



International  
Labour  
Organization



# Implications of the influx of Syrian refugees on the Jordanian labour market ILO/FAFO/DOS

## The study



- The study on the “Implication of the influx of Syrian refugees on the Jordanian Labour Market” is part of the ILO response to Syrian refugees crisis in Jordan.
- It was conducted by the ILO in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and executed by Fafo Institute of Applied International Studies and the Department of Statistics.
- The survey was designed to cover the Jordanian governorates Amman, Irbid and Mafraq, as well as the Zaatari refugee camp. It targeted an approximate 3800 households, 800 of them in Zaatari.

# Purpose and scope of the study

The objective of the ILO labor market study is three-fold:

- a) To assess the impact of the Syrian crisis on the Jordanian labor market with a particular focus on the northern governorates of Irbid and Mafraq plus the capital Amman.
- b) To provide a better understanding of the occupational and employment profile of the Syrian refugees in Jordan.
- c) To propose a set of policy recommendations that would guide the development of an ILO response strategy aimed at addressing challenges and priorities pertaining to employment and livelihoods of Syrian refugees and Jordanian hosting communities.



# Main topics

- Labour force participation
- Work experience and access to employment
- Legal restrictions, informal employment, underemployment and stability
- Working condition, hours, payment, contractual arrangements and practice, Type of contract, Social security
- Labour market challenges for women, youth and persons with disabilities
- Perceptions and attitudes among workers
- Child employment

# ***Key Findings***



# General findings



1. A loss of opportunity for increased employment of Jordanians in newly emerged low-skilled jobs
2. Increased competition for existing jobs
3. Future threats of out-crowding in the labour market
4. An overall deterioration in working conditions leading to increased decent work deficits in Jordan

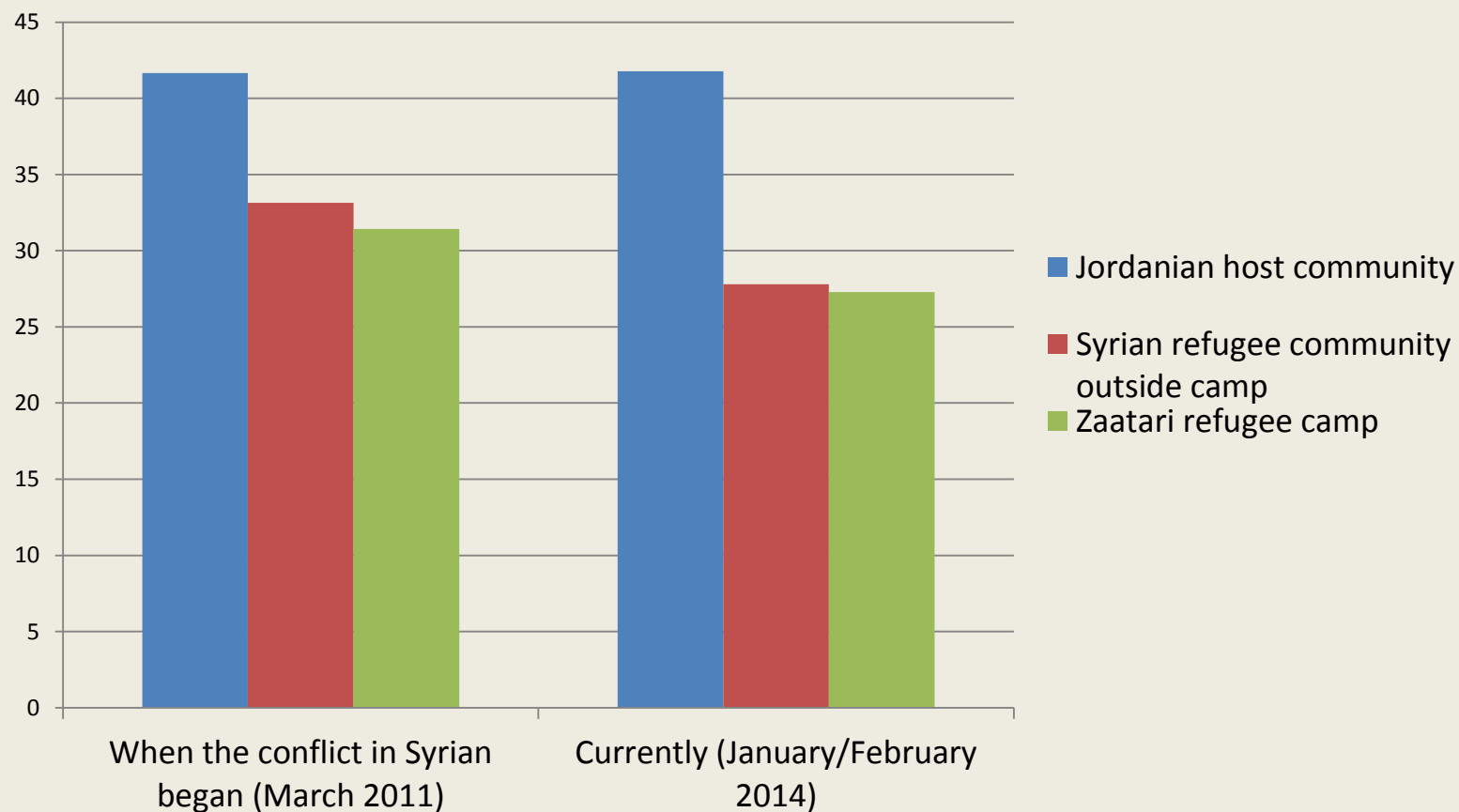
Labour force participation rates in the Jordanian host community remain practically the same as when the crisis erupted, with one in three Jordanians aged 9 or above being economically active.

Almost one in two unemployed Jordanians have been actively looking for work for more than a year, compared to about one in four Syrian refugee workers.

## Labour force participation

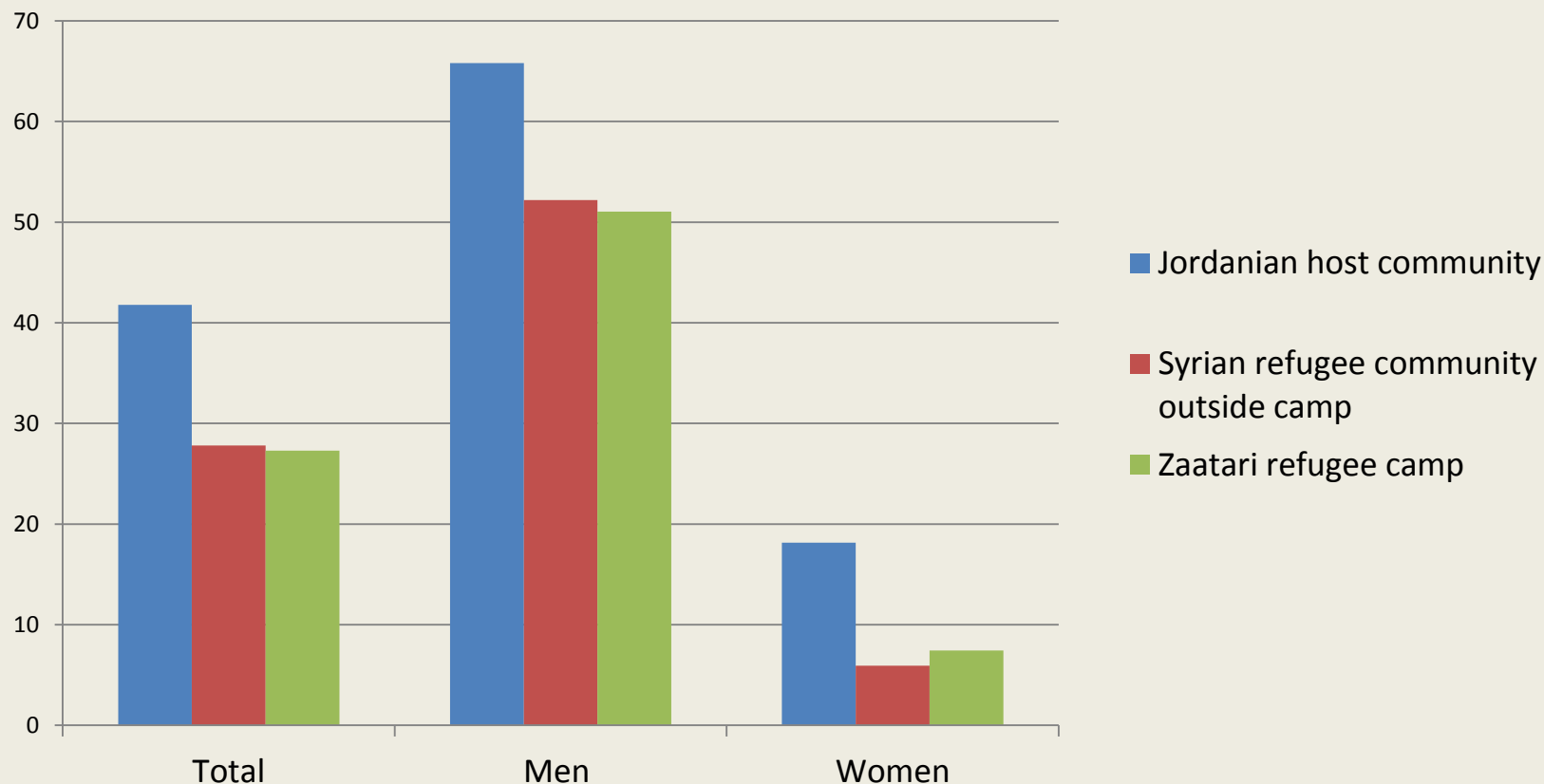


# Current and previous labour force participation rate by community

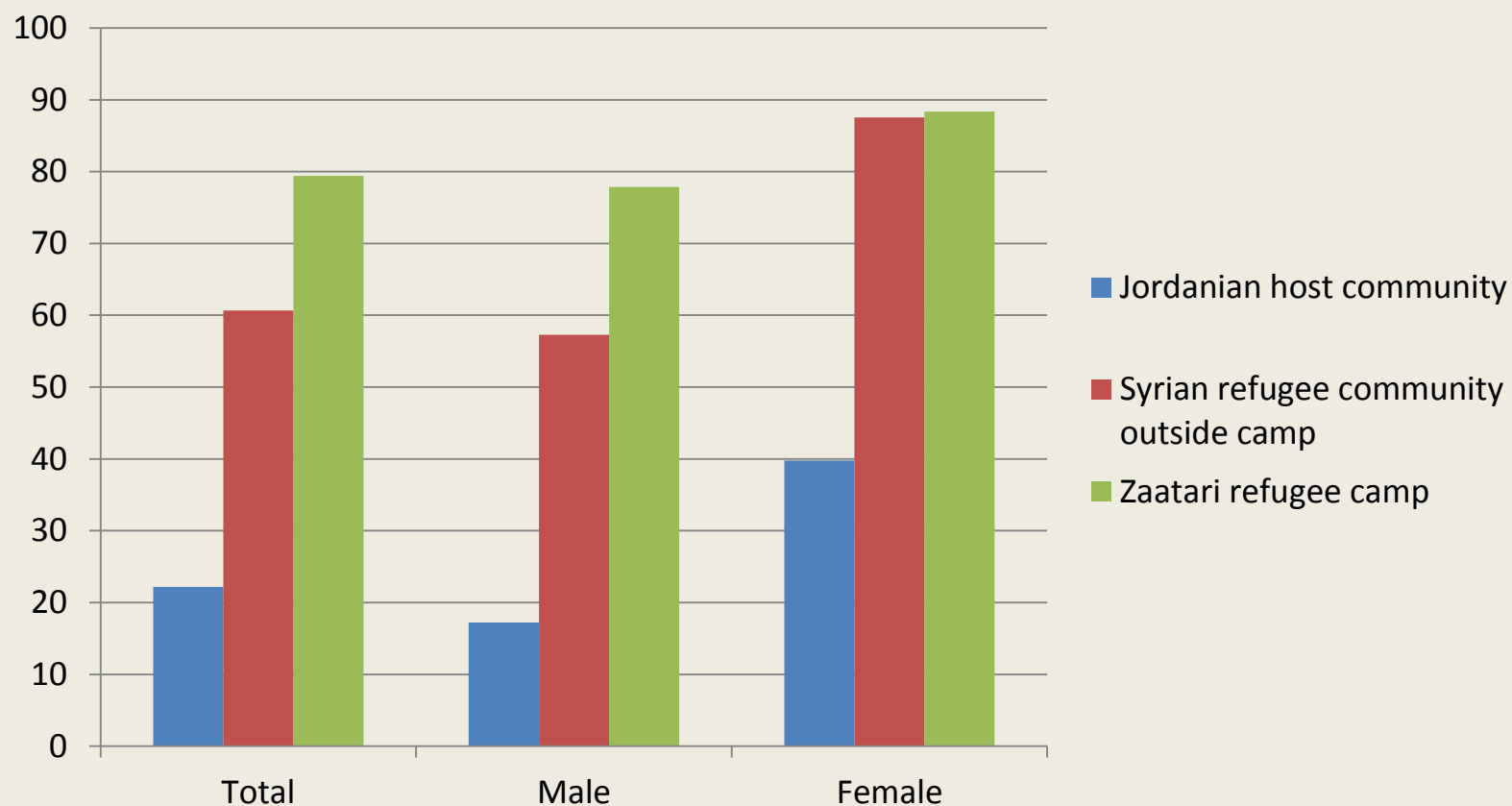




# Current labour force participation rate by gender and community



# Current unemployment rate by gender and community



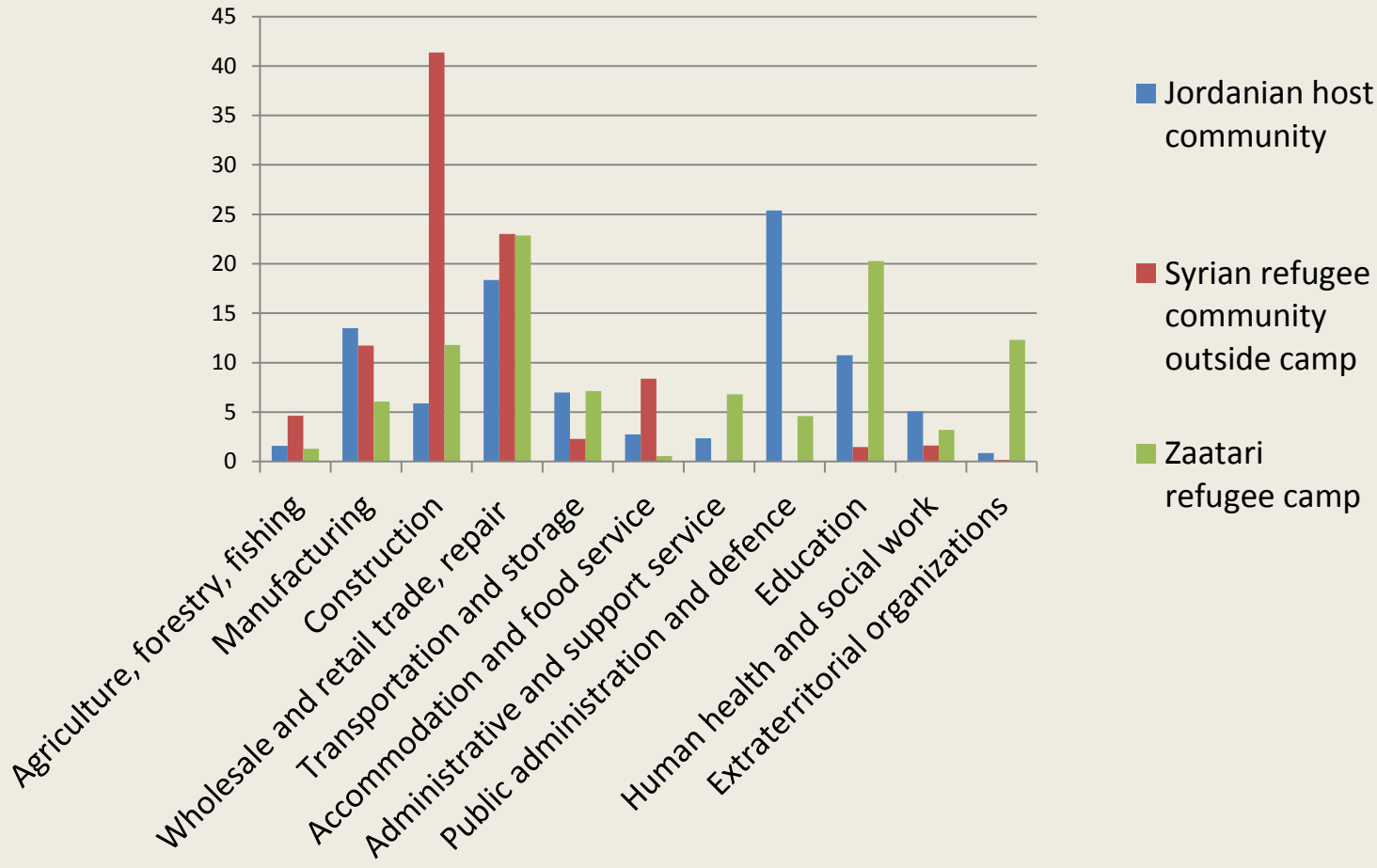
# Work experience and access to employment



The work experience of the Syrian refugee community comes to a larger extent than that of Jordanians from blue-collar, manual, and medium-skilled and unskilled occupations and industries.

Syrian refugees' success or failure in finding a job in Jordan appears associated with the kind of industry, occupation and status in employment they have experience with from Syria.

# Industry



# Legal restrictions, informal employment, underemployment and stability

1. The access of foreign citizens into the Jordanian labour market is formally restricted by the legal requirement that they obtain a one-year renewable work permit. In practice, however, these formal restrictions are circumvented by many Syrian refugees, with less than ten per cent of Syrian refugee workers reporting they have obtained such a permit for their current main job.
2. A substantially larger share of Syrian refugee workers (99 percent) than Jordanian workers (about 50 percent) is in informal employment.
3. A smaller share of Syrian refugee workers than Jordanian has been in stable employment the past six months.
4. The time-related underemployment is about three times as high among Syrian refugee workers as among Jordanian workers.



# Work permit

**10 percent** of Syrian refugee workers in Zaatari and outside the camp reported as having obtained permits for their current main job.

**18 percent** of Syrian refugees outside camp report having applied for a permit for their current main job, but only **40 percent** of them succeeded.

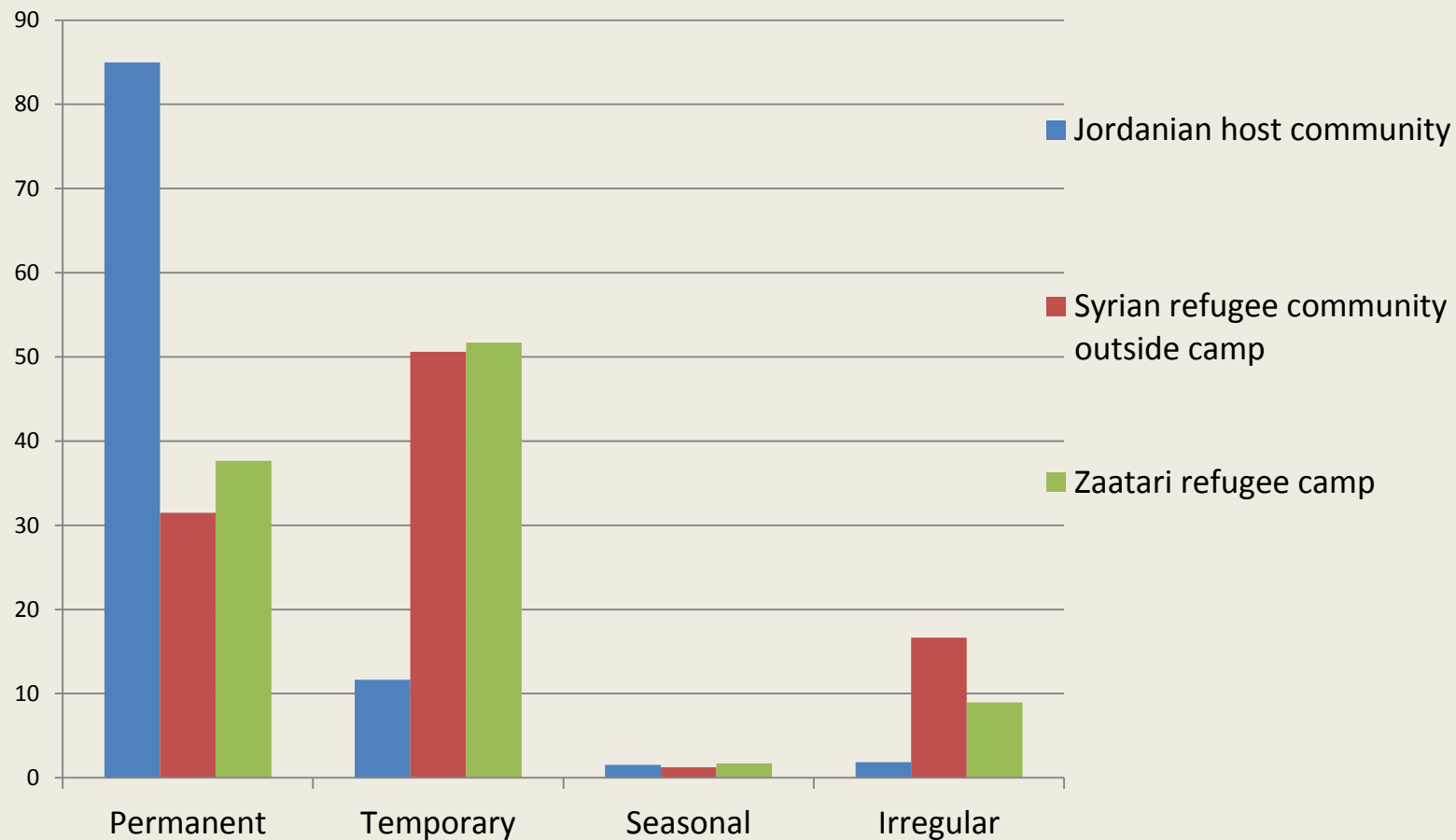
The workers who applied for work permits all applied for permits specified for construction (**32 percent**), services (**30 percent**), restaurants (**17 percent**), industry (**17 percent**) or agriculture (**4 percent**).

**80 percent** of them chose the specified type of permit because it matched the relevant job. The rest chose the cheapest type, the permit they thought easiest to get or let the employer make the choice.

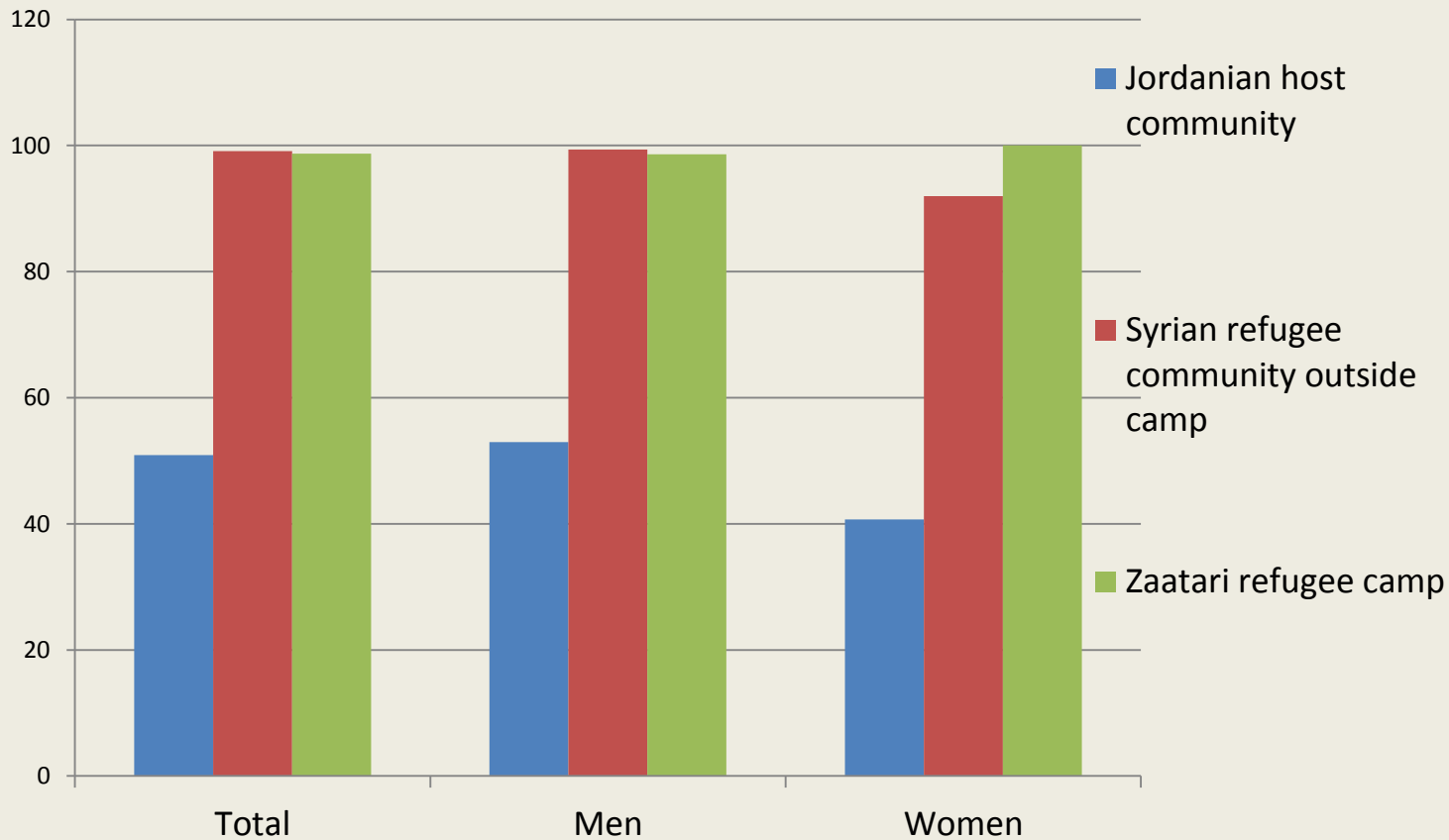
Among workers who did not apply for a permit, the main reasons cited were that permits are too expensive (**64 percent**) or too difficult to get (**15 percent**).

In Zaatari camp, only 5 respondents (**7 percent if workers**) report applying for a work permit.

# Job stability



# Informal employment



# Working Conditions

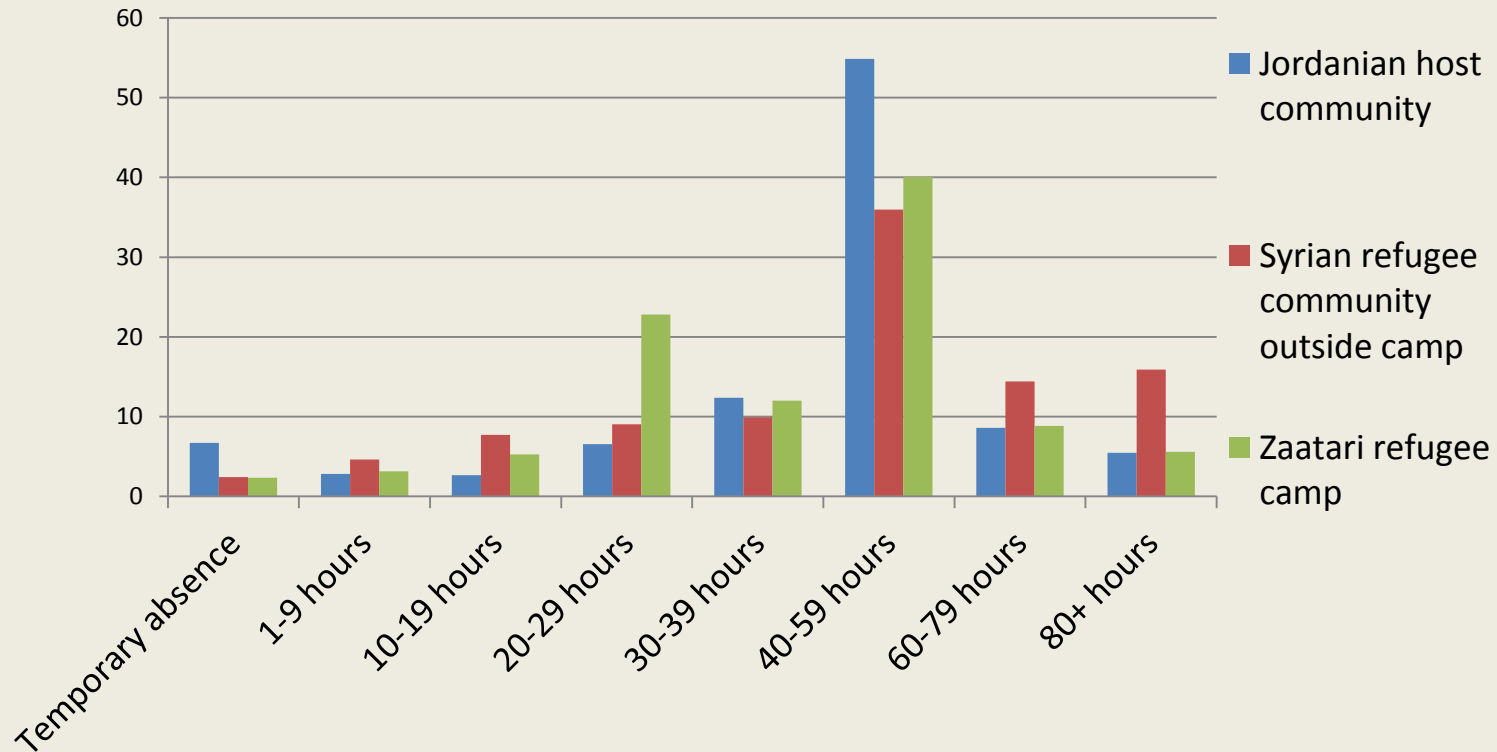
Syrian refugee workers tend to work longer hours than Jordanian workers and are generally paid less.

Being employed on the basis of a written contract is significantly less common among Syrian refugee workers, who are more often employed on the basis of an oral agreement or employed without contract, than among Jordanian workers.

A smaller share of Syrian refugee workers than Jordanian workers report having been informed about work-related hazards & necessary precautions & having received necessary protective equipment from their employer.

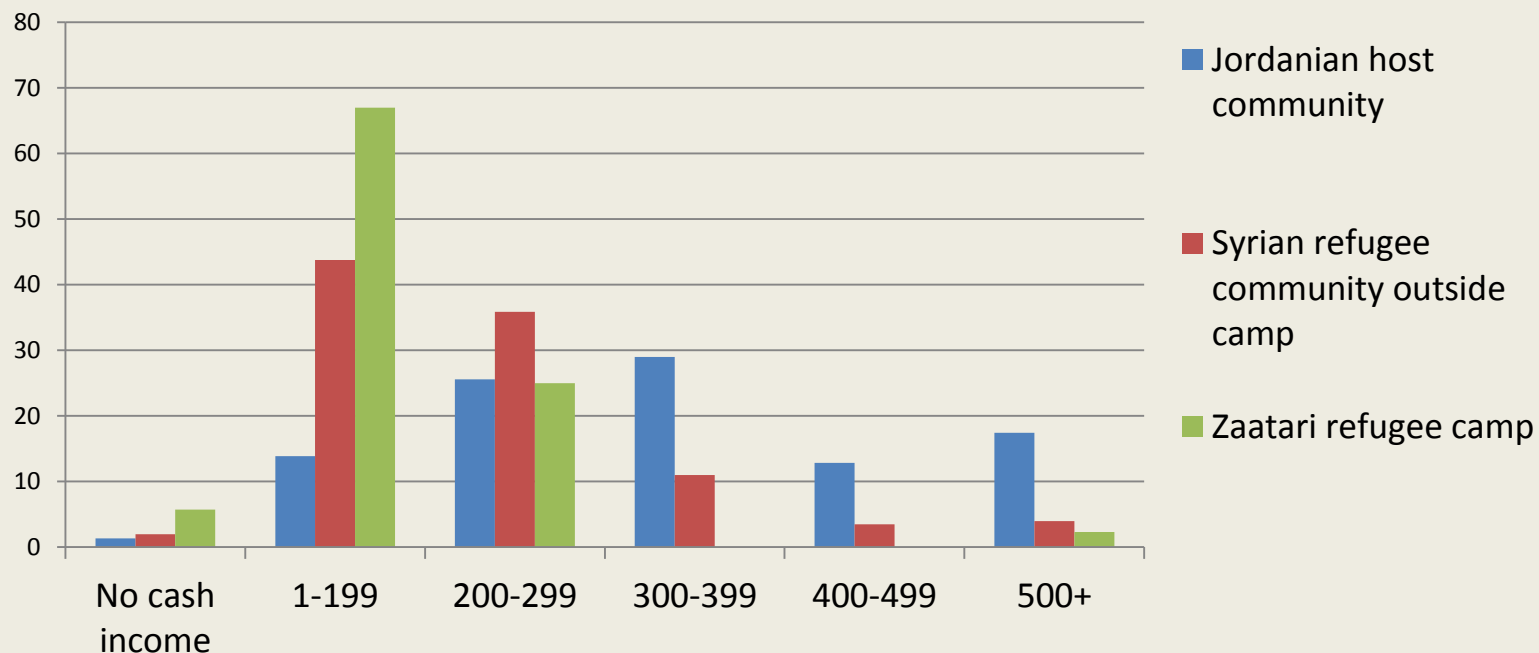


# Hours worked past week - by community

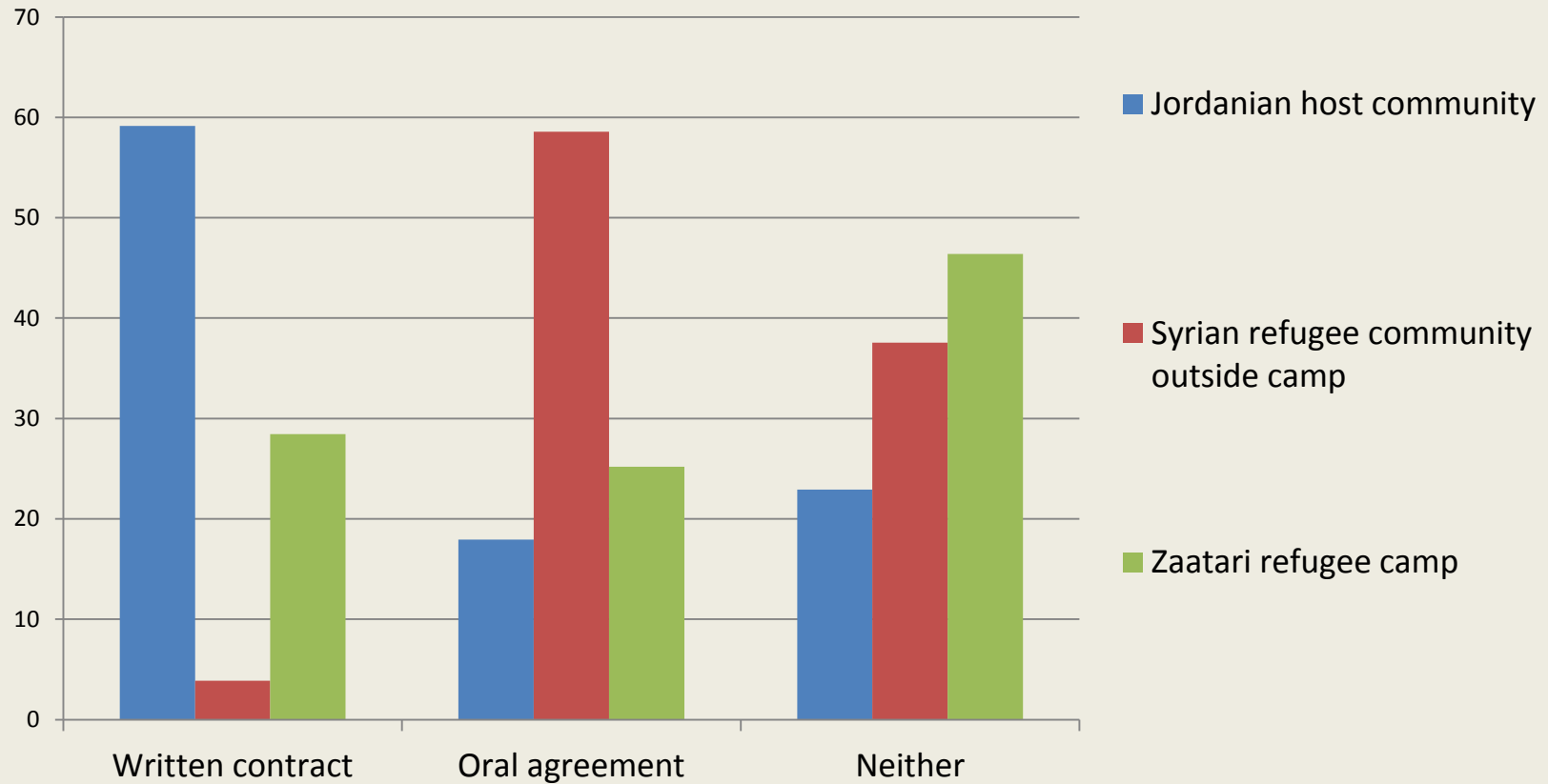




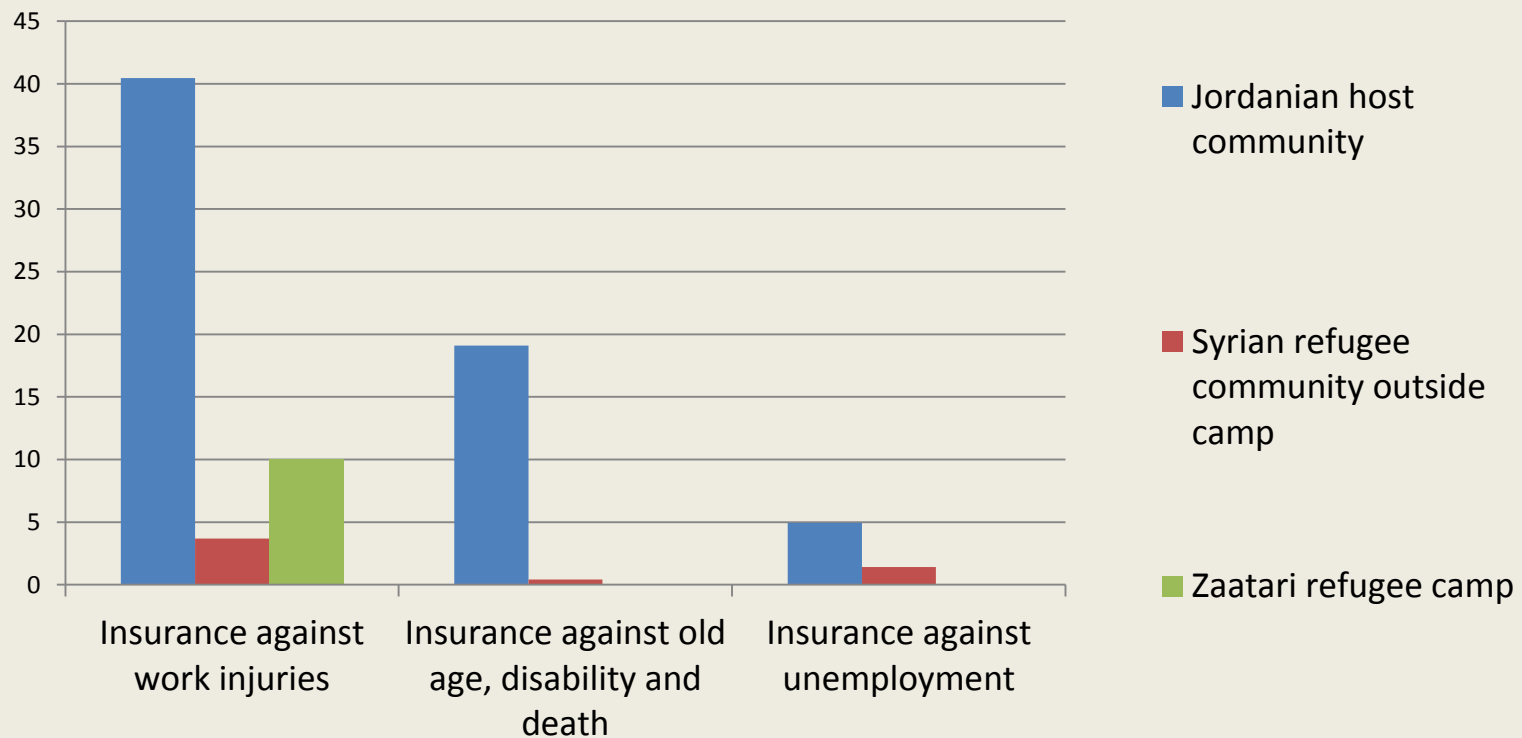
# Cash income past month - by community



# Type of contract

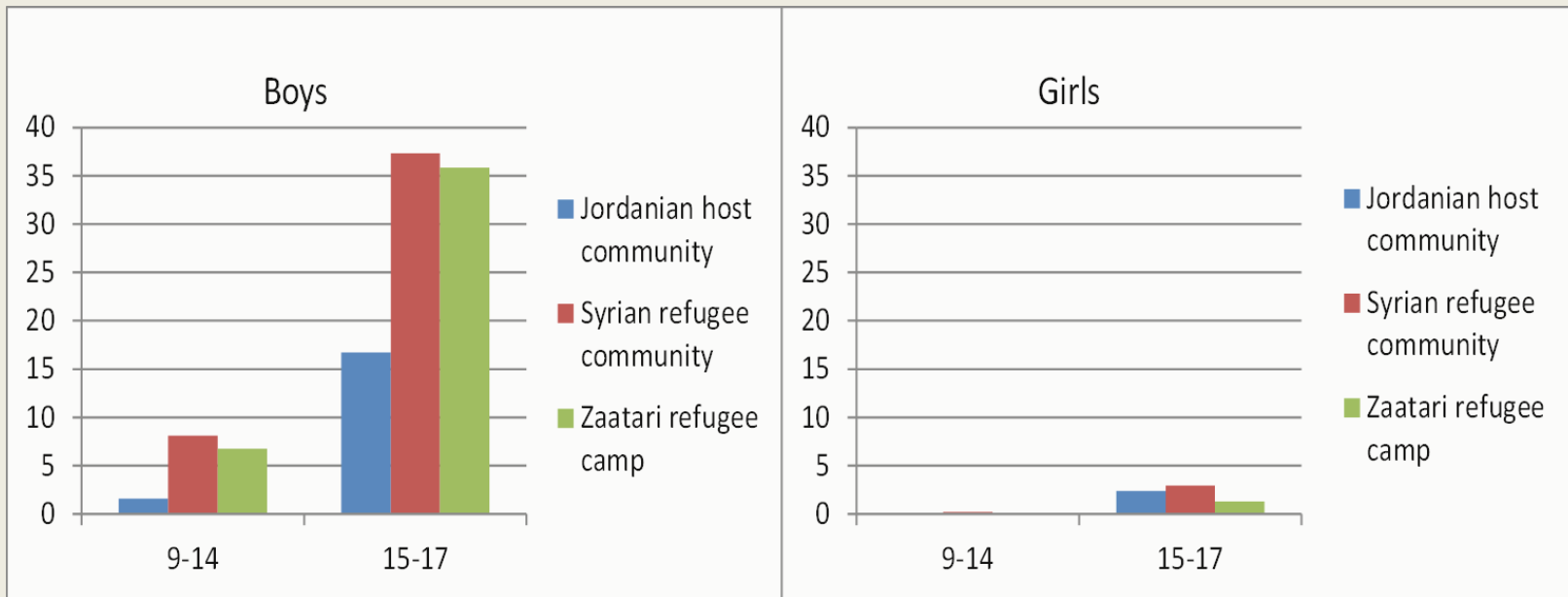


# Share of workers with different forms of social insurance regulated in contract or oral agreement - by community





# Child Labour



Current prevalence of economic activity among children 9-17, by sex, age and community

# Perceptions and attitudes among workers towards the labour market

There is widespread agreement across communities that Syrian workers are willing to accept jobs and salaries which Jordanians will not accept.

This indicate that:

- Syrian refugees take many of the jobs that Jordanians will not have and thus that the refugees to some extent do not compete with Jordanians for the same jobs.
- Or that the increased presence of Syrian refugees in parts of the labour market has led to a lowering of wages and working conditions to a level which Jordanians no longer will accept.
- Indeed, many Jordanian workers believe Syrian refugee workers are taking jobs from Jordanians and pushing down their wages, and workers across all communities fear the consequences of increased competition in the labour market.

There is also a widespread agreement that Syrian refugee workers are being exploited.





## Policy recommendations

- Formalize the informal economy and reduce informal employment.
- Consider giving Syrians formal temporary work permits in specified sectors in line with Jordanian labour regulations for migrant workers.
- Clarify realistic scenarios for the development of the Jordanian labour market as basis for any strategy on the labour market.
- Maximize the short-term employment potential of the aid economy and coordinate measures between international community and the Government of Jordan.
- Improve linkages with the National Employment Strategy.
- Promote school enrolment among Syrian children.