doc. A/73/12 (Part II), New York: United Nations. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G19/246/69/PDF/G1924669.pdf>, accessed 11 May 2022.

3. What are the medium-term trends on the labor market in Jordan, and how can educational pathways for the displacement-affected youth better support meeting the demands and requirements of the labor market?

### Methodology Note<sup>2</sup>

The project adopted a participatory and multi-stakeholder approach to involve key stakeholders, including policymakers, practitioners and youth representatives, across all stages of the research. The results in this research report are drawn from 1) a mixed-method survey, 2) key informant interviews 3) macro-economic analysis and 4) desk review.

#### *Mixed method survey*

The mixed-method survey was conducted on a national-level sample of the Jordanian youth, Syrian refugee youth and refugee youth of other nationalities. There were 885 respondents between the ages of 15 and 24 years. Probability-proportional-to-size (PPS) sampling was used, where the main variables of gender, age and governorate reflect the original population of each group (for representative samples only). The mixed method included both quantitative and qualitative questions. The data collection was implemented through phone calls with survey participants between the months of August and November of 2021.

**Figure 1: Sample number of population groups targeted in the survey**

Population group	Number	Type of sample
Jordanian youth	384	Representative
Out-of-camp Syrian Refugee youth	384	Representative
In-camp Syrian refugee youth	54	Indicative
Non-Syrian refugee youth	63	Indicative

<sup>2</sup> For more details about the methodology, please see Annex 2.

### ***Key informant interviews***

The study included 40 key informant interviews with international and national implementers, donors, governmental representatives and think tanks working in the field of education and livelihoods of relevance to the youth.

### ***Macroeconomic analysis***

The macroeconomic analysis of the labor market in Jordan was conducted through an extensive review of secondary material relevant to the Jordanian labor market, in addition to 20 key informant interviews with economic experts and private-sector representatives.

<b>Key informant interviews</b>	
<b>Type of Stakeholder</b>	<b>Number</b>
Government representatives	5
United Nations agencies	5
International nongovernmental organizations (INGOs)	10
National nongovernmental organizations	8
Local community-based organizations (CBOs)	4
Donors	6
Development agencies	1
Economic experts	10
Private-sector actors	8
Educational institutions	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>

### ***Desk review***

The desk review included relevant research papers and materials of relevance to the study's scope that were published by think tanks, implementing agencies and others.

## CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

In Jordan, there is a total of 761,059 people registered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as refugees.<sup>3</sup> Syrian refugees present a total of 674,439,<sup>4</sup> where the majority of them (80%) live outside the camps in both urban and rural areas.<sup>5</sup> In-camp Syrian refugees reside in Zaatari in the northeast of the country, and in Azraq and the Emirati camp in central eastern Jordan. In addition, Jordan also hosts refugees of other nationalities: 86,620 Iraqis, Somalis, Sudanese, Yemenis and people of other nationalities, all representing 11% of the total number of registered refugees in Jordan.<sup>6</sup> The youth (15 to 24 years of age) represents 20% of the registered Syrian refugees in Jordan,<sup>7</sup> and also 20% of the Jordanian population.<sup>8</sup> **Young people represent a largely untapped pool of talent, ideas and entrepreneurship that needs more support.**

Syrian refugee youths and refugee youths of other nationalities are living in a country that was already facing economic challenges, and heavily reliant on foreign investment, international aid and remittances from the diaspora.<sup>9</sup> More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has heavily impacted the economy in Jordan. Unemployment, which has been on the rise since 2015, has increased dramatically as a result of the economic challenges. The most recent data for the fourth quarter of 2021 puts the unemployment rate at 23.3%. **The unemployment rate is particularly high among the youth, at 52.1%, and significantly higher for the female youth (70.2% compared with 47.9% for males).** Those who are highly educated, holding a bachelor's degree or above, were unemployed at 26% for males and 79.2% for females.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, when focusing on refugees, **52.3% of Syrian refugee youth are unemployed, based on recent 2021 figures.**<sup>11</sup>

Jordan's economy is not currently able to create enough jobs to meet demand or to absorb all the new entrants to the labor market. This limitation in the number of job opportunities has spurred severe competition, made worse by several compounding factors; the competition is not confined to new job seekers, as those who were laid off

3 UNHCR (2022). Registered Persons of Concern Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Jordan (April 2022). <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/92101>, accessed 11 May 2022.

4 Ibid.

5 UNHCR. Operational Data Portal – Refugee Situations: Total Registered Syrian Refugees in Jordan. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/36>, accessed 11 May 2022.

6 UNHCR (2022). Registered Persons of Concern Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Jordan (April 2022).

7 Data requested from UNHCR Jordan Office.

8 Data requested from the Jordanian Department of Statistics.

9 ARDD. Between Poverty and Prison: The Challenges of Debt among Vulnerable Women in Jordan. Amman: Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development, 2019. <https://firebasestorage.googleapis.com/v0/b/ardd-94d08.appspot.com/o/publications%2F1cszr51qmfe?alt=media&token=a611aee5-e40d-44fc-a953-eee9e35d494c>, accessed 11 May 2022.

10 Newsletter: Department of Statistics: unemployment rate at 23.3% for quarter four in 2021. (خبر صحفي - الإحصاءات: ٢٣,٣٪ معدل البطالة خلال الربع الرابع من عام ٢٠٢١). [http://dos.gov.jo/dos\\_home\\_a/main/archive/unemp/2021/Emp\\_Q42021.pdf](http://dos.gov.jo/dos_home_a/main/archive/unemp/2021/Emp_Q42021.pdf), accessed 11 May 2022.

11 UNICEF. 2021. Youth Transitions to Adulthood in Jordan: High Aspirations, Challenging Realities. <https://www.unicef.org/jordan/media/8361/file/Youth-Transitions-to-Adulthood-in-Jordan.pdf>, accessed 11 May 2022.

from their jobs during the pandemic are also chasing the limited number of available jobs. Economic experts and private-sector actors in the key informant interviews observed the demand for Jordanian workers from the Gulf countries – which in the past has contributed to the employment of a good proportion of Jordanians – has weakened and exacerbated the unemployment problem. Further adding to this issue is the possibility of the return of Jordanians working in the Gulf and abroad.

Key informant interviews with economic experts shed light on the reasons for this decline in the economy's capability to create jobs. It may be attributed to multiple reasons; and the current levels of investment needs to further improved to stimulate growth and create jobs. Although numerous efforts are being exerted to promote investment, it is apparent that there are diverse barriers that hinder these investments. This is combined with macroeconomic risks such as the increased cost of living<sup>12</sup> (and its impact on consumer behavior), and regional demographic trends, which all contribute to shaping the current macroeconomic situation in Jordan. That's being said, it's worth to mention that Jordan have shown improvements in business climate according to World Bank, jumping 29 places from score of 104 to 75.<sup>13</sup> However, rooms of improvement still need to be addressed to further improve the business environment in Jordan.

The pandemic shocked both aggregate demand and aggregate supply, and changed the saving and consumption behaviors of consumers, as well as the investment behavior of businesses. All these circumstances deepen the status of uncertainty and cause people to be more hesitant concerning consumption and investment decisions. The COVID-19 crisis has also pushed some businesses to rethink the need for getting back to pre-pandemic hiring numbers after recovery. While this enables businesses to cut costs, it creates extra burden on the labor market already suffering from high unemployment. The Jordanian economy has very low wages against rising prices. The impact of the pandemic has exacerbated the situation by giving employers the right to deduct 30% of employees' salaries for those organizations that kept working during the lockdown (which then was reduced to 20%) and 50% for those organizations whose work completely stopped during lockdown.<sup>14</sup> However, the defense law contributed to protecting employees through policies that aimed to keep them in employment with their employers.<sup>15</sup>

The COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated the underlying economic challenges in Jordan. The country's economic growth has been limited for over a decade by exogenous shocks, starting with the global financial crisis in 2008, followed by the Arab Spring in 2011, which resulted in interruptions of energy imports, the 2015 closure of Jordan's borders with Iraq (reopened in August 2017 but still not flourishing) and

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12 The World Bank. Consumer price index – Jordan. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/FP.CPI.TOTL?locations=JO>. Accessed 6 June 2022.

13 World Bank. 2020. Investment Climate Statements: Jordan. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-investment-climate-statements/jordan/#:~:text=Jordan%20was%20selected%20as%20one,payment%20system%20for%20labor%20taxes,> accessed 6 June 2022

14 Phenix Center. 2020. Jordan Response to COVID-19 Pandemic and its Impact on Decent Work in Jordan. («أثر وباء كورونا على»). <https://tinyurl.com/2p9zszx7b>, accessed 11 May 2022.

15 In March 2020, the government of Jordan issued a number of defense orders under the national defense law, that aimed to respond to COVID-19 crisis through several orders issued by the government. Part of these orders aimed to protect employees in their employment, among other orders.

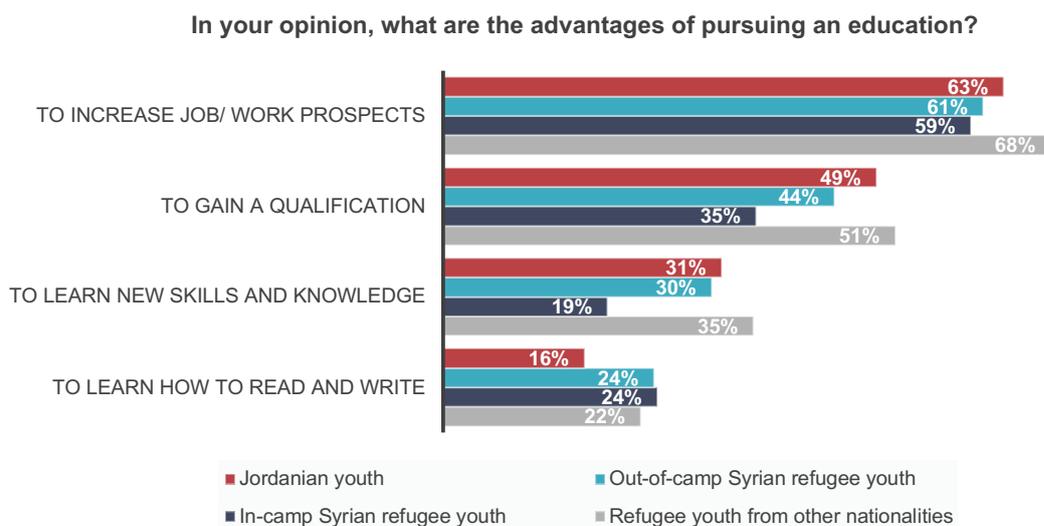
with Syria (partially reopened in 2018), which disrupted trade routes.<sup>16</sup> Examining a protracted displacement crisis such as that in Jordan opens up the opportunity to reveal the structural and systemic barriers that limit the development possibilities for the hosting country. The key findings of this report will shed the light on these structural and systemic barriers, in addition to demonstrating youth aspirations versus the challenges they face when pursuing pathways of education and livelihood in Jordan.

# FINDINGS ON EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

## Entering Education: Barriers and Motivations

Youth respondents' primary motivation to pursue education<sup>17</sup> was linked to the perception of **being able to access better income-generation opportunities in the future**. The top three benefits of pursuing education, as stated by the youth across all nationalities, was to increase job work prospects (62%), to gain professional qualifications (46%), and to learn new skills and knowledge (30%). Non-Jordanian youth respondents were more likely to value basic educational benefits, as one out of four non-Jordanians (24%) acknowledged the benefit of education as being learning how to read and write. Qualitative responses showed that income-generation activities also acted as a motivation to continue pursuing education, as stated by a 19-year-old Jordanian woman:

**“I would like to have a job along with my education to be able to support myself in pursuing my education because my financial situation needs support”**

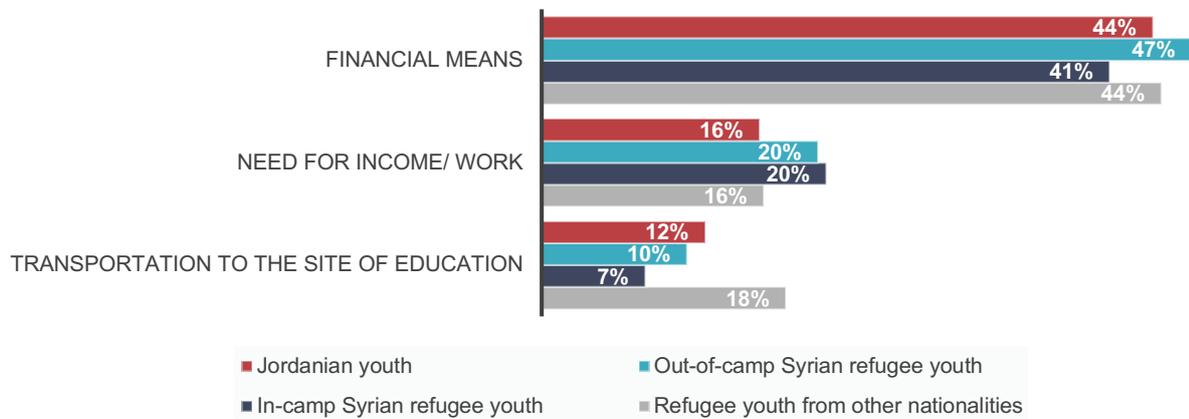


16 United States Department of State, 2021. 2021 Investment Climate Statements: Jordan. Available at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-investment-climate-statements/jordan>, accessed 11 May 2022.

17 Secondary, tertiary education and TVET.

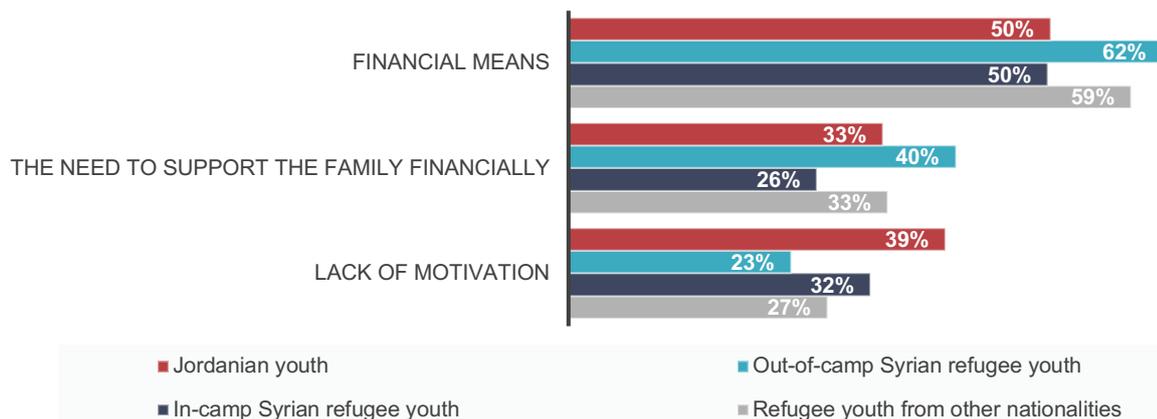
**The lack of financial means creates a burden against pursuing educational pathways** for many of the youth, regardless of their nationality, and acts as key reason for youths to withdraw from pursuing educational pathways. Almost half of the survey respondents (45%) cited their bad financial situation as the challenge for their pursuit of these pathways, and this affected the youth to a similar extent regardless of their educational level. The need to earn an income also presented this challenge for some of the Jordanian and the refugee youth of other nationalities (16%). It presented a bigger challenge for Syrian refugee youths (20%), both those out of camp and those in camp. The challenge was higher among the male youth of all nationalities, where the biggest gender difference was seen for male Syrian refugee youths, both for those out of camp (31%) and those in camp (35%), compared with female Syrian refugee youths (out of camp at 8% and in camp at 7%).

**What are the main challenges you face in trying to enter/ continue education?**



Moreover, **financial challenges were cited as a major factor for young people to leave school**. Financial difficulties were identified as the top reason for youths to leave school (56%). Household dynamics were another major reason, with 36% stating that the need to support the family financially led to the youth leaving school, with out-of-camp Syrians most affected by this at 40%. A lack of motivation to continue studies was another commonly cited reason (31%). On the other hand, a fifth of youths (20%) agreed that having clear connections between education and work would keep young people in school.

**In your opinion, why do young people drop out of school?**



**The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted access to education** according to youth of different nationalities. The pandemic created restrictive measures for accessing education, especially for vulnerable groups in Jordan. One third of the youths (31%) from different nationalities agreed that COVID-19 had negatively affected access to education.<sup>18</sup> When asked about the reasons for this negative impact, youths mentioned a number, including a lack of equipment and poor internet quality or unavailability of the internet in their area.

The experiences and observations from the implementers interviewed in the study indicate that drop-out rates increased during COVID-19 restrictions, especially for refugees, given the fact that online education excluded groups of people who lived in communities with unstable or no connections to the internet or with too few devices. The pandemic shifted donors' priorities to ensure that young people remained in education, especially in secondary education. According to education implementers, refugee households were not always aware of or informed about the latest news on remote education, such as about the platform to compensate loss of education.

More than half of youths (64%) believed that COVID-19 negatively impacted the quality of education, and the highest percentage was among the Jordanian youth (72%), in comparison to 59% of out-of-camp Syrian refugee youth, 46% of in-camp Syrian refugee youth, and 68% refugee of other nationalities.<sup>19</sup> Youths mentioned the lack of supervision from teachers, a weakness in communicating information and the inability of parents to help students in remote learning. A Jordanian male youth described the reasons for this by saying:

**“Disinterest [of youths] in exams and cheating, in addition to lack of supervision. Students do not understand the education they get”**

The experience of remote learning showed that the current education system was not ready for it, due to the lack of infrastructure and the limited skills. Key informants shared that one of the reasons affecting the education during COVID-19 crisis was that teachers were not equipped with the skills needed to switch to e-learning teaching methods. In addition, the lack of student-teacher interaction impacted students' commitment and discipline, decreasing youth interest in getting education.

However, according to the key informant interviews, the pandemic crisis opened up the discussion on room for improvement in the education system and the considerations needed to incorporate online learning in schools and universities, such as teachers' capacity-development needs to implement it, and how to support parents during the online learning process, especially when some students have illiterate parents.

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18 No significant differences across age groups observed.

19 Ibid.

## Selecting Educational Pathways

Jordan's education system has a number of formal tracks at different stages. At the school level, it includes a basic compulsory schooling stage, which spans first grade to tenth grade, and a secondary stage, which includes the eleventh and twelfth grades. There are also academic and vocational tracks. Post-school educational pathways include server tracks, which include universities, diploma colleges, and educational institutions delivering technical and vocational education and training (TVET). As part of this study, this section will cover secondary education in public schools, universities and TVET institutions.

Early on, the Government of Jordan committed to providing access to education to Syrian refugee children in both host communities and camps, through formal Ministry of Education schools.<sup>20</sup> This was also part of the 2016 Jordan Compact pledge that "every Syrian refugee child would be in school by 2016-2017,"<sup>21</sup> mainly through the expansion of double-shift schools, added lesson times, Saturday classes and hiring additional teachers and administrators.

However, **not all refugee children have equal access to public schools** across different nationalities, which is impacting their access to secondary education. While the Government of Jordan shows consistency when it comes to Syrian refugees' enrollment and access to public school, refugees of other nationalities do not enjoy the same rights and exemptions. Interviews with implementers highlighted, for example, that while Syrian refugees were exempted from paying fees to enroll in public schools, refugees of other nationalities were not and had to pay substantial fees to enroll in public schools. Support for refugees of other nationalities has also not been predictable, according to implementers. For example, they are not always sure if school uniforms and book expenses will be covered by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). All of this creates financial barriers for their access to education.

Another educational access limitation for refugees of other nationalities are the **inconsistent policies on the requirements to enter public schools**, especially on documentation. Refugees of other nationalities do not always know if civil documentation is requested from them to enter schools (such as a Ministry of Interior card or residency), given the bad financial situation of refugees of other nationalities" Households and their inability to renew these documentation due to cost and accumulated fines. This creates an unclear right to education for refugees of other nationalities.

Prior to the pandemic, the quality of education in public schools in both basic and secondary education has presented another issue for all population groups in Jordan.<sup>22</sup> The quality of education varies across the type of school. For example,

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20 Durable Solutions Platform and Columbia University. In My Own Hands. 2020. In My Own Hands: A Medium-Term Approach Towards Self-Reliance and Resilience of Syrian Refugees and Host Communities in Jordan. [Link](#)

21 Barbelet V, Hagen-Zanker J, Mansour-Ille D. The Jordan Compact: Lessons learnt and implications for future refugee compacts. London: Overseas Development Institute, 2018. [Link](#)

22 Durable Solutions Platform and Columbia University. In My Own Hands. 2020.

second shifts in public schools, which mostly enroll Syrian refugees, were described that it needs to be improved, by increasing lessons duration and improving teaching capacities.<sup>23</sup>

Enrollment rates in secondary education also reveal a limitation for refugees specifically. Pre-COVID-19 figures on enrollment rates show that for Jordanians it was 88% in 2019, and 47 percentage points lower for Syrian refugees. These figures have been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis measures adopted in the education sector in Jordan.<sup>24</sup>

Despite the government's interest in and calls for TVET, and although progress has certainly been made over the last 15 years, negative perceptions toward vocational jobs still reduce the interest of the youth in engaging in vocational training compared with pursuing a bachelor's degree, placing TVET as a second-class educational pathway.<sup>25</sup> Social norms propagate negative perceptions toward vocational or blue collar jobs, which are considered shameful for some families. It has been observed that the majority of the youth who pursue vocational educational pathways come from households with low to medium incomes and the students who show an inclination toward practical vocational training have parents with a low level of education.<sup>26</sup> In addition, the TVET system suffers from a number of issues, including fragmentation across TVET service providers, a lack of coordination, poor perceptions from employers about the quality of TVET, and a low employability of students graduating from such programs.<sup>27</sup>

### **No clear employment pathway can be identified for the youth who pursue**

**TVET.** While the government is prioritizing the improvement of vocational training as a pathway for individuals to enter the labor market, specifically for the youth,<sup>28</sup> and while vocational training is being invested in refugees, implementers are noticing limited opportunities to equip those with vocational education with work opportunities. Moreover, while a lot of investment has been made for vocational training for refugees, this has been countered by the reality of the inabilities to work, either due to limited opportunities or to policy restrictions. In addition, implementers engaged in scholarships noticed that the refugee youth tended to prefer a university scholarship over a scholarship to a TVET educational institution.

Universities are one of the key educational pathways for young people. However, refugee populations face two concerns when thinking of enrolling in universities. The

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23 Ibid.

24 Breanna Small. 2020. I Want to Continue to Study: Barriers to Secondary Education for Syrian Refugee Children in Jordan 2020. Human Rights Watch. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2020/06/26/i-want-continue-study/barriers-secondary-education-syrian-refugee-children-jordan>, accessed 11 May 2022.

25 Phenix Center. 2020. Policy paper: toward expanding TVET in Jordan. (ورقة سياسات نموذج مؤسسة التدريب المهني نحو توسيع التعليم) «والتدريب المهني والتقني في الأردن»، مركز الفينيق للدراسات الاقتصادية و المعلوماتية، ٢٠٢٠. <https://tinyurl.com/3fzbs5c9>, accessed 11 May 2022.

26 Ibid.

27 Phenix Center. 2020. Policy Paper: Surpassing Social and Cultural Barriers in Selecting Vocational Majors. (ورقة سياسات: «تجاوز المعوقات الاجتماعية والثقافية في اختيار التخصصات المهنية»، مركز الفينيق للدراسات الاقتصادية المعلوماتية [http://labor-watch.net/uploads/ar\\_labor-watch.net\\_637345555834239156.pdf](http://labor-watch.net/uploads/ar_labor-watch.net_637345555834239156.pdf), accessed 11 May 2022.

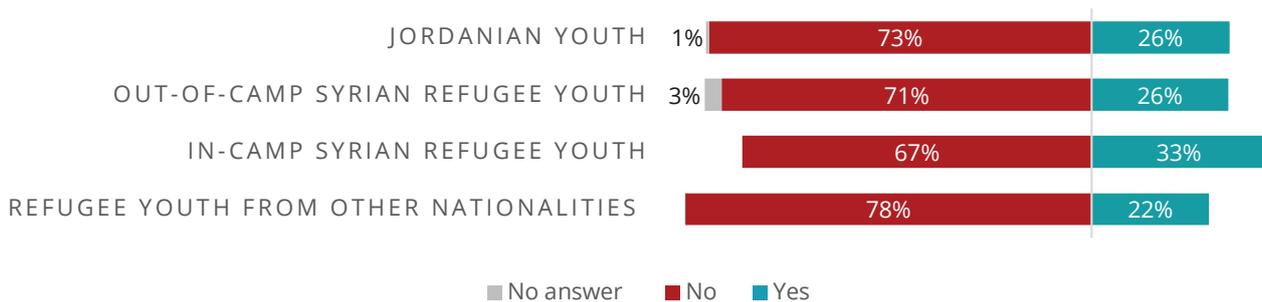
28 See, for example, news from the Ministry of Labor at <https://tinyurl.com/4p8drrcd>, accessed 11 May 2022.

first is the **high cost of enrollment fees**, where refugees have pay the expensive fees of international students, compared with Jordanian students.<sup>29</sup> The second is related to majors, **while refugees might select their desired majors, they are only allowed to work in specific sectors that are considered low-skilled, and don't have access to sectors closed to non-Jordanians**. These two concerns are reflected in the clear gaps between Syrian refugees and Jordanians for post-secondary education enrollment and completion, where less than 5% of Syrian refugees complete higher education, compared with 40% of Jordanians.<sup>30</sup>

Barriers to higher education institutions do, however, affect the youth from both the host community and refugee populations. These include high tuition costs, a lack of scholarship opportunities, limited available fields of study, difficulties traveling to higher education institutions, and a lack of job opportunities on graduation.<sup>31</sup>

Given the prohibitive tuition fees, scholarships support students to pay for their education. However, they are limited in the coverage of young people who aspire to higher education and they are highly competitive.<sup>32</sup> **Few among both the Jordanian and the refugee youth said they knew about scholarships in Jordan**, at 26%, with very few differences across nationalities.

#### ARE YOU AWARE OF ANY SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION OPTIONS IN JORDAN



Another limitation of scholarships is that they are often restricted to younger individuals. Age requirements present an issue to Syrian candidates. Displacement has caused many Syrian refugees interruptions in their education for a couple of years. This means they may be older at enrollment in higher education compared with their Jordanian peers. (For example, scholarship can place the age of 24 years as the limit, while Syrian students might reach 27 years of age before attaining the level needed to enter higher education.)

29 Durable Solutions Platform and Columbia University. In My Own Hands. 2020.

30 El-Ghali HA, Alameddine F, Farah S, Benchiba S. Pathways to and Beyond Education for Refugee Youth in Jordan and Lebanon. Beirut: Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, 2019. <http://www.databank.com.lb/docs/Pathways%20to%20and%20Beyond%20Education%20for%20Refugee%20Youth%20in%20Jordan%20and%20Lebanon%202019%20AUB%20Policy%20Institute.pdf>, accessed 11 May 2022.

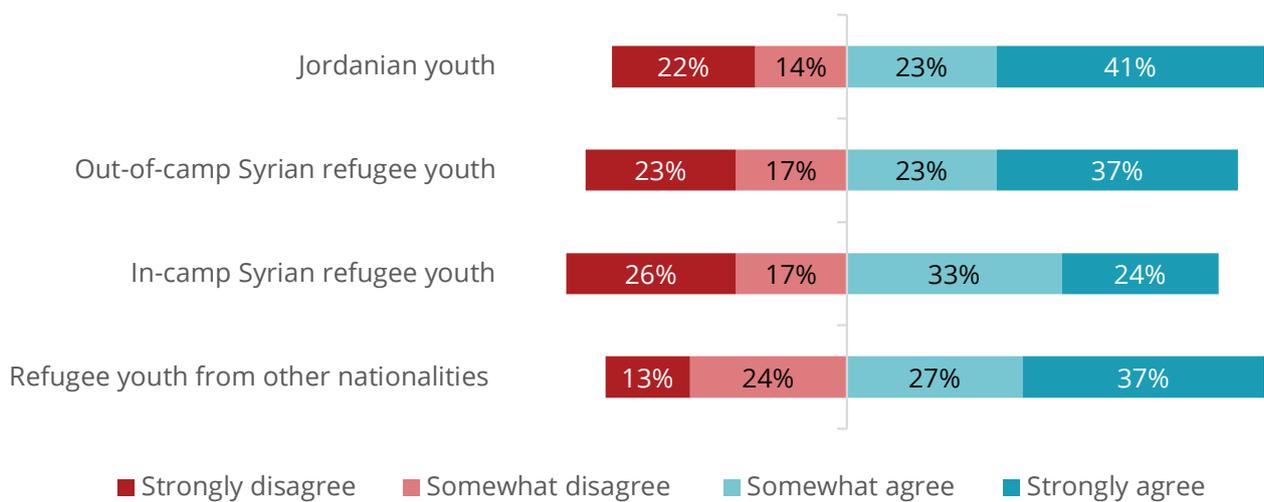
31 Krafft C, Assaad R. Introducing the Jordan Labor Market Panel Survey 2016. IZA Journal of Development and Migration (2021) 12:08, <https://sciendo.com/pdf/10.2478/izajodm-2021-0008>, accessed 11 May 2022.

32 Durable Solutions Platform and Columbia University. In My Own Hands. 2020.

Participants called for improved curriculums of different educational pathways, as a step needed to forge better linkages between educational pathways and future livelihoods for young people. Specifically, universities needed to prepare the youth with the necessary skills for the market, such as English, technical, soft, digital and communication skills. Despite the promotion of entrepreneurship activities by both the government and implementers, education curriculums did not equip them with the needed skills for this, such as financial literacy, practical skills, feasibility studies and project-based learning.

The survey shed light on factors affecting the selection of educational pathways. A number of external factors influence the youth's selection of educational pathways, including family members. **Parents play a strong role in youth's decision-making** over their education pathways. A total of 62% of the youths from all nationalities agreed that their parents could have a strong influence on educational decisions. The most influential family members were the mother (55%) followed by the father (31%).

**How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement:  
"My family has a strong influence on my education decisions."**



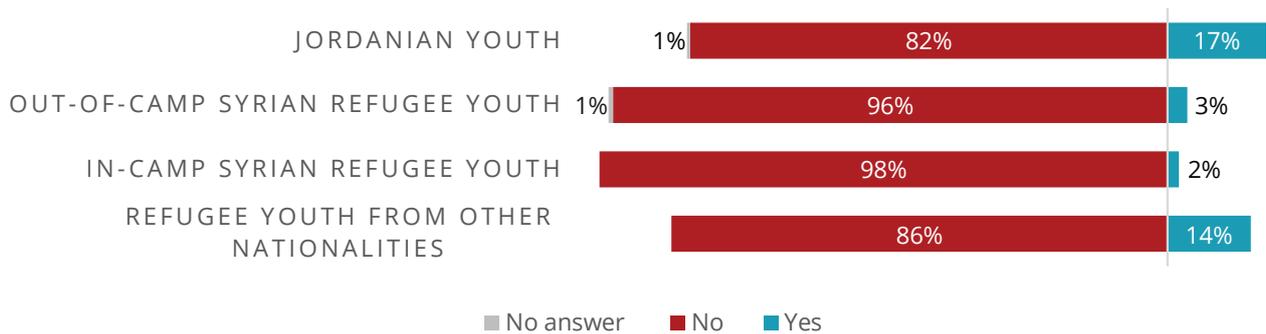
## Bridging from Education to Livelihoods

This study explored different challenges and considerations faced by the youth that impact the bridging from education to livelihood pathways. The topics explored in this section include career counseling, youth perceptions and the impact of restrictive policies in accessing livelihood opportunities for the refugee youth.

Career counseling is a service that aims to help people to take better and informed decisions regarding their educational and career pathways. Services in career counseling offices consist of providing information about possible jobs relevant to students' selected majors and what skills they will need to develop, and increasing students' awareness of what the market needs so that they have time to develop these skills during their learning.

**Very few respondents were aware of career counseling services**, despite their importance in helping to identify future employment and educational pathways for young people. While the awareness was higher for the Jordanian and refugee youth of other nationalities (17% and 14% respectively), few among the Syrian refugee youth (3%) knew about these services. For the youths who did know about career counseling services, 80% stated that they were easy to access.<sup>33</sup> This indicates that the issue with career counseling is less about availability and more related to a need for better outreach and promotion.

### ARE YOU AWARE OF CAREER COUNSELLING SERVICES?



With the lack of knowledge of existing career counseling services, the youth shared their interest in accessing career counseling. Across all nationalities, of those who were not aware of the services, **over 70% shared a desire to receive career counseling**.

Despite the existence of career counseling service providers, either from the government or nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), career counseling is still not systematically mainstreamed in Jordan for young people. For example, career counseling is still not structurally integrated in the educational system, within both the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education. In addition, different implementers mentioned the need to support the career counseling service providers, such as building the capacities of counselors, either school counselors or those at career counseling centers in universities, and developing concrete manuals to be used in career counseling services. Career counseling services should consider content related to the challenges for the displaced youth and advice on how to engage in education and future livelihood pathways, including relevant policy barriers.

There have been previous and ongoing efforts to improve the career counseling system in Jordan,<sup>34</sup> such as developing manuals with relevant ministries, or implementers revising career counseling center structures and objectives. A need to expand career-counseling opportunities persists, however, especially for younger students. Investing in career counseling at an early stage of students' education would support them in taking an informed decision when selecting their education pathway.

<sup>33</sup> No significant differences observed across age groups.

<sup>34</sup> For example, the government, along with the International Labour Organization, has issued the first career counseling manual for grades 8 to 10: [http://www.mol.gov.jo/ebv4.0/root\\_storage/ar/eb\\_list\\_page/cg\\_career\\_counselor\\_manual\\_final\\_en\\_issue.pdf](http://www.mol.gov.jo/ebv4.0/root_storage/ar/eb_list_page/cg_career_counselor_manual_final_en_issue.pdf), accessed 11 May 2022.

In addition to the gap on career counseling, there is a lack of information on market sector needs linked to specific majors in educational pathways. This limited knowledge causes young people to be less informed when choosing their education majors in a way that secures later livelihood opportunities. One of the main resources has been developed by the Civil Service Bureau, but this is limited to public sector occupations in governmental entities and does not cover the demand in the private sector. Jordan still lacks evidence-based forecasting on what majors will be needed in the coming five years for all sectors.

**Most youth respondents across all nationalities considered training and skills-building as important to obtaining job opportunities (89%).** The top two reasons mentioned by respondents were to improve youth employability in their desired job (66%) and to diversify their skills to become more employable (68%). However, only 20% of youths were aware of skills-building activities provided by government institutions, and only 29% knew how to find services that were provided by NGOs. Only one third of youth respondents (32%) believed that educational institutions currently provided enough opportunities to develop practical skills.

**For youth who were engaged in or had finished TVET, university degrees or diplomas, 72% considered their major was highly in demand in the labor market, while 28% said the demand was low.** These responses are linked to broader youth aspirations in relation to the labor market. Youths have shown some awareness of the mismatch between education and the labor market in their narrative responses. For example, some youths indicated that selected majors did not match labor market needs, and led to oversaturation. Another few young people acknowledged the mismatch between educational outcomes and labor market requirements, stating that the current education curriculums did not provide the youth with the skills needed and the qualifications that would allow them to enter the labor market. This mismatch was also reflected when 22% of youths stated they aspired to work within their major or a specialty that they had studied in. These mismatches created another layer of barriers that stand in front of youths' abilities to meet their preferences and interests when engaging in the labor market.

**Restrictive policies against access to specific sectors for refugees not only limit access to livelihoods for the refugee youth, but also disrupt their selection educational pathways.** In 2019, the Government of Jordan issued a new set of professions that were closed to non-Jordanians. This creates an additional mismatch between the majors selected by the refugee youth and access to the labor market.<sup>35</sup> The Ministry of Labor has though recently allowed flexible work permits in a list of occupational families that allow Syrian refugees to move within them, including sales and services, agriculture and hunting, crafting, manufacturing, and primary professions.<sup>36</sup>

35 Jordan INGO Forum and Jordanian National NGOs Forum. 2020. Walk the Talk for the Jordan Compact. <http://jordaningoforum.org/testsite/wp-content/uploads/Walk-the-Talk-June-2020.pdf>, accessed 11 May 2022.

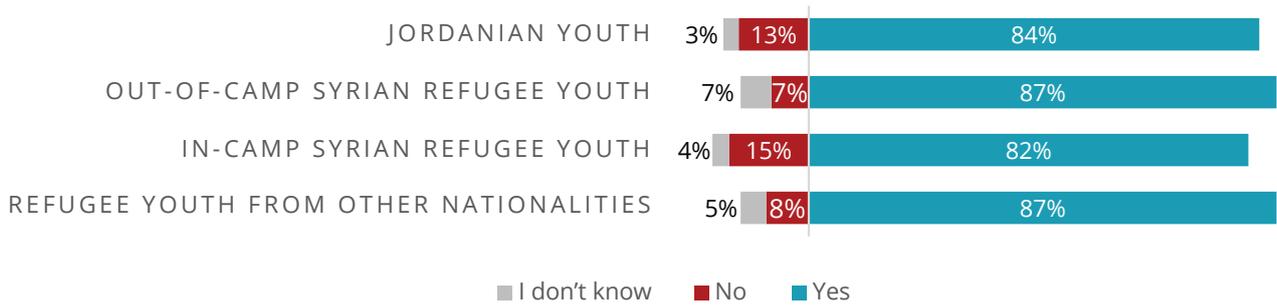
36 Ministry of Labor. 2021. Practical Guide to Issuing Flexible Work Permits for Non-Jordanian Workers of Syrian Nationality. (وزارة العمل. ٢٠٢١. الدليل الإجرائي لإصدار تصريح عمل المرءن للعمال غير الأردنيين من الجنسية السورية)

# FINDINGS ON LIVELIHOOD PATHWAYS

## Navigating the Labor Market

Youth perceptions toward factors that help in finding a job indicated **clear linkages between education, skills and livelihoods**. Most survey respondents across all nationalities (86%) considered education as useful to getting a job. In addition, more than half of the youths from all nationalities attributed finding a job to the educational background in a specific sector or major (56%) and to having the necessary skills and practical experience (53%). Social factors were also linked to finding a job. While the right networks and connections were considered as a factor by only 10% of youths, 21% of Jordanians specifically said that *wasta* (or nepotism) was an important factor, while non-Jordanians barely mentioned this social factor.

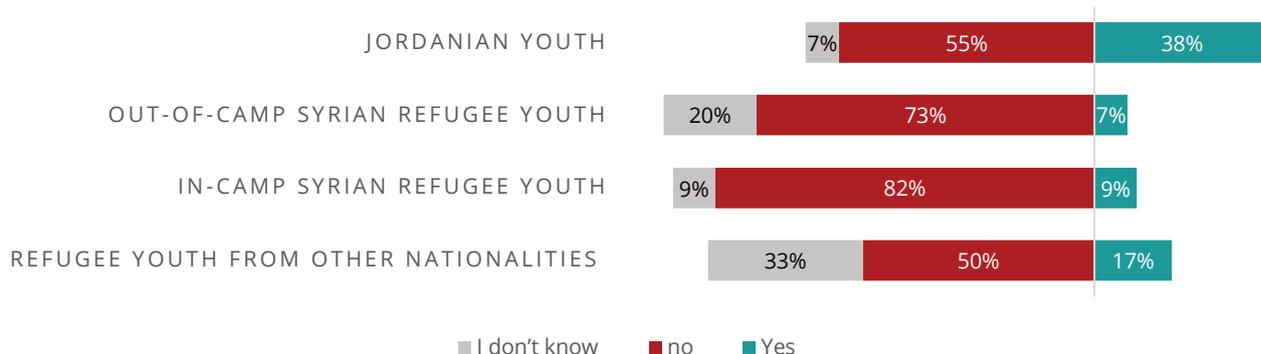
### IN YOUR OPINION, IS EDUCATION USEFUL TO GET A JOB/ TO FIND WORK?



Despite youths considering the value of education, educational attainments in practice were less helpful to job prospects for the displaced youth. Only 7% of the Syrian refugee youths and 17% of the refugee youths of other nationalities said their educational attainment helped them in getting their current job, compared with 38% of Jordanian youth. Differences across gender indicate that female youths across all nationalities were more likely to perceive benefit from their educational attainment in getting their current job – at 55%, compared with 13% for male youth.<sup>37</sup>

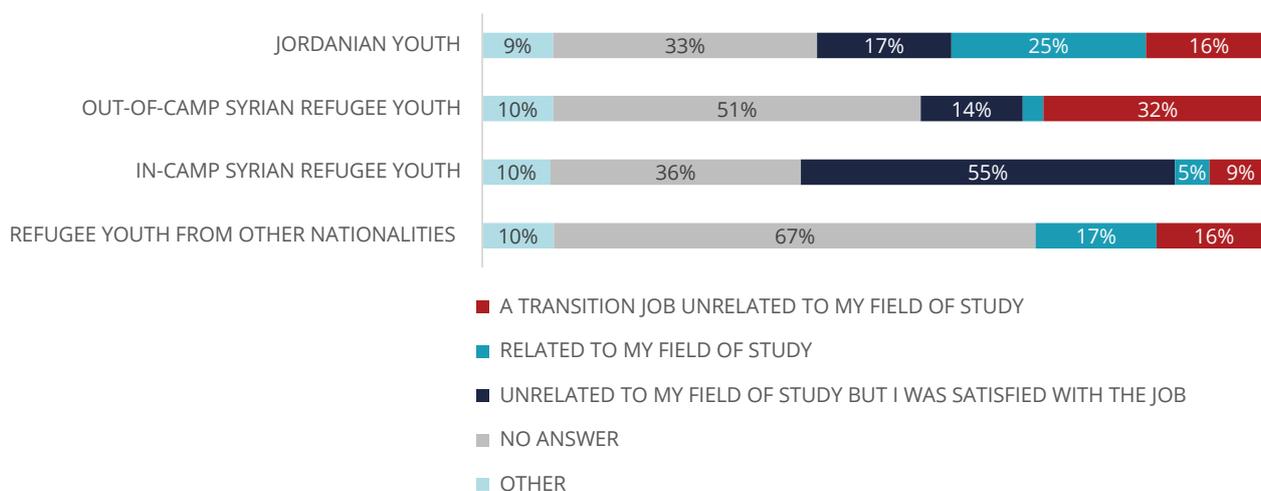
<sup>37</sup> Gender-disaggregated data by nationality for this question are as following: 65% for female Jordanian youths compared with 27% for the male Jordanian youth; 20% for the female out-of-camp Syrian refugee youths compared with 6% for the male out-of-camp Syrian refugee youth.

### IF YOU ARE CURRENTLY IN EMPLOYMENT, HAS YOUR EDUCATION HELPED YOU GET YOUR JOB?



For those who were currently working having achieved a certificate in a major, **very few had their first job in the field of their study**. While only 3% of out-of-camp Syrian youths worked in a job related to their field of study, 25% of Jordanians and 17% of refugees of other nationalities managed to work in their field of study. Syrian refugee youths tended to work more in a transition job that was unrelated to their field of study (31%) compared with other populations such as Jordanians and refugees of other nationalities (16% and 17% respectively).

### IF YOU ARE IN EMPLOYMENT, WAS/ IS YOUR FIRST JOB IN YOUR FIELD OF STUDY?



When navigating to the labor market, **the youth is increasingly using social media and new methods to look for jobs**. A total of 75% of the Jordanian youths and 72% of the refugee youths of other nationalities indicated that they used social media and the internet as a key source of information when looking for jobs, with lower proportions among out-of-camp Syrian (50%) and in-camp Syrian youth respondents (56%).

At the same time, **traditional job-seeking methods continue to play an important role**, especially for the Jordanian and out-of-camp Syrian youth in urban areas. This includes reaching out to friends and peers, which was higher for Jordanian and out-of-camp Syrian refugee youths, and lower for in-camp Syrian and refugee youths

of other nationalities. This was also followed by seeking information from parents and other family members (18% for all youths), which was the highest for in-camp Syrian refugees (31%), indicating the limited social reach beyond families. Though a less prevalent activity, 7% of respondents stated that they had physically traveled to markets and other nearby locations to search for jobs. Only very few respondents mentioned using structured and organization-based methods, such as educational institutions (3%) and employment centers (6%).

Gender dynamics have an impact on the youth navigating the labor market. With the low labor market participation of females, there are various barriers contributing to this result. The current transportation network is poor, for example, particularly in linking governorates. This is a significant issue, given that most jobs are concentrated in Amman, and to a lesser extent in Zarqa and Irbid, making it difficult for women residing in other remote areas to join the labor market. Other key impediments are the limited availability and high cost of childcare facilities, as well as the gender pay gap, which is particularly prevalent in the private sector. A symptom of these problems is that early drop-out from the labor market is more prevalent among women than their male counterparts.

**The male youth in Jordan are also impacted by gender dynamics**, where social pressures affect their engagement to enter the labor market. They are urged to earn money very fast because it will affect their future decisions (such as marriage). This causes the youth to have high turnover and jump between different jobs to achieve a better income. Key informant interviews with private-sector actors and economic experts revealed that the private sector was less inclined to hire young Jordanians, especially those with no previous work experience. Many young people were tempted after receiving training and gaining some experience to quit their current jobs and start looking for other opportunities, mainly in search of better salaries. From the employers' point of view, this involves considerable losses, especially the costs associated with training and qualifying young people.

**“I hope to find a job and be able to open a house [get married] and achieve my aspiration”**

*– 23-year-old unemployed Yemini refugee*

## Youth Priorities, Preferences and Decent Work.

In their search for job opportunities, **most youths prioritize salary over decent work conditions**. Over 70% of youth respondents stated this priority, while only 11% of them looked at decent work conditions and employers that maintained employees' rights. One quarter of respondents (23%) looked at job security, with Jordanian youths being the most likely to consider it (27%), while Syrian refugee youths were the least likely (19%). One fifth of youth respondents across all nationalities (21%) considered job location (close to home) as something they looked for.

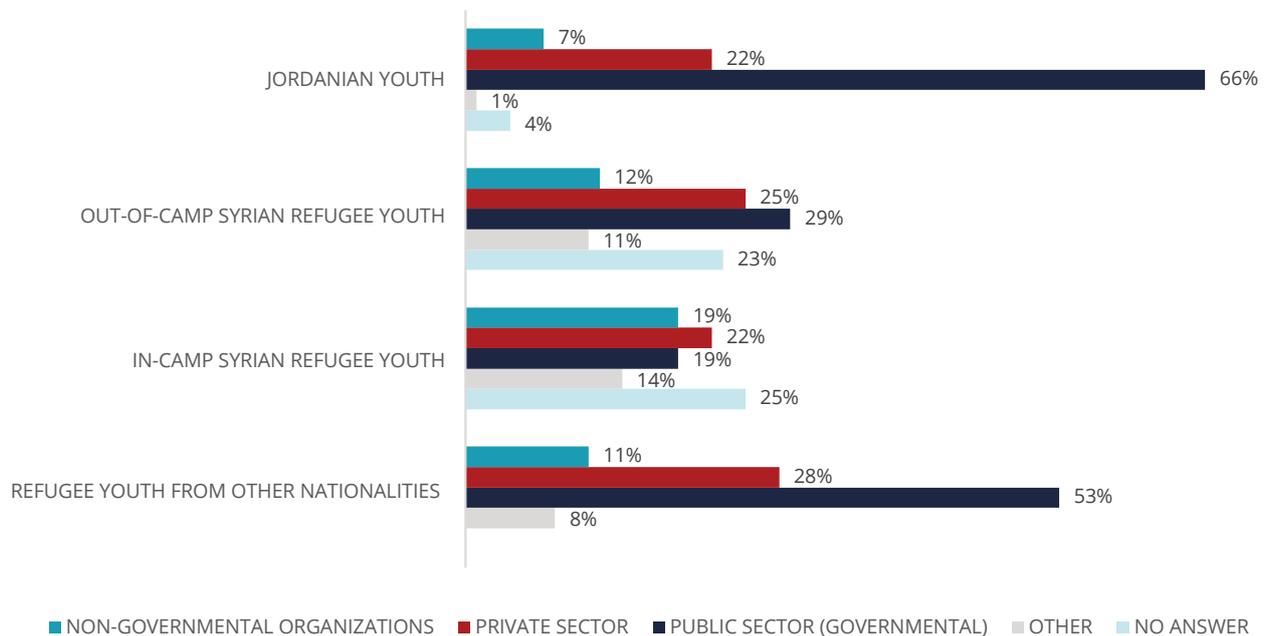
**“I want to find a job near my house with a good salary so I and my mother can live from it”**

*– unemployed Syrian refugee male youth from Mafraq*

More than half of the youth respondents (57%) **preferred a formal, contract-based, salaried working arrangement**, indicating that an official agreement that linked the employee to the employer in the long term was an important consideration when selecting a job. Jordanian and refugee youths of other nationalities showed a higher preference for this option (69% and 68% respectively), in comparison with out-of-camp and in-camp Syrian refugee youths (44% and 59% respectively). While the informal sector is widespread across Jordan, very few survey respondents indicated a desire to work in it (4%).

In terms of sectors, more than half of Jordanian youths stated that they preferred working in the public sector. While refugee populations are not allowed to work in the public sector, 29% of out-of-camp Syrian refugee youths and 53% of refugee youths of other nationalities said that they preferred to work in the public sector. A quarter of youths in general expressed their preference to work in private sector. Syrian refugee youths were the most likely to give “no answer” when they were asked this question (23% and 25% for out-of-camp Syrian refugee youths and refugee youths of other nationalities, reflecting their lack of knowledge when it came to types of sector). Syrians in general showed less knowledge regarding the advantages and disadvantages of the private sector, answering that they “don't know” (39%), and of challenges with private sector (43%).

WHICH SECTOR WOULD YOU PREFER TO WORK IN?



According to key informant interviews with economic experts and private-sector actors, the sector's ability to create jobs also declined substantially following the COVID-19 pandemic, with limited ability from the government to financially support the private sector due to tight government budget.<sup>38</sup> Compounding the issue is that the working conditions in some private sector companies are inadequate. For

38 Recent efforts have aimed to support the private sector's ability to create jobs, for example through the National Employment Programme 2022, Tashgheel. See <https://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/national-employment-programme-2022-tashgheel-launched>, accessed 11 May 2022

instance, some sectors, such as some private schools and nurseries, do not comply with the minimum wage standards. The work environment continues to suffer from inefficient structures, a lack of career development and employee training programs, and a work environment that might not be suitable for working women.

Another type of employment that is emerging and being promoted for the youth is self-employment. The Government of Jordan has started placing a **high priority on self-employment and entrepreneurship** as a solution for unemployment for youth. The Reform Matrix (2018–2022) aims to improve “the efficiency of the business and investment environment; reduce the cost of doing business; boost exports and investments; and enhance macroeconomic stability”.<sup>39</sup> The Matrix supports Jordan Vision 2025, which included an objective to encourage small and medium-sized businesses.<sup>40</sup>

At the same time, **youths shared their interest in establishing their own business**. This was similarly high for both Jordanian youths and out-of-camp Syrian refugee youths (64% and 63% respectively), and slightly less, but still high for refugee youths of other nationalities and in-camp Syrian refugee youths (57% and 48% respectively).

However, economic experts and private-sector key informants raised questions about the approach toward promoting entrepreneurship and self-employment. There is a lack of proper guidance and tracking over this type of employment, with limited data. For instance, there is no regularly updated database of investments in the start-up space in Jordan, resulting in no information about the number of start-ups founded and jobs generated. Without proper data and tracking, the government and other actors in the entrepreneurship ecosystem have little knowledge of what is and what is not working. Very few data tackle key metrics such as the financing raised by these companies, their rates of success or failure, and their sectoral focus, among other critical measurements. It is thus very difficult to ascertain how the entrepreneurship scene will look over the coming 10 to 15 years. Another issue related to this is that start-ups get registered under the same category in the Ministry of Industry and Trade, allowing less space to extract specific figures related to youth-led start-ups and entrepreneurship.

Although the Reform Matrix stressed support for start-up businesses, promoting entrepreneurship through reduced legal and regulatory burdens, **establishing a new business is a challenging experience for the youth**. This starts with the registration process, where the youth face a set of bureaucratic requirements. The registration challenges also link to the fact there is a lack of recognition by laws and regulations of the specific identity and characteristics of start-ups (i.e. there is no official definition of what a start-up is). The registration requirement to establish a start-up is the same as that for establishing a bigger business. This does not fit with the reality of start-ups and youth-led entrepreneurship projects, which are more prone to financial vulnerability and are in need of facilitation in their first years of work.

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39 Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation. Reform Secretariat. [https://mop.gov.jo/EN/List/Reform\\_secariat?View=1088](https://mop.gov.jo/EN/List/Reform_secariat?View=1088), accessed 11 May 2022.

40 The Government of Jordan. 2015. Jordan 2025 A National Vision and Strategy. <https://www.greengrowthknowledge.org/sites/default/files/downloads/policy-database/JORDAN%29%20Jordan%202025%20Part%20I.pdf>, accessed 11 May 2022.

Another level of challenge is the financial one, as refugee youth face additional layer of challenges, such as the lack of financial inclusion for them, such as lack of access to credit and using banks.

Restrictive policies for Syrian refugees present additional barriers when establishing home-based businesses specifically. Despite improved registration arrangements, Syrians are permitted to operate home-based businesses only in food processing, handicrafts, and tailoring outside of camps.<sup>41</sup>

The youth itself might not be fully aware of the dynamics related to entrepreneurship and self-employment, such as the associated risks and challenges. These could include the difficulties in registering businesses, the costs of operating, a lack of skills necessary for establishing and running projects and, among others, challenges in access to finance. Motivating the youth to enter the sphere of self-employment without educating it about the challenges and the needed skills to succeed creates the risk of business failures.

In reality, and from the economic point of view, home-based businesses and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) have been less resilient to the impact of COVID-19 crisis. Within this context, it is important to note that although MSMEs comprise 98% of all enterprises in Jordan, and are a big source of employment and growth, large enterprises have been found to be more resistant to such shocks. This creates a challenge for policy makers designing future coping mechanisms.<sup>42</sup>

**More than half of youth respondents showed an interest in the gig economy and freelance jobs (63%).** The reasons for this interest were linked to the associated independence and flexibility, including flexible wages (55%), self-employment and greater decision-making (48%), and flexible working hours and schedules (39%). Yet, while more young people were interested in participating in the gig economy as a supplement to their main source of income (41%), very few mentioned their interest to engage in the gig economy as their main source of income (13%). Jordanian respondents were more interested in supplementing their income through the gig economy (54%), while more out-of-camp Syrian refugee youths were leaning toward engaging in it as their main source of income (20%). Those who were interested in the gig economy addressed a number of skills needed to actively engage in it, including networking skills (33%), English language skills (29%) and project management abilities (26%).

Refugees specifically face a number of challenges in engaging in the gig economy. Living in remote areas and poverty would mean a set barrier to accessing digital platforms, such as a lack of reliable internet connection, unsuitable hardware and a lack of advanced digital skills.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, efforts to integrate refugees into

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41 Jordan INGO Forum and Jordanian National NGOs Forum. 2020. Walk the Talk for the Jordan Compact.

42 MED MSMEs. MSME Development Policies and Programmes in Jordan. <https://medmsmes.eu/jordan#:~:text=MSME%20development%20policies%20and%20programmes,98%25%20of%20private%20sector%20entities>, accessed 11 May 2022.

43 Digital Refugee Livelihoods and Decent Work – Towards Inclusion in a Fairer Digital Economy, International Labour Organization, 2021. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ILO%20Executive%20Summary%20-%20Digital%20refugee%20livelihoods%20and%20decent%20work.pdf>, accessed 11 May 2022.

the online gig economy should be accompanied by a wider effort to improve the conditions within this new form of work. Moreover, due to the challenges and risks in the gig economy, such as low payment levels and job insecurity, it can be viewed as one element in a wider range of income options – as complementary livelihoods rather than stand-alone solutions. This resonated with the respondents who were uninterested in this form of work: they raised concerns related to low or unstable income streams (40%), lack of job security (19%) and negative perceptions by peers or family members toward these types of jobs (12%). In addition, the inability to have bank accounts can exclude refugees from engaging in remote work through gig activities. Also, the information technology sector is closed to non-Jordanians, denying them one of the main sectors of gig economy.<sup>44</sup>

Decent work considerations were also reported in the survey. Jordanian youths, Syrian refugee youths and refugee youths of other nationalities face **significant different barriers to entering the labor market**. The lack of work experience was mentioned by Jordanian youths at 33%, compared with 17% of non-Jordanian youths. This shows that the non-Jordanian youth's tendency to be active earlier in the labor market exposes it to more work experience than Jordanian youth. Some 39% of all youths stated that the limited or lack of job opportunities created challenges to them entering the labor market. On policies, only 28% of refugee youths of other nationalities considered restrictive policies that prohibited non-Jordanians from working in specific sectors as a challenge to them. This was stated less by Syrian refugees, both out-of-camp and in-camp ones (5% and 14% respectively). In addition, more refugees of other nationalities (31%) stated that the lack of official documentation, such as work permits, was a barrier to them finding a job.

Refugee-specific barriers were also reported in the survey. **Some refugees were subject to discrimination when engaging in the labor market due to their nationalities**. Of the out-of-camp Syrians, 31% stated discrimination, and 36% of refugees of other nationalities stated it.<sup>45</sup> Those who experienced discrimination faced not being considered for a job (49% for out-of-camp Syrians and 77% for refugees of other nationalities), not being paid the same amount as a national (Jordanians) (24% for both the same groups), not being paid the full agreed amount (17% for out-of-camp Syrians and 8% for refugees of other nationalities), not receiving a work contract/social security contributions/health insurance (17% for out-of-camp Syrians and 8% for refugees of other nationalities).

The youth in general tended to have **less knowledge about employees' rights**. While Jordanians and refugees of other nationalities were less unaware of employees' rights (28% and 44% respectively), out-of-camp Syrian refugee youths were the most unaware of employees' rights, at 61%. In addition, **almost half of refugee youths did not know how to obtain a work permit**, where 48% out-of-camp Syrians and 53% refugee youths of other nationalities said they did not know how to obtain one (in-camp Syrian refugee youths were less affected by this lack of knowledge, at 31%). In spite of this, almost all refugee youths addressed the importance of obtaining work permits (93%).

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44 Ibid.

45 These results include only the out-of-camp Syrian refugee youth and the refugee youth of other nationalities.

While Syrian refugees have specific procedures that facilitate their access to work permits (despite the existing challenges), refugees of other nationalities are not included in the Jordan Compact, so they do not have the same facilitations. In practice, this means that refugees of other nationalities are subject to the Law on Residence and Foreigners' Affairs and other labor regulations. This is reflected in the expensive cost of work permits for refugees of other nationalities – and they face difficulties to obtain these. As a result, some refugees of other nationalities have to work without a work permit, making them subject to arrest, imprisonment and deportation.<sup>46</sup>

**Youths' responses highlight the issues with a decent work environment in Jordan** due to the lack of control over labor standards in all sectors of the economy; an inability to enforce labor laws that creates a work environment unsafe for employees; and violations of labor standards and human rights, a lack of contracts and a lack of health insurance and social protection.<sup>47</sup> A low number of inspectors at the Ministry of Labor also hinders the provision of decent work conditions in Jordan.

## Sectoral Analysis: Most Promising Sectors

The macroeconomic analysis of this study gave results on the most promising sectors and jobs in Jordan. It identified the sectors were information and communications technology (ICT) and tech-enabled services, the green economy, agriculture, and manufacturing (see the figure below).

**Figure 1: The most promising sectors and sub-sectors in Jordan**

ICT and Tech-enabled Services	Green Economy	Agriculture	Manufacturing
HealthTech, FinTech and EdTech	Solar power	Large manufacturing facilities	Masks and medical equipment
Online & mobile solutions and services	Wind energy	Large producers of fruit, vegetables, poultry	Textile and Apparel Manufacturing
IT infrastructure	Energy storage solutions	Packaging and logistics services	
Gaming	Electric vehicles repair technicians		
Software			
Business Process Outsourcing			

The **ICT sector** includes manufacturing and service industries that capture, transmit and display data and information electronically.<sup>48</sup> The ICT sector in Jordan has been witnessing great growth – over the past three years alone, it went from providing

46 Rochelle Johnston, Dina Baslan and Anna Kvittingen. 2019. Realizing the Rights of Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Jordan from Countries other than Syria: With a Focus on Yemenis and Sudanese. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/71975.pdf>, accessed 11 May 2022.

47 Phenix Center. 2020. Policy Paper: Surpassing Social and Cultural Barriers in Selecting Vocational Majors.

48 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Annex. 1 the Definition of the ICT Sector. <https://www.oecd.org/sti/ieconomy/2771153.pdf>, accessed 11 May 2022.

3,000 jobs to about 16,000, with the figure expected to spike to about 25,000 job opportunities in the coming years.<sup>49</sup> This is supported by REACH2025, an initiative spearheaded by the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology and the Information and Communications Technology Association – Jordan (int@j) to accelerate growth, create jobs and develop human resources. This is to be accomplished by creating between 5,000 and 7,000 businesses in the digital economy by 2025, and boosting the ICT sector's revenues.<sup>50</sup>

The pandemic has also led to an increase in the demand for an array of tech-enabled goods and services, including e-learning portals, delivery services, e-commerce, and for the development of software and mobile applications and online services in the medical, financial, legal and research domains.

The sector is being positioned as strategic for youth employment, with the Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship launching the Youth Technology & Jobs project in 2020, which will train 15,000 youths on employable digital skills, introduce the digital skills curriculum for 300,000 public school students, and establish Tech Hubs.<sup>51</sup> The leading sub-sectors in the ICT space are healthtech, fintech, edtech, information technology infrastructure, software development, online and mobile solutions and services, gaming, and business process outsourcing.<sup>52</sup>

However, there are limitations toward creating opportunities for Syrian refugees within this sector, as not all jobs are open for refugees, specifically in software and web development jobs, which require special approvals. This sector may be considered a promising one instead for the Jordanian youth.<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, refugees might be able to work in it through freelancing opportunities, gig activities or remote work with markets outside Jordan. Discussions with economic experts addressed the usefulness of the several skills-building programs in this sector, such as boot camps that targeted both Jordanians and Syrians. While the success of Syrians following these programs is still limited, the door is not completely shut for them in this sector.

Another identified sector is the **agriculture sector**. In the aftermath of the pandemic and amid the Ukraine crisis, there has been a renewed focus on the importance of self-sufficiency and food security-related issues. Experts identify this as an opportunity for the Government of Jordan to capitalize on by encouraging and facilitating further investments in the agricultural sector. The government for its part has already invested in the sector as a response to increased demand resulting

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49 Jordan News, 2021. ICT Sector Generates Jobs, Props up National Economy – Experts. <https://www.jordannews.jo/Section-109/News/ICT-sector-generates-jobs-props-up-national-economy-experts-9680>, accessed 11 May 2022.

50 Jordan: New Initiative Seeks to Build 150,000 Jobs in 9 Years. Al Bawaba. <https://www.albawaba.com/business/jordan-new-initiative-seeks-build-150000-jobs-9-years-902984>, accessed 11 May 2022.

51 Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship, 2020. Youth Technology & Jobs Project. [https://modee.gov.jo/EN/Pages/Youth\\_Technology\\_and\\_Jobs\\_Project](https://modee.gov.jo/EN/Pages/Youth_Technology_and_Jobs_Project), accessed 11 May 2022.

52 United States of America Department of Commerce, 2021. Jordan – Country Commercial Guide: Information and Communication Technology. <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/jordan-information-and-communication-technology>, accessed 11 May 2022.

53 RYSE. 2020. Employment and Market Systems Assessment in Jordan. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/85288>, accessed 11 May 2022.

from the pandemic. For example, the Made in Jordan 2020–2025 vision, launched in October 2020, aimed to build the capacity of local processors by linking them to new export markets and relaxing export restrictions. The primary end objective is to create new job opportunities for rural communities. The sector representative at the Jordan Chamber of Industry revealed that 20 investment opportunities had already been executed to expand existing food processing factories.

This sector – along with its related sub-sectors, which include manufacturing facilities, the production of fruits, vegetables and poultry, the floral industry, and related packaging and logistical services – has great potential for job creation and economic growth promotion. In particular, the government could utilize state-owned lands by leasing them for the purposes of land reclamation. Further, a RYSE labor market assessment found that the sector holds several formal-wage opportunities in large manufacturing facilities and with large producers of fruit, vegetables and poultry.<sup>54</sup> In addition, there are opportunities in the sector's extended support services, namely packaging and logistics services. This sector's attractiveness to Syrian refugee labor is also considered a highlight, as Syrian participation in it was found to be high, with 11% of businesses in the sector reporting hiring Syrians. However, the ability of the sector to create decent jobs for both population groups is still questioned and needs to be put under focus.

Another factor that contributes to more hiring for Syrians in this sector is the reluctance among Jordanians in joining foreigner-dominated sectors, such as agriculture and construction. This reluctance is justified by several reasons, including low wages, difficult and risky working environments, long working hours, the seasonal nature of the jobs and the lack of social protection benefits. The acceptance of these circumstances by foreign workers allows them to persist. This presents a significant challenge for the Government of Jordan in its efforts to reform labor market distortions.

**Manufacturing** is the second highest employer of Jordanians and the top employer of Syrian refugees in Jordan.<sup>55</sup> According to the Jordan Strategy Forum, the manufacturing sector can generate sufficient employment opportunities, if production levels are increased for either the export market or local market (import substitution). This sector is of particular interest as its growth would signal the generation of new jobs in other sectors, but it would also diversify the composition of the GDP.<sup>56</sup> Additionally, there is a stable long-term relationship between economic growth and employment growth in this sector, as the elasticity of the manufacturing sector is equal to +0.32. This figure implies that a 0.32% increase in employment is associated with a 1% increase in manufacturing real GDP. The textile and apparel manufacturing sub-sector is the leading industrial sector in terms of the number of employees, with a total of over 76,000 in 2019.<sup>57</sup>

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54 Ibid.

55 The Department of Statistics. Employment in Establishment. <http://dosweb.dos.gov.jo/labourforce/employment-in-establishment/tables-of-employment-in-establishment/>, accessed 11 May 2022.

56 Jordan Strategy Forum, 2022. The Unemployment Challenge in Jordan: Between Demand & Supply. <http://jsf.org/sites/default/files/The%20Unemployment%20Challenge%20in%20Jordan%20%20Between%20Demand%20%26%20Supply%20%282%29.pdf>, accessed 11 May 2022.

57 The Jordan Chamber of Industry, 2020. Leather and Garment Industries Sector. <https://tinyurl.com/2p8fp46y>, accessed 11 May 2022.

The increased demand for goods and services spurred on by the pandemic, including for masks and medical equipment and supplies, also contributes to the potential of the manufacturing sector. For instance, prior to the pandemic, Jordan manufactured no more than 20,000 masks per day, which later rose to 5.5 million after the spread of the pandemic.<sup>58</sup> While this has created positive contributions, the sustainability of this line of production could of course change as the COVID-19 situation improves.

A study by the West Asia-North Africa Institute (WANA) also found that there was a moderate alignment with the previous and current skill sets of Syrian refugees within this sector, meaning that Syrians who had previously worked in manufacturing in Syria could be considered as having moderate skills for manufacturing in Jordan. This makes the manufacturing sector attractive to Syrians hoping to one day return to Syria.<sup>59</sup>

The **green economy** is another promising sector that offers great opportunities for promoting development and creating job opportunities. According to economic experts, specific demand is witnessed in solar power, wind energy and energy storage solutions. Moreover, with the increase in the adoption of electric vehicles in Jordan (18,000 electric vehicles were on the road in the country in 2018, up from zero before 2012<sup>60</sup>), skilled repair technicians will be in more demand. This sector is also a critical contributor to Jordan's climate goals.

In addition to the macroeconomic point of view, the survey inquired about the youth's perspectives on the promising sectors in terms of which currently offered the most job opportunities. The health sector, which includes medicine and pharmaceutical jobs, was the top sector with job opportunities, according to the youth. Jordanian youths and out-of-camp Syrian refugee youths considered hospitality and tourism as the second-top sector in terms of job opportunities, while in-camp Syrian refugees and refugee youths of other nationalities considered the tech-enabled and ICT sector to be second-top sector. While the tech-enabled and ICT sector was considered at the third sector on job opportunities for Jordanian youths, out-of-camp Syrian refugee youths put food processing and agribusiness in third place. Despite their inability to work in the governmental sector, in-camp Syrian refugee youths and refugee youths of other nationalities considered the public sector at third place. It is worth mentioning that out-of-camp Syrians looked at retail and e-commerce as a potential sector for job opportunities, placed fourth, while Jordanian youths made the public sector the fourth-top sector.

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58 Jordan News Agency. Jordan produces 500 mln face masks during pandemic-JCI, 2021. [https://petra.gov.jo/Include/InnerPage.jsp?ID=35830&lang=en&name=en\\_news](https://petra.gov.jo/Include/InnerPage.jsp?ID=35830&lang=en&name=en_news), accessed 11 May 2022.

59 West Asia-North Africa Institute, 2018. Syrian Refugee Employment Trends in Jordan and Future Perspectives. [http://wanainstitute.org/sites/default/files/publications/Publication\\_SyrianRefugeeEmploymentTrendsJordan\\_English.pdf](http://wanainstitute.org/sites/default/files/publications/Publication_SyrianRefugeeEmploymentTrendsJordan_English.pdf), accessed 11 May 2022.

60 Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2019. Recommendations on E-Mobility in Jordan: Based on a Delegation Trip to Germany. <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/amman/15635.pdf>, accessed 11 May 2022.

# YOUTH ASPIRATIONS IN THE MEDIUM TERM

## High Aspirations Meet a Difficult Reality

**Displacement appears to play a significant role in the long-term aspirations of the youth** in Jordan, with refugee youths less likely to have high ambitions or aspirations compared with their Jordanian counterparts. Displacement-related vulnerabilities seem to present a significant barrier for the youth to pursue more ambitious plans related to education and employment. The most frequent response to educational aspirations for out-of-camp Syrian refugees was “no aspiration” (37%). Gender also played a role, as some females stated that, because they got married, education fell down their list of priorities.

**“[My] aspirations are stopped due to tight situation, if there were money and income then I would think to continue my education”**

*– Syrian man in Zarqa with a primary education*

**“I am not thinking to continue my education because I have responsibilities at my house with my husband and children”**

*– 24-year-old married Syrian woman with a lower secondary education*

Moreover, **Jordanian and refugee youths of other nationalities were more likely to aspire for a university degree (bachelor) in a specific major, compared with Syrian refugee youths.** Jordanians were more likely to aspire to postgraduate education (master's or doctorate; 25%), which was barely mentioned by refugee youths. This finding seems to reflect the financial difficulties that refugees face when they want to pursue higher education pathways, especially with the limited scholarship opportunities available to the refugee youth.

Taken together, the survey results demonstrate that young people in Jordan, regardless of nationality or residency status, **are not very satisfied with where they have reached in their education.** Around half of Jordanian youths (54%) agreed with the statement, “My own aspiration of education was met and achieved”, while only 27% of out-of-camp Syrian refugee youths agreed with it. In-camp Syrian and refugee youths of other nationalities were slightly higher in agreement, at 42% and 47% respectively. The difference between Jordanian and Syrian refugee youths reflects the limitations that refugees face to continue further education and their limited aspirations, as described above.

Youths of all nationalities in Jordan have **high aspirations for sustainable livelihoods, but in practice struggle to make their aspirations reality.** Some youths indicated that they had higher aspirations that were not met or matched by what the labor market offered. Other respondents negatively described youth aspirations as a barrier to adapt to the labor market, indicating unrealistic expectations. These prevented them from potentially being more flexible in terms of taking certain jobs or working in different sectors.

**“Youth’s aspirations are bigger than the current labor market. Youth think that once they graduate they will start working, but they got surprised that there are no available jobs, either in their majors or other fields”**

– 23-year-old Jordanian woman from Amman with a bachelor’s degree

**“Youth aspire [to] imaginary things, such as having a good salary and convenient employment, but these things do not exist in real life”**

– 29-year-old unemployed Syrian refugee male from Balqa governorate

On livelihood aspirations, displacement impacted the ability to meet job aspirations. While more youth Jordanians (41%) who were currently employed stated that their job met their aspiration, fewer displaced youths in this study agreed with this. Only 17% of both out-of-camp Syrian refugee youths and refugees of other nationalities considered that their current job met their aspiration, and 27% of in-camp Syrian refugee youths.

### DOES YOUR CURRENT EMPLOYMENT MEET YOUR ASPIRATION?



## Looking to the Future

**A third of Jordanian (32%) and Syrian refugee youths (35%) stated that they hoped to find other countries outside of Jordan to stay in over the next 5 to 10 years.** The proportion was highest among refugee youths of other nationalities at 50%. This preference was higher among male youths in general, at 47% compared with 22% of female youths.<sup>61</sup> Planning to return to their country of origin was mentioned only by some displaced youths, where it was lowest among out-of-camp Syrian and refugee youths of other nationalities, at 2%, and mentioned more by in-camp Syrian refugee youths, at 16%. Western countries were the most preferred options to move to for refugee youths, mostly for out-of-camp Syrian refugee youths, at 64%, and for half of in-camp Syrians and refugee youths of other nationalities, at 52% for both.

**Searching for employment pushes the youth to consider looking for opportunities outside Jordan.** Around half of the youths from all nationalities were considering looking for work opportunities outside of Jordan. This trend was higher among refugees of other nationalities, at 65%, compared with Syrian youths, both

<sup>61</sup> Disaggregation of this finding across nationality and gender: for Jordanians – 42% of male and 21% of female youths; out-of-camp Syrian refugees – 49% of male and 20% of female youths; in-camp Syrian refugees: 46% of male and 25% of female youths; refugees of other nationalities: 67% of male and 42% of female youths.

those out of camp and those in camp (43% and 48% respectively), and Jordanian youths (47%). Gender also played a role on the differences between youths, as male youths (59%) in general tended more to consider looking for work opportunities outside of Jordan compared with female youths (35%).<sup>62</sup>

Reasons for looking for work opportunities outside Jordan reflected **young people's low satisfaction with living conditions and job prospects in Jordan**. The better and more job opportunities abroad, compared with the lack of available jobs in Jordan, were the more commonly cited reasons for considering working outside the country. Some refugees specifically considered the restrictions that limited their ability to work in certain sectors as a reason to consider leaving Jordan.

**“There are no work in Jordan because I don't have a national ID number. I applied for many companies but they didn't accept me because I don't ID number”**

*– 24-year-old unemployed Syrian refugee female youth from Zarqa governorate with a bachelor's degree*

Linkages to education were also among the reasons. For example, some Jordanian youths mentioned that their educational credits produced more job potential abroad. Refugees also shared reasons related to their education, where some refugees said the fact they were not allowed to work on the major they earned in their education was the reason for considering working outside Jordan, as shown in these quotes:

**“Because jobs in Jordan are only for Jordanians. Low-skilled jobs or those that doesn't require experience or specialty are the ones allowed for non-Jordanians. Even if I was specialized or more skilled in a specific field, the priority will be for Jordanians”**

*– 18-year-old female Sudanese refugee youth*

**“[I am looking for opportunities outside Jordan] because I am not permitted to work in my major in Jordan and the salaries are low and with no rights”**

*– 24-year-old unemployed Syrian refugee male youth from Zarqa governorate with a bachelor's degree*

Refugees cited the discrimination and a need to work with employers that cares about workers' rights as reasons for thinking of leaving Jordan. Some of Syrian refugee youths living in camps attributed the bad living conditions and their wish to leave the camp as the reason to think of working outside Jordan.

**“Camps have bad living conditions, the conditions outside are better”**

*– 16-year-old male Syrian refugee living in a camp*

**“Because there is no jobs in Jordan and my aspiration did not achieved in Jordan”**

*– 20-year-old Syrian refugee from Irbid governorate*

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<sup>62</sup> Disaggregation of this finding across nationality and gender: for Jordanians – 57% of male and 38% of female youths; out-of-camp Syrian refugees – 59% of male and 27% of female youths; in-camp Syrian refugees – 58% of male and 39% of female youths; refugees of other nationalities – 70% of male and 61% of female youths.

# CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research report has aimed to draw a picture of educational and livelihood pathways for young people in Jordan, and to indicate the challenges that prevent youths from bridging between education and entering the labor market. The target age group investigated in this study were either near or in their early stages of entering the challenging, limited and highly competitive labor market, where displacement adds another layer of vulnerability facing the refugee youth specifically. Better support for all young people in Jordan, by empowering and enabling them to achieve self-reliance, will create a positive medium- and long-term impact for both host communities and the refugee population, and for Jordan as a hosting country.

## Recommendations

### *To the Government of Jordan:*

- **The Government of Jordan should support the private sector to create job opportunities.** Incentivizing the private sector and addressing its needs within the current economic environment would better motivate it to support youth employability in Jordan. In addition, prioritizing policies that promote job creation, support demand and investment, and reduce regulatory and bureaucratic barriers and costs for Jordanian and non-Jordanian entrepreneurs would enable job creation for young people in Jordan.
- **The Government of Jordan, with the support of international donors, should explore opening additional professions to non-Jordanians, prioritizing sectors with high growth potential that can serve the local labor market and community needs.** This will enable Jordan to more fully realize the economic benefits and contributions that Syrian refugee youths and refugee youths of other nationalities bring. The sectors being closed to non-Jordanians presents a major barrier for young people in achieving their aspirations and limits their ability to forge stronger linkages between their educational and livelihood pathways.
- **The Jordanian Ministry of Education in collaboration with implementing agencies should expand, scale up and promote the existing career counseling services for young people,** along with other awareness-raising activities, with a specific focus on the younger ages who are yet to enter secondary education. The youth from all nationalities faces limited guidance in choosing educational pathways. The expansion and promotion of career counseling across age groups and governorates, through coordination with different service providers across ministries and implementers, can support the youth in choosing future educational pathways and careers. In addition,

involving parents in career counseling will enable them to better support youths in selecting educational pathways.

- **The Jordanian Ministries of Labor and Education, together with implementing agencies, the private sector and educational institutions, should ensure that labor market needs are well tracked and used to inform the youth's education and employment choices.** Including content for labor market awareness in educational curriculums and career counseling services, investing in awareness-raising activities and engaging the private sector in the process would support increased youth knowledge in these topics.
- **The Government of Jordan, in collaboration with international donors and operational agencies, should work on easing the requirements to establish businesses for the youth,** and should expand grants and mentoring opportunities to better promote entrepreneurial initiatives for the youth. The experience of the loan scheme for youth run by the Kurdistan Region of Iraq's Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs can provide some learning in this effort.<sup>63</sup> This includes educating the youth about the nature of entrepreneurship and the risk and opportunities, to enable them to make informed decisions about self-employment.
- **The Ministry of Youth should involve youth in the policy-making process,** and enable forums and venues to hear youth voices on their educational and livelihood challenges and aspirations, to better meet their preferences.
- **The Department of Statistics should invest in regularly assessing labor market trends and youth attitudes** to inform the policies and programs with evidence-based recommendations.
- **The Government of Jordan, in collaboration with implementing agencies and educational institutions, should consistently measure labor market trends and promote majors that deliver high employability potential for the youth,** through relying on recent market assessment and available evidence-based research.
- **The Government of Jordan should increase coordination and joint planning across the Ministries of Education, Labor and Youth, and other relevant governmental entities,** to build on respective progress, create a realistic pathway across the different levels and ministries, and maximize resources. This will create more opportunities to tackle youth challenges and to better support youths' abilities to meet their aspirations.

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63 See Durable Solutions Platform and IMPACT Initiatives. 2021. "My hope is to stay here" – Shared Livelihoods Services as a Pathway towards Integration in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Research report. <https://www.dsp-syria.org/my-hope-remain-here>.

*Donor agencies should:*

- **Invest in adaptive interventions and programs that enable the youth to become more resilient and to adapt to the unprecedented changes in the Jordanian labor market.** The COVID-19 pandemic has created another layer of economic challenges for the youth. There is thus a need to equip youths with the skills needed to tailor their efforts when entering the labor market and to create alternative and innovative ways to engage with the labor market in Jordan.
- **Increase flexible multi-year planning and funding modalities** to allow implementing actors to develop predictable planning and responses to the emerging needs and challenges of both the refugee and the host community youth in Jordan.
- **Help to foster inclusive economic growth for host communities and refugees**, in support of host countries, to contribute resources and expertise to promote economic opportunities, decent work, job creation and entrepreneurship programs for host community members and refugee youths, in line with the GCR areas in need of support.

*Inter-sector and coordination bodies should:*

- **Prioritize the assessment of linkages between educational and livelihood pathways and options for the youth of all nationalities in Jordan.** Entities such as the 3RP working groups, the Jordan INGO Forum and other platforms should actively explore the interconnections between educational and livelihood operations and needs, to support more holistic programming and self-reliance more broadly.
- **Set a broader learning agenda on self-reliance and pathways to solutions, based on adequate mechanisms for data collection and data analysis.** The role of reliable and quality data is essential for designing new programs, adapting interventions or developing new policies. Coordination bodies should take the lead in bringing together key actors to set a joint vision on how to support the youth's self-reliance and pathways to solutions.

*Operational agencies, such as United Nations and NGOs, should:*

- **Educational institutions should ensure the current education majors and available training respond to the changing job markets and emerging sectors and meeting labor market demands.** Ensuring adequate mechanisms for data collection and data analysis of relevant data on the labor market will contribute to the broader learning agenda, which is essential for designing new programs, adapting interventions, influencing policies and building new ones.
- **Address shared challenges between vulnerable host communities and displaced youths, while remaining aware of refugees' distinct vulnerabilities due to their legal status.** The findings from the survey point toward many

shared challenges and lived experiences between vulnerable host communities and refugees, but also to a number of distinct vulnerabilities for refugees. Programs should be designed in a way that takes into account the shared aspects and the displacement-related differences. For example, Syrian refugees face distinct challenges in their ability to access guidance on selecting their educational pathways and future careers, in addition to policies that restrict their access to specific sectors in the Jordanian labor market.

- **Invest in equipping students with supplemental training, technical skills building and internship opportunities**, through providing the needed activities that can increase youth employability beyond relying only on their education attainment, to bridge the experience gap in a way that facilitates entrance to the labor market in their early career.
- **Implementing agencies with the support of the Government of Jordan should utilize different types of support to households, including cash assistance**, to better enable young people to pursue educational pathways and in a way that protects them from engaging early in income-generating activities to cover the financial needs of their families. This should be in line with GCR's areas of support that state the need to provide more direct financial support to minimize the time refugee boys and girls spend out of education.

# ANNEX 1: METHODOLOGY

## Overview

This research project relied on a set of data collection methods to answer the research questions, which include a mixed survey, KIs, macro-economic analysis and desk review. Over the course of research stages, two Research Reference Groups (RRG) were established to guide the full project cycle through inception, design and validation workshops, as well as advocacy and dissemination efforts. The first RRG consisted of 12 practitioners, including International and national implementers. The second RRG included 15 of Jordanian youth, Syrian refugee youth and refugee youth of other nationalities. The methodology section will include details about the Survey and the macro-economic analysis.

## Survey

The mixed method survey was conducted on 885 national level sample of Jordanian youth, Syrian refugee youth and refugee youth of other nationalities between the ages of 15 and 24 years. The mixed method survey included both close-ended and open-ended questions (quantitative and qualitative). The survey was administered in Kobo through phone calls with survey respondents. The phone calls took around 30 minutes. All over the survey population groups, a probability randomized selection of survey respondents was used to ensure a probability sampling, using electronic methods in randomization.

The specifications of each population group sample is as following:

### · *Jordanian youth sample (representative)*

The Jordanian youth sample is representative sample of 384 respondents of the age-group of 15-24 years old, with a confidence level of 95% and confidence interval of 5%. The design of the sample followed the Probability Proportional to Size (PPS) sampling approach, where the main variables of gender, age and governorate reflect the original population of Jordanian youth of the sample's age-group. In order to use PPS, the original Jordanian youth population statistics and proportions were requested from the Jordanian Department of Statistics, disaggregated by gender, age and governorate. Therefore, the proportions of these key variables in the sample reflect the original population, as shown in the table below:

**Table #: proportions of the Jordanian youth survey sample and original population, disaggregated by gender, age group and governorate<sup>64</sup>**

		Sample	Original Population
<b>Gender</b>	Male	52%	52%
	Female	48%	48%
<b>Age group</b>	15-17	31%	31%
	18-21	42%	42%
	22-24	27%	28%
<b>Governorate</b>	Amman	38%	38%
	Balqa'	6%	6%
	Zarqa	14%	14%
	Madaba	2%	2%
	Irbid	20%	20%
	Mafraq	5%	5%
	Jerash	3%	3%
	Ajloun	3%	2%
	Al-Karak	4%	4%
	Tafilah	1%	1%
	Ma'an	2%	2%
Aqaba	2%	2%	

**· Out-of-camp Syrian refugee youth sample (representative)**

The out-of-camp Syrian refugee youth sample is representative sample of 384 respondents of the age-group of 15-24 years old, with a confidence level of 95% and confidence interval of 5%. The design of the sample followed the Probability Proportional to Size (PPS) sampling approach, where the main variables of gender, age and governorate reflect the original population of Jordanian youth of the sample's age-group. In order to use PPS, the original Jordanian youth population statistics and proportions were requested from UNHCR, disaggregated by gender, age and governorate. Therefore, the proportions of these key variables in the sample reflect the original population, as shown in the table below:

<sup>64</sup> The sub-totals might not add up to %100 due to rounding

**Table #: proportions of the out-of-camp Syrian Refugee youth survey sample and original population, disaggregated by gender, age group and governorate<sup>65</sup>**

		Sample	Original Population
<i>Gender</i>	Male	51%	51%
	Female	49%	49%
<i>Age group</i>	15-17	34%	34%
	18-21	39%	39%
	22-24	27%	27%
<i>Governorate</i>	Amman	34%	34%
	Balqa'	3%	3%
	Zarqa	9%	9%
	Madaba	2%	2%
	Irbid	27%	27%
	Ma'raq	17%	17%
	Jerash	2%	2%
	Ajloun	1%	1%
	Al-Karak	1%	1%
	Tafilah	0%	0%
	Ma'an	2%	1%
	Aqaba	1%	1%

**· In-camp Syrian refugee youth sample (indicative)**

The in-camp Syrian refugee youth sample is an indicative sample of 54 respondents of the age-group of 15-24 years old. The design of the sample aim to provide a balanced distribution of key demographic variables of gender, age and camp. The proportions of the key variables in the sample are as shown in the table below:

**Table #: proportions of the in-camp Syrian Refugee youth survey sample, disaggregated by gender, age group and governorate<sup>66</sup>**

<i>Gender</i>	Male	48%
	Female	52%

65 The sub-totals might not add up to %100 due to rounding

66 The sub-totals might not add up to %100 due to rounding

<b>Age group</b>	<b>15-17</b>	33%
	<b>18-21</b>	44%
	<b>22-24</b>	22%
<b>Camp name</b>	<b>Zaatari camp</b>	65%
	<b>Azraq camp</b>	26%
	<b>Emirati camp</b>	9%

### • Refugee youth of other nationalities (indicative)

The refugee youth of other nationalities sample is an indicative sample of 63 respondents of the age-group of 15-24 years old. The design of the sample aim to provide a balanced distribution of key demographic variables of gender, age and location. Due to the small sample size, three locations were selected to be included in the sample, which are the most location where refugees of other nationalities reside in Jordan. The proportions of the key variables in the sample are as shown in the table below:

<b>Table #: proportions of refugee youth of other nationalities survey sample, disaggregated by gender, age group and governorate<sup>67</sup></b>		
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Male</b>	48%
	<b>Female</b>	52%
<b>Age group</b>	<b>15-17</b>	43%
	<b>18-21</b>	30%
	<b>22-24</b>	27%
<b>Location</b>	<b>Location 1: Amman</b>	52%
	<b>Location 2: Balqa'</b>	21%
	<b>Location 3: Zarqa</b>	27%

## Survey tool

The survey tool included questions revolves around the followings section and sub section: <sup>68</sup>

### A. Demographic questions

### B. Education

1. Practical barriers and advantages of education/ impact of COVID
2. Knowledge of education options/ Motivation
3. Social dynamics and engagement

<sup>67</sup> The sub-totals might not add up to %100 due to rounding

<sup>68</sup> In case the need of a copy of the survey tool, please contact [info@dsp-me.org](mailto:info@dsp-me.org).

### C. Livelihoods

1. Preparation for the labor market & career counselling
2. Awareness of the labor market, work and training preferences
3. Skills building and training
4. Legal aspect/ Durable solutions/ Migration/ Non-Jordanians

The survey tool was validated and reviewed by both the practitioners research reference group and youth research reference group. The survey tool was piloted on 30 respondents, and was revised according what came up from the pilot results. The survey tool was administered by 16 youth enumerators, who got trained on the survey questions, data collection approaches, interviewing skills, and data ethical considerations. The training aimed to ensure a standardized approach of which the enumerators are asking question in a standardized and unified way with the survey respondents to ensure consistency.

### Data analysis

Survey data was analyzed using SPSS for quantitative data and MAXQDA for qualitative data. Due to similarities in responses between different groups, findings are reported for all youths, across all surveyed nationalities. Significant differences between population groups were highlighted where relevant.

### Ethical Considerations

The data collection ensured proper ethical consideration for the whole process. Consent were obtained from the survey respondents of 18 years and above. For respondents of age below 18, a consent and approval was obtained from their parents. The enumerators informed the respondents that they have the right not to answer specific questions or withdraw from the interview. In addition, the option of "no answer" was included in the all of the questions to ensure the right of not responding. Moreover, the respondents were informed about how the data will be proceeded and that it will remain confidential.

### Survey limitations

- Although the representative samples were enough to provide a national level representation of the population groups, delving into more disaggregation of the data, such as disaggregating the data by age or governorate, will reduce the amount of responses, and therefore reduce the confidence level of the desegregated statistics.
- The indicative samples (in-camp Syrian refugees and refugee youth of other nationalities) doesn't provide representative statistics that can be generalized with proper confidence level, but they give an indication of what trends exists for these populations, that can be explored later on bigger sample sizes.

- Due to Covid-19 restrictions at the time of the survey data collection and the design of this research, the data collection activities has to be done via phone calls and not in-person.

## Macro-economic analysis

This study included a macro-economic analysis of the Jordanian labor market, conducted by an external consultant, MMIS. The macro-economic analysis aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What is the overall macro-economic situation of Jordan in light of the impact of COVID-19?
2. What economic sectors show most promise and can potentially create job opportunities for both Jordanian and refugee youth in Jordan? / What economic sectors would benefit most from Syrian refugee labour?
3. What are the needs and priorities of the private sector (in the identified economic sectors), especially when it comes to new hires?
4. Based on the above three questions, what are the medium-term (3-5 year) trends and outlook on the economy in Jordan?

The macro-economic analysis followed a methodology of secondary and primary data collection efforts, identifying key previous research completed in this area, and engaging with leading economic experts and private sector representatives. The research followed the below methodology:

1. **Desk research/ secondary data collection:** MMIS has collected relevant information and secondary data through undertaking a comprehensive desk research and literature review of all available reports, data and information relevant to the main research question, and four sub-questions. The desk research will aim to supplement the literature available to DSP with any additional data and documents relevant to the research questions.
2. **Primary data collection:** MMIS conducted 20 KIIs (10 with economic experts and 10 with private sector actors), 2 of them were with representatives from educational institutions. The interviews have worked to collect qualitative data, ideas and point of view.