

Economic Empowerment Working Group (EEWG)

Jordan

NOTE FROM MEETING

31st October 2024

Introductions

The session opened with the traditional introductions of participants. There were 39 participants in the room and online, including a number of first-time attendees. A good turn out!

1. Operational updates

The Chair and the Sector Coordinator (UNHCR) provided a brief summary of the main talking points discussed during the September JoSH (Jordan Strategic Humanitarian team) meetings and inter-sector meetings. The October meetings are scheduled to coincide with our session.

The main challenge that is being discussed in the JoSH is still the funding situation. The update did not indicate if anything specific is being done about the decline in funding, only that it is still an issue. The situation for refugee returns to Syria is still not viable (although there was no reference to the displacement that is happening from Lebanon to Syria and the relevance of this regional movement on return prospects, or other issues in Jordan). There is also an acceptance that we are challenged by a worsening macro-economic trend in the region. The update did not indicate if any decisions are being made about these challenges, or if it is simply an ongoing conversational and exchange. However, the JoSH is meeting today (31st October) to discuss further how the impact of the conflict in neighboring countries will affect Jordan. There is also a discussion on an updated amendment to the Labour Law.

At the inter sector level, the 2024 JRP indicators have been integrated into the JORIS platform for 2025, but this has never been discussed with the international community. NOTE: JORIS is managed by MOPIC. There will be a meeting between [someone] and MOPIC to discuss this further and try to establish a more collaborative approach to JORIS between the Government and the international community. There was also a discussion about the 'one refugee' approach and how the regional dynamics will affect the Jordan operation. A 'one refugee' working group will work on advocacy (which perhaps means fundraising).

2. Activity Info and the Jordan Financial Tracking System (JFT)

UNHCR has encouraged all partners to share their planning figures and update information in Activity Info and the JFT so that UNHCR can start planning for 2025 reporting on Activityinfo (AI) which is a monitoring and evaluation tool managed by UNHCR and the JFT tracks financial contributions and expenditure¹. The

¹ NOTE: It is understood that the financial tracking system only relates to humanitarian funding, and does not relate to 'other funds' even if other funds are used for refugee or host community support. It is also unclear how development

Economic Empowerment group's reporting to the JFT is very low. UNHCR stated that they need more information to understand the financial situation for each of the sectors. The current reporting levels suggest the economic empowerment group is substantially underfunded, but this might just be a result of under-reporting. NOTE:

partners are the owners of the data, and timely reporting is crucial for producing the regional report, advocacy purposes, and reflecting on the progress made by partners. Partners are responsible for reporting, while UNHCR manages the AI and JFT portal.

UNHCR indicated that If any organisation needs training on how the JFT system works, and how to input the relevant information, UNHCR's interagency unit is able to offer one-to-one training on how organisations can use the system. This information is important for UNHCR to improve their advocacy work².

Question from the floor: one question highlighted the Challenge of avoiding **Reporting Duplication by Budget Owners and Implementing Partners,**

The UNHCR replied:

1. **Funds Received from UN Agencies:** When funds are received from UN agencies, the budget owner is responsible for reporting on the plan budget. The implementing partner, on the other hand, reports on the progress of the implementation.
2. **Funds Secured Directly by Partners:** If the partners secure the funds and receive them directly into their bank accounts, they are responsible for reporting on both the plan budget and the progress, provided they are also the implementing partners.

GTZ requested an extension on the reporting deadline to ensure their reporting is done and included in the JFT. The answer to the question was not so clear, but there was an agreement to extend the deadline to Sunday (or until the partners have clarified their situation).

3. Presentation from the Institute for University Cooperation, ICU

3.1. Project Green Step

For further information, please contact: marta.pannunzio@icu.it. The presentation is attached to the email distribution.

Project Green Step is an almost 600,000 EUR initiative funded by the Union for the Mediterranean, with finances originating from the EU's development budget (development funds, not humanitarian funds.....so not applicable to the JFT and Activity Info). It is a pilot project in three countries (Lebanon, Jordan, Tunisia), and there are local partners in each country, thereby strengthening or contributing the localisation agenda.

The purpose of the project is to contribute to the green transition of economies, and specifically focus on developing an employment and entrepreneurship friendly environment and support environmentally responsible approaches to waste management, energy, agricultural production and tourism. The employment element of the project is focused on young people (age 18-35) and women, small businesses, and medium-sized enterprises

assistance that is utilised in areas where refugees are living is factored into the reporting and information management systems.

² It is understood that UNHCR uses the word 'advocacy' as an alternative word for resource mobilization.

(SMSEs). And activities include support to business start-up, skills training, and digital outreach to improve knowledge and awareness on the environment and green development. Slide 4 and 5 in the attached presentation provides some numbers on the targeted areas, notably.

- Skills for youth (training, certification, job matching)
- Entrepreneurship and MSME support
- Regional partnerships

But the main 'ask' from ICU is help from other Economic Empowerment members: does anyone have suggestions or ideas on trainers for vocational training (high quality people, well-regarded). Martha (the presenter, marta.pannunzio@icu.it) encourage any economic empowerment members to contact her if they have recommendations, thoughts and ideas with training providers, other SMSEs or partners that they are working with. NOTE: there is already good collaboration with an investor umbrella group in Jordan, but additional collaboration would be useful.

Action point: please contact marta.pannunzio@icu.it directly if you have something to offer, or if you feel you could benefit from continued conversations.

- **ARDD intervention on a TVET platform that relates to skills training:**

ARDD mentioned a project that was developed between 2022 and 2024 together with Vision Hope International (VHI). The project provided opportunities for Sudanese, Yemeni and other refugees. It produced an online platform with information on donors, skills training providers and other information to help collaboration on vocational skills training. The project included a donor mapping with a list of all donors that are contributing to vocational training and skills development. The platform also includes a list of organizations and their activities. Contact for further information and feedback: kjomaa@ardd-jo.org

- **UNHCR asked, as we all encourage localization, How can local NGOs and communities access the platform, and is it available in Arabic?**

ARDD agreed that the platform needs to be translated into Arabic. The platform is available online through the url:

<https://ardd-jo.org/tvet-for-all-platform/> The report will be presented on Sunday 4th November at the Education Sector Working Group (the TVET sector). It is part of the Knowledge Café that the Education Sector organizes occasionally.

- **Is there an opportunity to bring the TVET working group and the Economic Empowerment group (and other groups) more closely together?**

There is currently a TVET working group hosted under the Education Sector, and there is concern that there is duplication (and consequential gaps) in the skills development environment. In addition, the Ministry of Education and the donors also have a coordination group.

The EU indicated that the Ministry of Education will become the umbrella group for all TVET exercises shortly (which might help the 'togetherness' of skills development activities and exchange). The suggestion was made for the Economic Empowerment and the Education/TVET working group to combine efforts, and then engage with the Ministry

of Education to bring all similar people together to talk about TVET as one group (maybe with some sub-groups.....).

Action point: the Economic Empowerment sector co-chairs (ARDD, UNDP) will look at the humanitarian and development coordination structures, and particularly the TVET coordination groups and look at opportunities for better engagement, coordination and collaboration. The co-chairs will come back to the group with a suggestion on bringing the disparate groups together.

Action Point: UNHCR Follow-Up on TEVET Information

Objective: Collect information on Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) under the Education Sector/3RP.

Follow-Up Result: On the same day after the meeting, UNHCR verified that there is no dedicated TVET task force or sub-working group under the 3RP Education Sector. TVET is one of the topics discussed within the sector, but it does not have a separate task force.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the chairs from the EEWG meet with the Education Sector chairs to inquire further about TVET and explore potential linkages.

4. Thanks and next meeting

Many thanks for your participation. We look forward to the next meeting towards the end of November and providing some feedback from the discussions and action points mentioned in this meeting note.