



## JORDAN

# PERIODIC ANALYSIS OF SYRIAN WORKERS OUTSIDE CAMPS

October 2018

This periodic analysis of Syrian workers aims to better understand issues around work permits and employment for the 81% of Syrians living outside of camps in Jordan. Further to the analysis done in October 2017 and given some changed regulations, to better understand the current situation of Syrians working in Jordan, this survey was prepared in February, data were collected by April 2018. Recent evidence suggests that over 117,000 Syrian refugees do some form of work out of the 297,000 of working age (ERF, 2018<sup>1</sup>); access to formal work has expanded and the current number of Syrians with valid work permits stands at over 50,000 (MOL, July 2018).

The below report is based on data collected by telephone by UNHCR and analyzed by a group of practitioners of the World Bank (WB), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNHCR, which illuminates selected dynamics of working Syrians.

### Data Sample Information

Based on data shared by the Ministry of Labour (MoL) with UNHCR, as well as data stored on the UNHCR database, random samples allow for a 90% confidence interval, a margin of error of 7.5, and response distribution of 50%. The UNHCR database was used specifically to produce the first two samples: refugees of working age (18 to 59 years) were included.

Group	Population	Sample size	Reached	
1. UNHCR registered, working age, don't have a work permit, working in construction	5,508 self-reported	118	148	125 %
2. UNHCR registered, working age, don't have a work permit, working in other sectors	38,548 self-reported	120	120	100 %
3. UNHCR registered, have work permits in construction profession through an employer	1,376	111	114	103 %
4. UNHCR registered, have a work permit in construction through GFJTU	9,361	119	120	101 %
Total		468	502	107 %

**Group/sample 1:** UNHCR registered, of working age, without a work permit, working in construction<sup>2</sup>. The population of this group was **5,508** individuals.

**Group/sample 2:** UNHCR registered, of working age, without a work permit, working in other sectors. The population of this group is was **38,548** individuals.

<sup>1</sup> The Impact of Refugees on Employment and Wages in Jordan, Belal Fallah, Caroline Krafft, and Jackline Wahba

<sup>2</sup> Data relies on self-reporting

For Group/Samples 3 and 4, both UNHCR and MoL databases were cross-checked against the Ministry of Interior (MoI) ID registration in both databases. This crosscheck was run in order to include only those registered as refugees and exclude non-refugee Syrians residing in Jordan. The number of matched records was much lower than expected because the MoI ID is indicated in MoL database for 51,054 of the 65,534 individuals including renewals of work permits. After running the crosscheck query, 14,690 were matched. In the absence of sectorial records in the MoL database, a filter was applied to the occupation field, depending on personal judgment on whether or not a specific occupation falls under the construction sector:

**Group/sample 3:** UNHCR registered, have a valid work permit in a construction profession through an employer: **1,376** Syrian refugees who obtained a work permits through their employers.

**Group/sample 4:** UNHCR registered, have a valid work permit in construction through the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions (GFJTU): **9,361** Syrian refugees who obtained a work permits through the GFJTU.

**Group 5:** Some Syrian refugees reached during the survey having work permits in sectors other than construction were reached most probably because they were unmatched in the crosscheck with the MoL database and were shown as “not having work permits”. This group was excluded from the analyses because it is not random.

The survey used random sampling to better reflect characteristics of the wider population of each group. In the findings section below; findings per group were included under each area and are consequently representative by group. Whenever multiple groups were combined for analyses; weights were not applied and are consequently indicative rather than representative.

## Communicating with Refugees

Staff members from UNHCR reached out to Syrian refugees working formally and informally to conduct the survey by using the helpline facility at UNHCR. The purpose of the survey was clearly explained to refugees at the beginning of each phone call: *“Hello Mr. /Ms. \_\_\_\_\_. I’m from UNHCR. We would like to better understand the employment situation of Syrians in Jordan. I would like to ask you a few questions about your employment situation. Your answers will be used for survey purposes only and will help us improve programming. Your answers will NOT be used in any decisions about provision of assistance or services to you and your family. If you are concerned about answering such questions, please tell us now, in which case we will not proceed. Is it OK to ask you a few questions?”* All contacted refugees participated in the survey and answered the questions.

At the end of each call UNHCR staff members stressed the fact that the survey is purely for analytical purposes and not a case-management theme, noting *“I would like to reassure you that UNHCR policy is that asylum seekers should not be denied any benefits or services on the basis of their work status. I also want to reiterate that this survey was only to help us understand the issues refugees are facing. Your responses will not be connected with your name and case number and will not affect any of the services that you are currently receiving or might receive in the future. Thank you for your time and patience.”*

UNHCR along with partners put together the questionnaire for this survey, considering the changes in the legal framework governing Syrian refugees’ access to the labour market between 2017 and 2018. Some questions were applied to all respondents while others were applied only to those working in construction.

# FINDINGS

## Duration and Stability

Almost half of the respondents work with diverse agreements and duration of employment; this includes both written and verbal contractual arrangements with the employer and includes those working formally and informally.

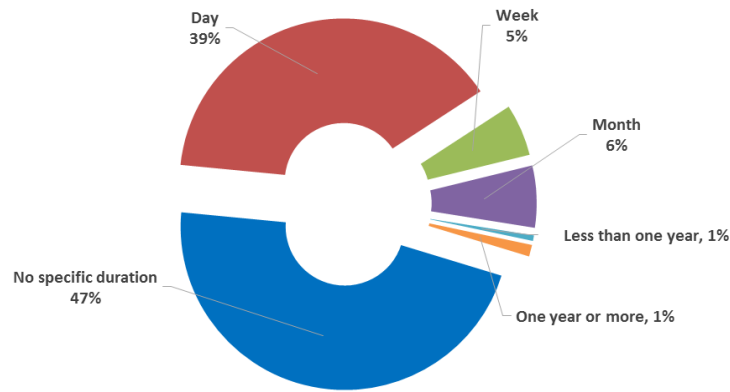


Chart 1: Durations of Contracts with Employer(s) – including Verbal Agreements

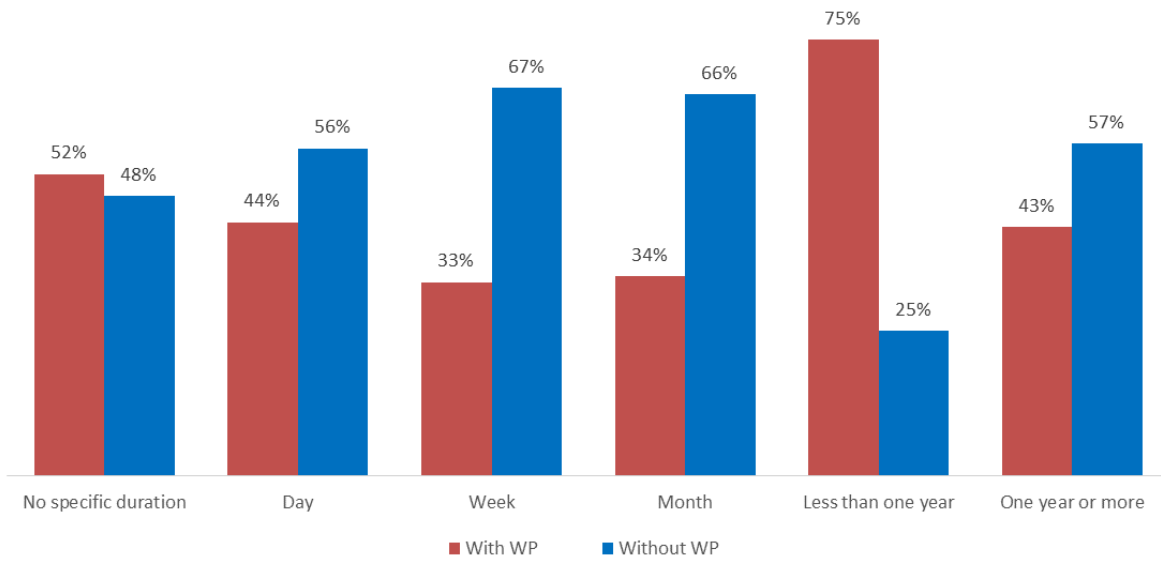


Chart 2: Duration of Agreement

47% of Syrians working with or without work permits haven't agreed with their employers on the duration of contracts or verbal agreements. By group, those having permits through an employer (group 3) most often work without any specific agreement duration.

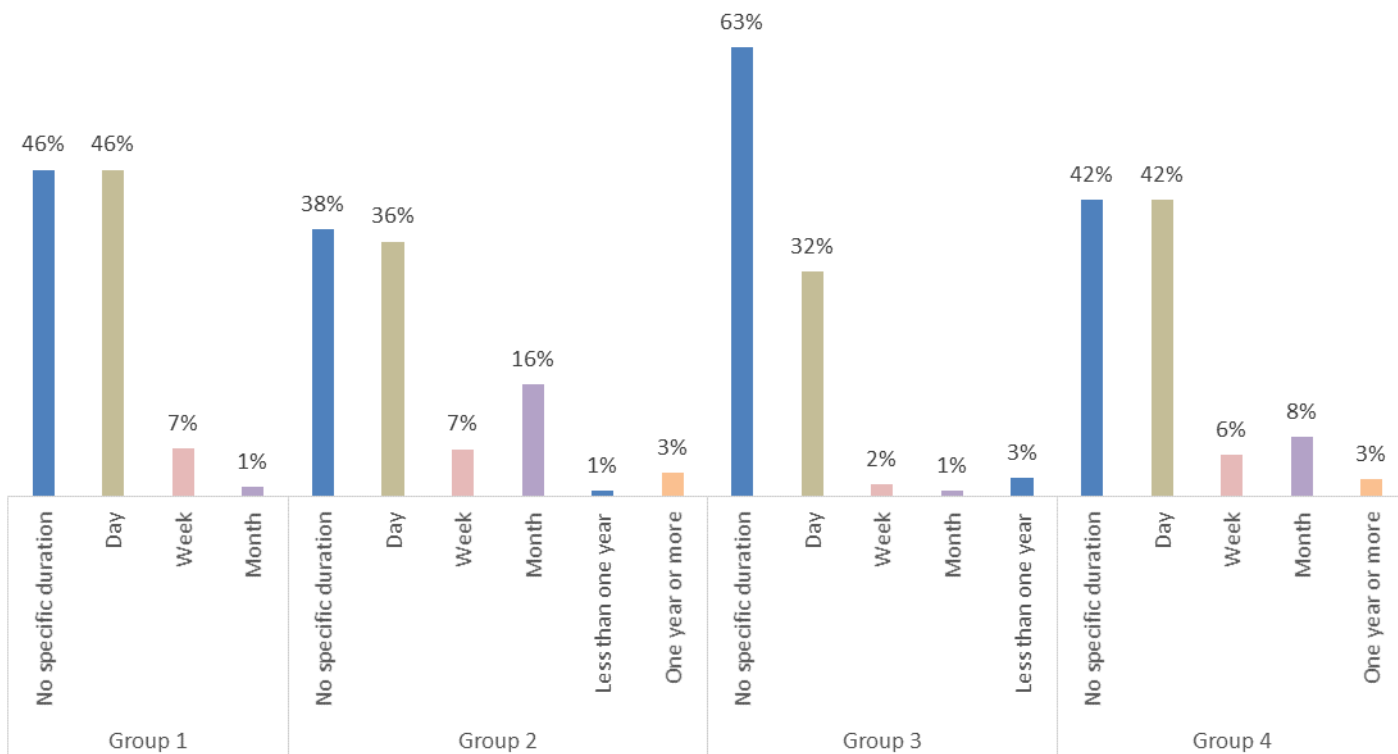


Chart 3: Duration of Contracts or Agreements with Employers by Group

On duration of work with current employer regardless the availability of contractual or verbal agreement, a large percentage of Syrian refugees interviewed have worked for less than three months with their current employer across groups 1 to 4.

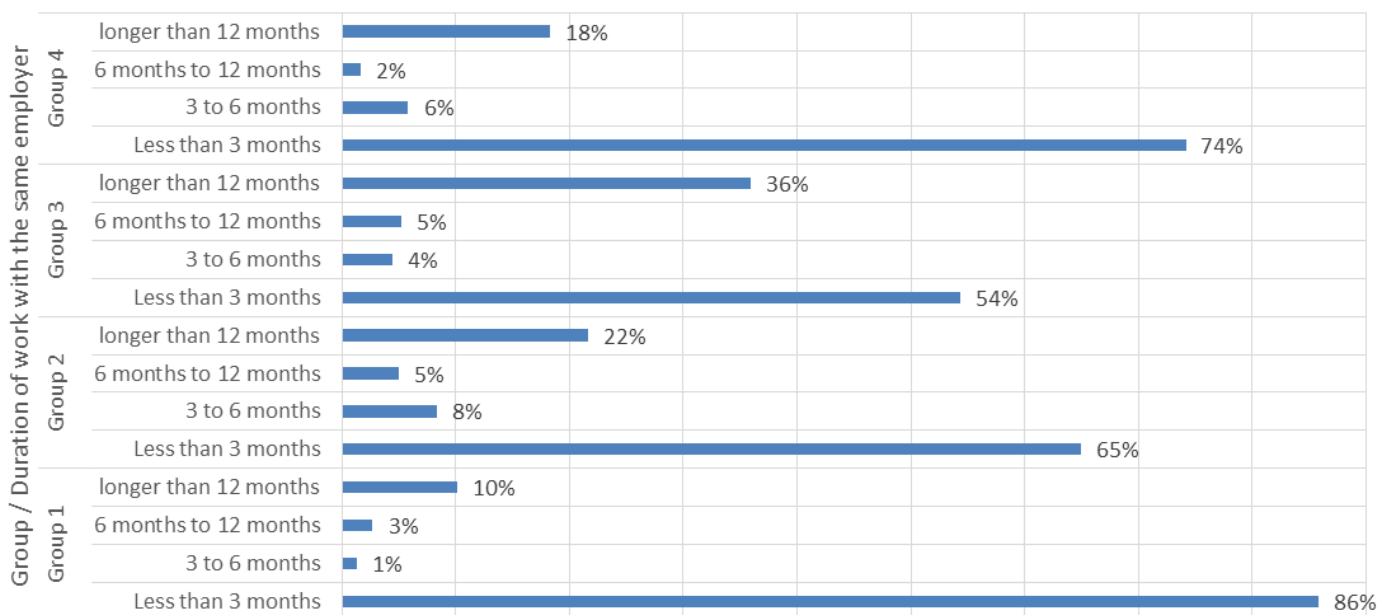


Chart 4: Duration of Work with Current Employer, by Group

The chart below shows the relation between the sector and the duration of the contract or agreements between Syrian workers and their employers. The majority of Syrian refugees working in constructions **work for a non-specific duration**. In agriculture, Syrian refugees most often work **at a daily rate**. The situation of Syrian refugees working in food and beverage (restaurants and catering), manufacturing (other than garment), and in retail and wholesale seem to be **more stable** and have more monthly contracts or agreements with their employers.

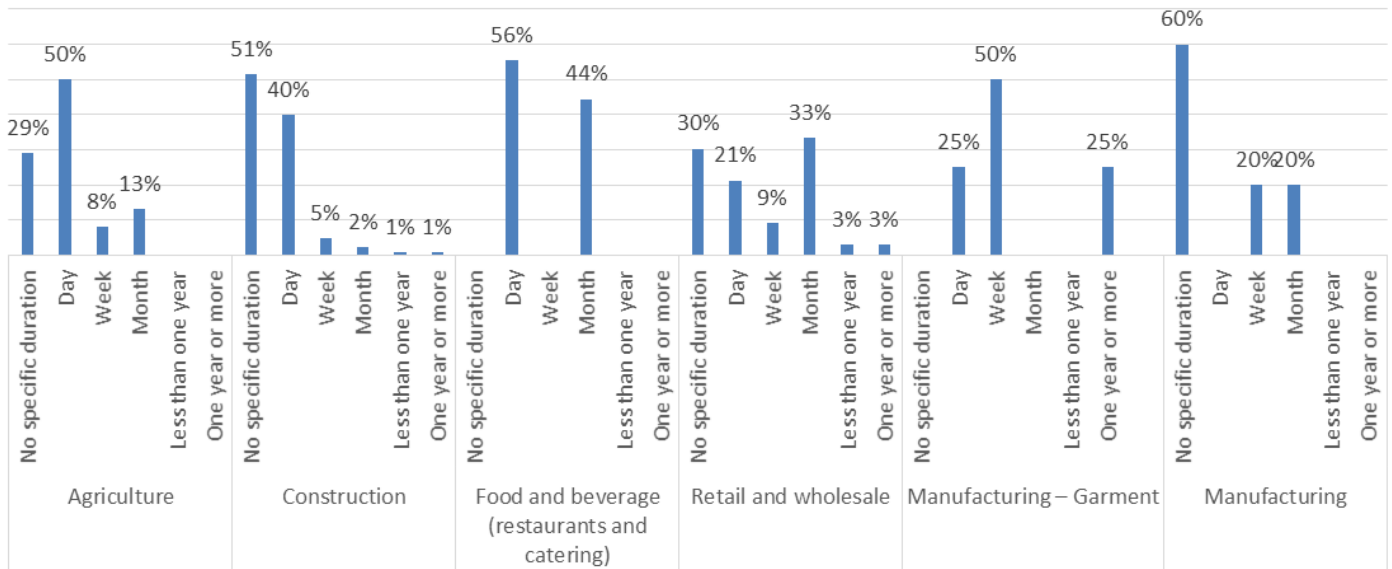


Chart 5: Duration of Contracts with Employer(s) by Sector

## Construction Sector, With or Without Work Permits

The survey reached 366 Syrian refugees working in construction sector / with or without WP. As mentioned; most of them work under the non-specific duration agreement schemes, or at a daily rate.

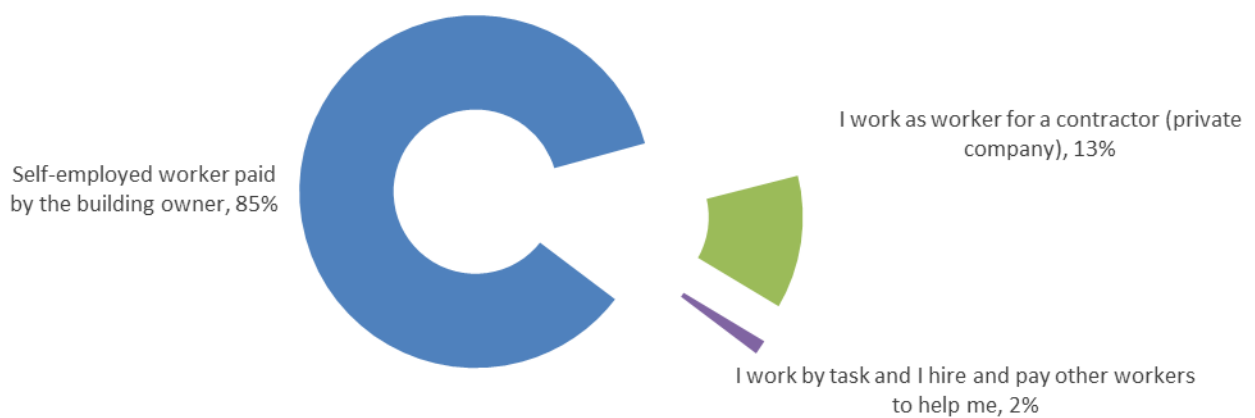


Chart 6: Employment Situation in the Construction Sector

Self-employed workers being paid by the building owner is the prevailing situation for Syrian refugees working in construction in general, followed by those who work for contractors/ private companies. Very few of the construction groups (1, 3, 4) work as a contractor or informally bringing on other workers.

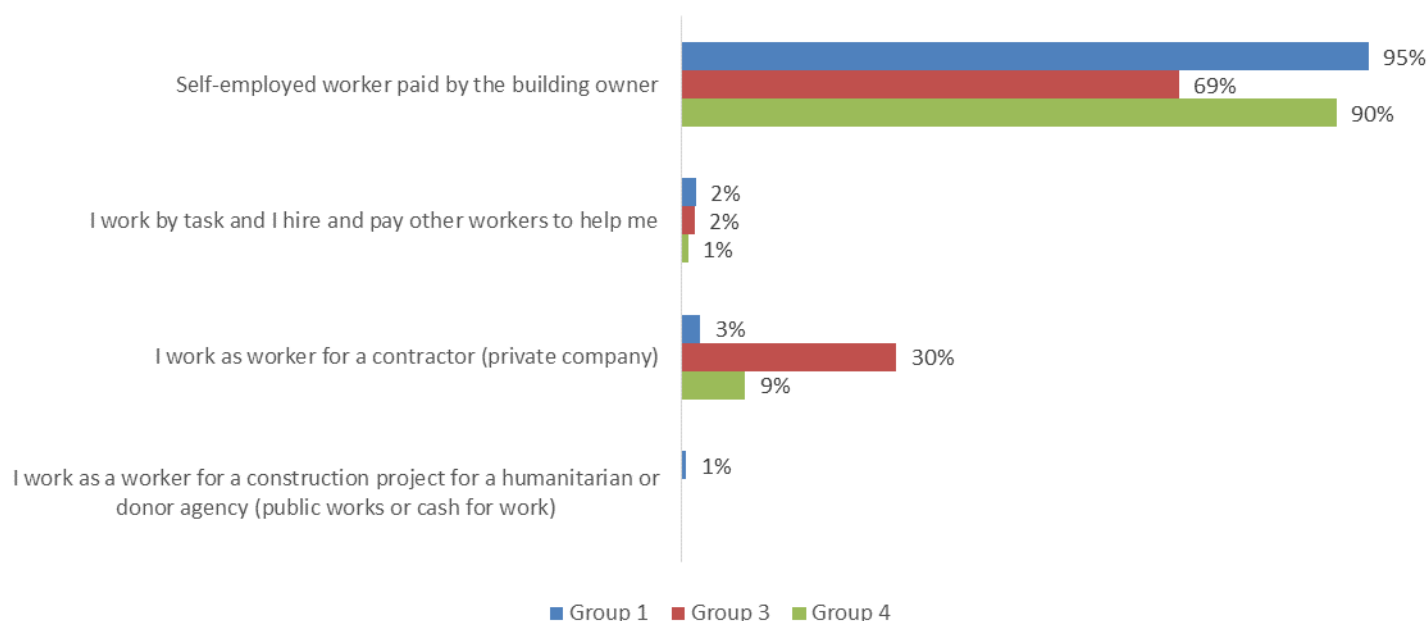


Chart 7: Current Work Arrangements in the Construction Sector by Group

Given that Syrians were able to cross the borders to Jordan easily before the crisis; 28% started to work in Construction in Jordan before the start of the crisis. Those who have arrived during or after the crisis started to work in the construction sector at the same year of arrival or after in most of the cases. In other words; those have started at year of arrival or after.

Year	Last entry to Jordan	Start of working in construction in Jordan
2010 or before	20	107
2011	35	24
2012	105	43
2013	138	73
2014	44	44
2015	4	26
2016	3	18
2017	4	20
2018	5	3

Having 28% seems very high, supposedly they used to move forth and back between Jordan and Syria. This survey is unable to address the cause behind such percentage because it does only ask about the year of *last* entry.

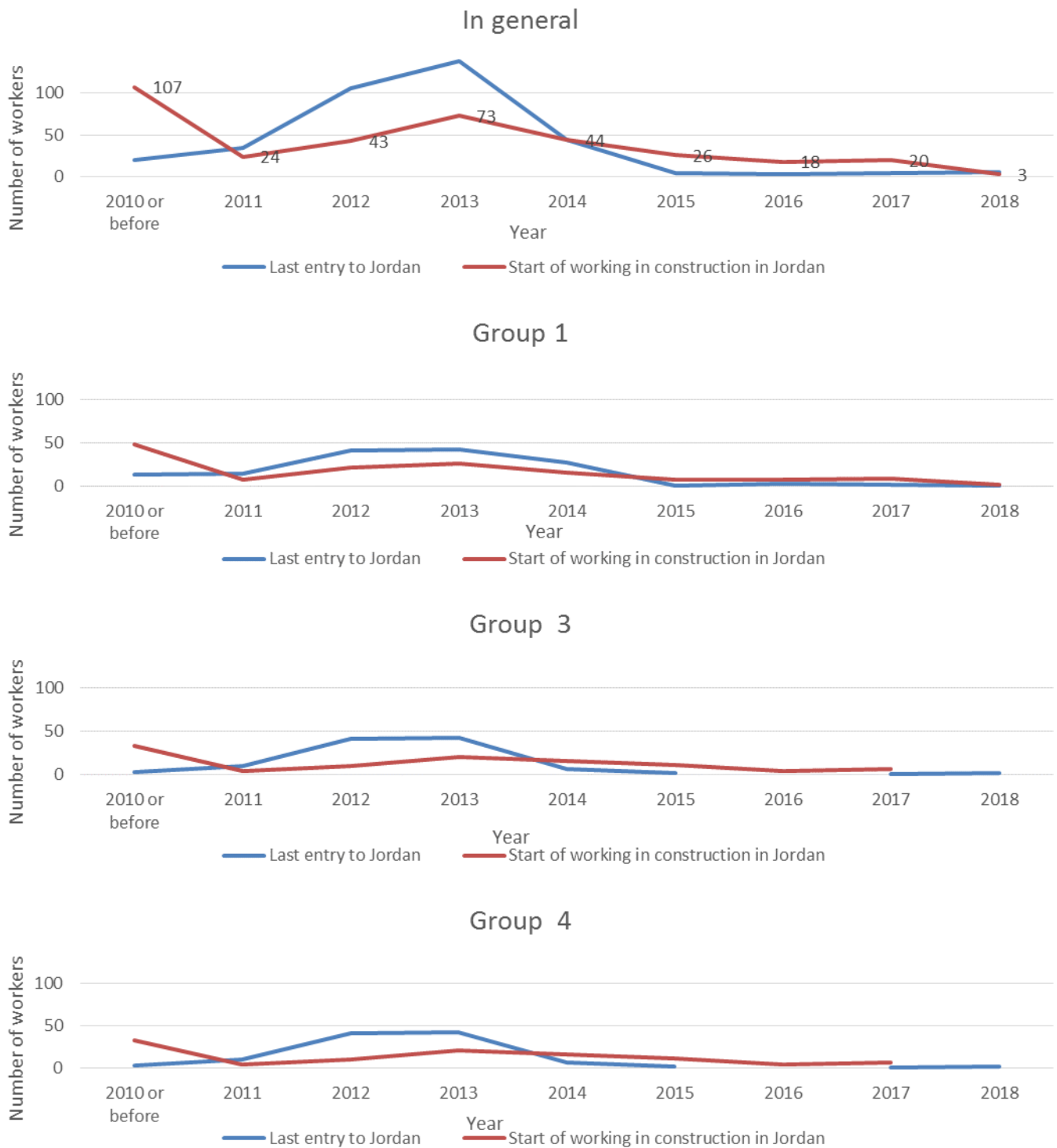


Chart 8: Last Entry to Jordan vs Start of Work in Construction by Sample Group

Only 51% of those with a private/public employer work permit are working in the construction sector as designated by the work permit and for the same employer listed on their work permits.

The majority of workers with GFJTU worker permits (85%) are working in the construction, which is the sector that they are supposed to work in, but some of the Syrian refugee workers (16%) mentioned that they work in occupations other than the ones mentioned in their work permits. Referring their usual occupations to the six sectors shown in the chart below; it could be inferred that construction work permits are sometimes being used by refugees working in other sectors.

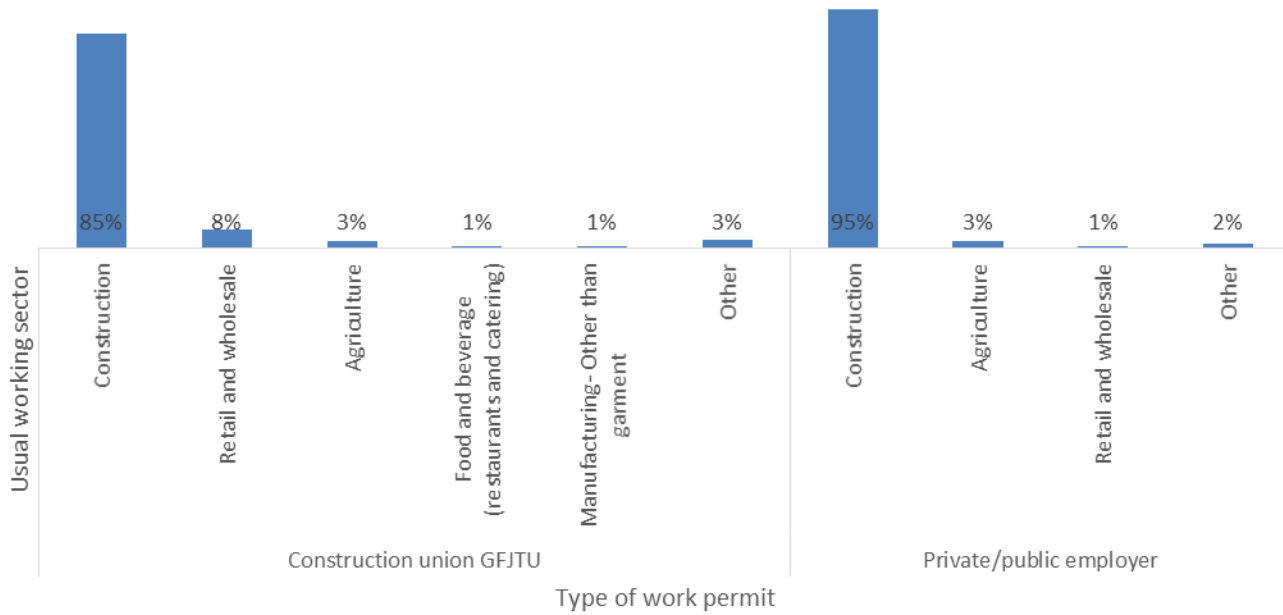


Chart 9: Type of Work Permit in Construction vs Usual Working Sector

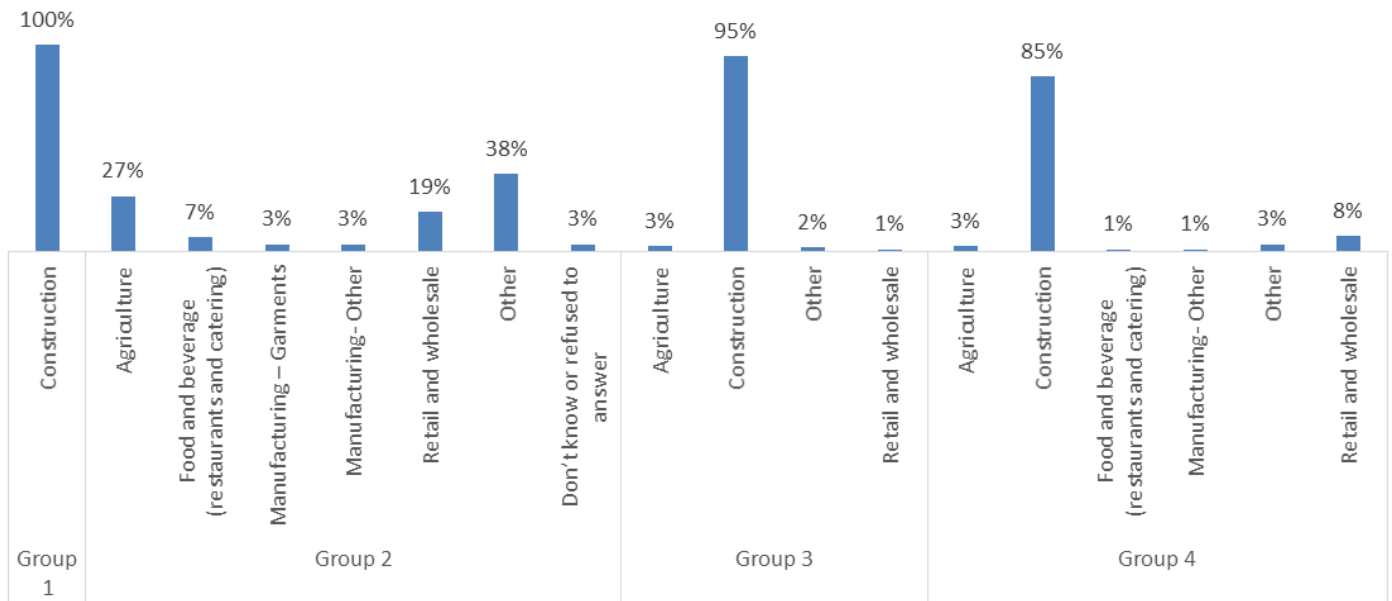


Chart 10: Normal Sector of Work by Sample Group



## Employers and Work Permits

The survey confirms the reluctance of employers in obtaining work permits for their Syrian refugees' workers. This reluctance was also indicated in the 2017 periodic analysis.

75% of Syrian refugee workers state that their employers are not willing to proceed in issuing them work permits (without elaborating on the reasons why), although 85% of the respondents made it clear that they would want a work permit if the employers were willing to get a work permit form them.

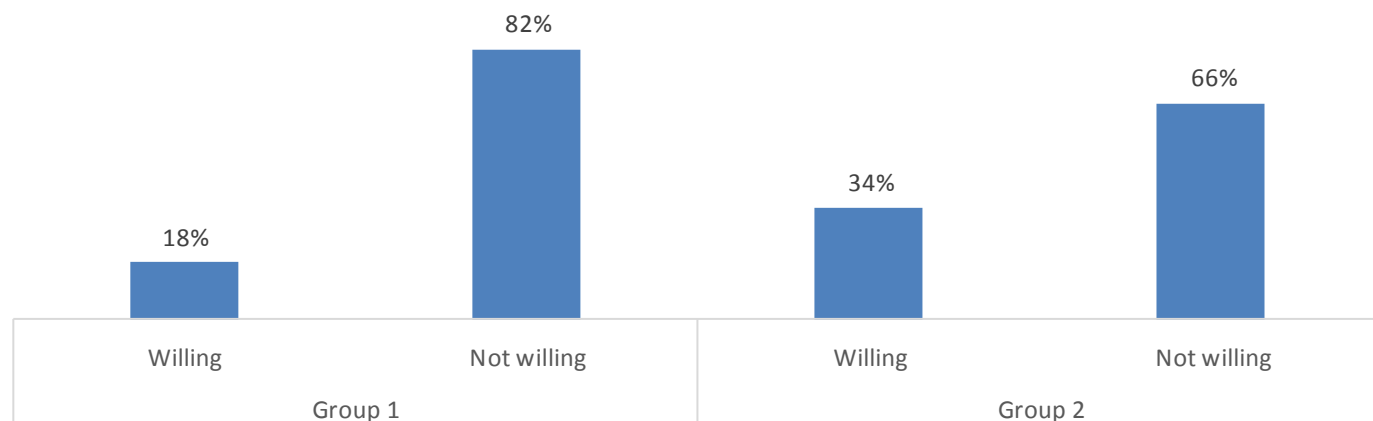


Chart 11: Refugee Workers Thoughts on Employer Willingness to Issue Work Permits for Their Workers

The 15% of those surveyed who do not wish to have a work permit explained that they either do not want to be tied to one employer, prefer to keep a low profile in terms of being exposed to formal databases, or are afraid of losing the opportunity to resettle in a third country. UNHCR policy on data confidentiality and resettlement as a durable solution were explained to respondents as needed, as approximately half of the interviewees seemed to be lacking understanding of work permits benefits and formal sector privileges. Enumerators urged respondents who had questions on work permits to contact the employment centers and also provided them with the center's phone number in their respective place of residence.

As indicated in the chart below on the reasons for not wishing to have a work permit, a relatively large group haven't answered what the survey has expected them to answer. The expected answers to this questions were as below:

- I am afraid of losing cash assistance (Note: if this is the answer given, the enumerator records the answer but clarifies UNHCR policy): "kindly note that receiving cash assistance is not linked directly to working. On another note, kindly be informed that if you been on cash assistance for an extended period of time, you may be replaced by other refugees from the waiting list by the end of this year, but again this is not linked to working".
- I am afraid of losing the opportunity to resettle outside of Jordan. (Note: if this is the answer given, the enumerator records the answer but clarifies UNHCR policy)
- I don't want to be tied to one employer
- I want to keep a low profile
- Other

The survey noted that no construction worker (Group 1) sampled is afraid of losing the opportunity to settle outside of Jordan. The number of respondents that chose the 'other' option was unexpectedly high, however, it has been expected while designing the questionnaire, that there might be no other options besides the ones provided. Some of those that chose 'other' explained that construction is not their main occupation, it is a 'plan B' for their living, or that they do not have any reason for not being willing to have a work permit.

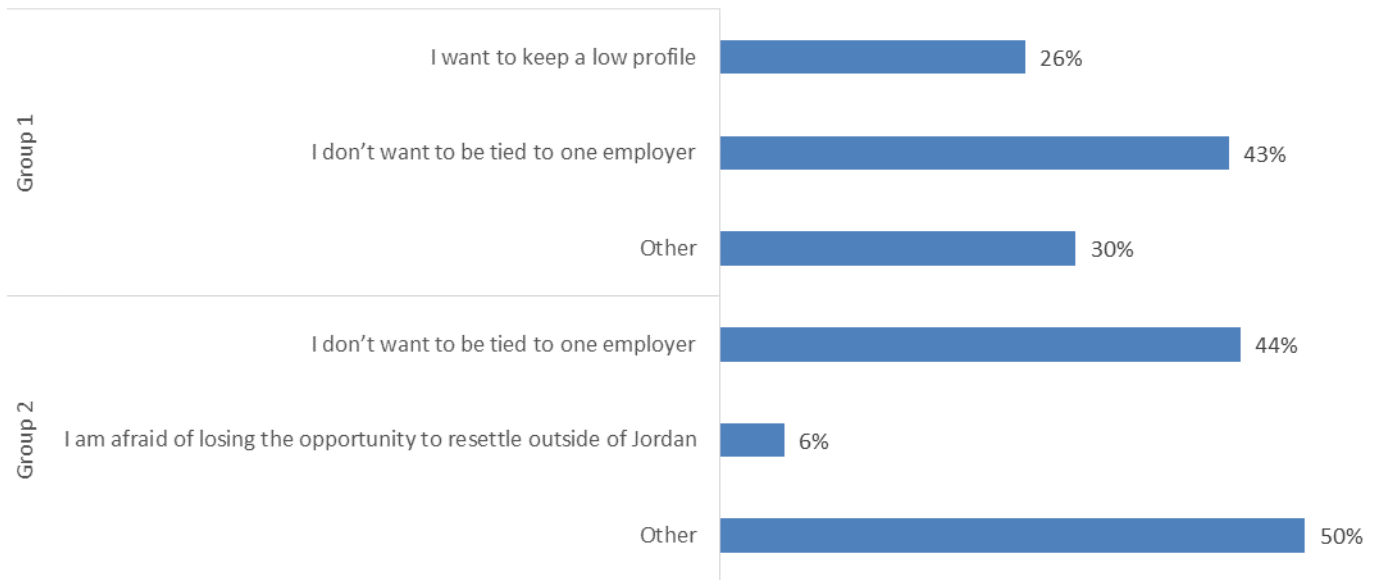


Chart 12: Reasons why refugees prefer not to have a work permit

The majority of refugee workers (87 %) pay the work permit issuance fees themselves to get their work permits. This situation is mostly prevailing in the construction sector followed by the agricultural sector.

The refugees self-reported costs associated with the work permits issuance varied between the three sectors (Construction, Agriculture, and public/private sectors). It is worth mentioning that the cost get higher if the employer was a Private/public employer, with an average of 85 JOD, while the averages is 64 JOD if it was GFJTU.

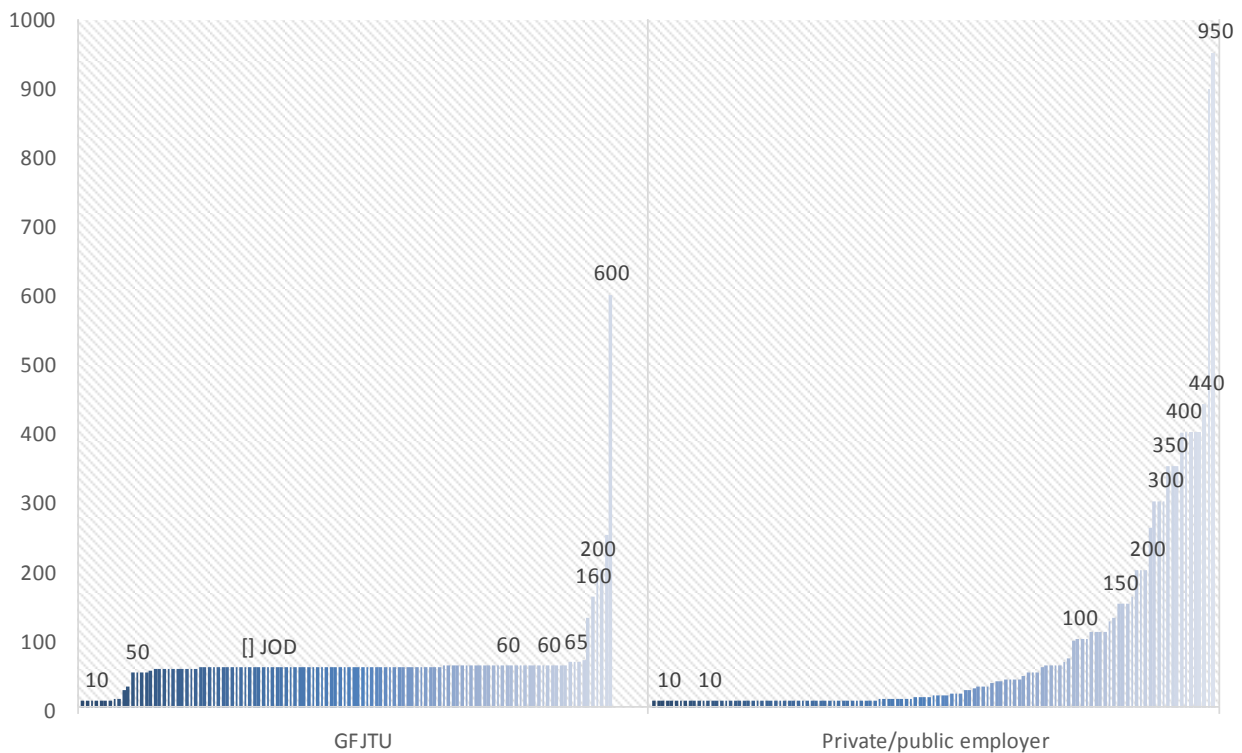


Chart 13: Costs Associated with Work Permit Issuance

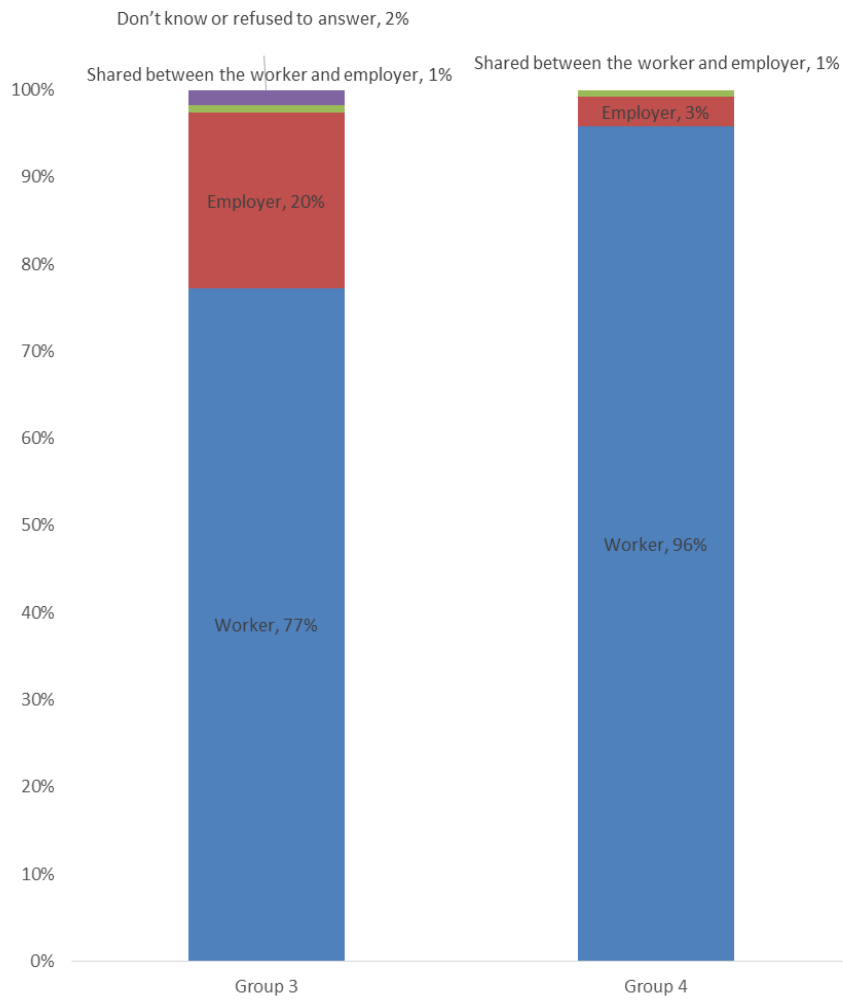


Chart 14: Who paid for the work permit

# ANNEX

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## Questionnaire

- a. During the last month, did you do any work, for wage, salary, commissions, tips or any other pay, in cash or in kind, even if only for one hour? Yes, no
- b. If no: Thank you very much for your time. (hang up)
  
- c. If yes: What is the duration of your latest contract or agreement with your employer(s) (including verbal agreement)?
  - a. Day
  - b. Week
  - c. Month
  - d. Less than one year
  - e. One year or more
  - f. No specific duration
  
- d. For how long have you been working for this employer(s) (since you started with him or her? even if irregularly)?
  - a. Less than 3 months
  - b. 3 to 6 months
  - c. 6 months to 12 months
  - d. Longer than 12 months
  
- e. Which sector do you usually work in?
  - a. Agriculture
  - b. Construction (Includes working on infrastructure construction, construction of buildings and repair and maintenance of building and infrastructure)
    - i. When was your last entry to Jordan? Year \_\_\_\_\_
    - ii. When did you first start working in construction in Jordan? Year \_\_\_\_\_
    - iii. Which of the following best describes your current work situation (most of the time)?
      1. Self-employed worker paid by the building owner
      2. I work by task and I hire and pay other workers to help me
        - a. How many workers on average: \_\_\_\_\_
        - b. Are they (multiple choices):
          1. Syrians
            - ii. Do the Syrian workers have work permits
              - a. Yes
              - b. No
              - c. Some of them
              - d. I don't know
            2. Jordanians
            3. Migrants
          - iii. Do the migrant workers have work permits
            - a. Yes
            - b. No
            - c. Some of them
            - d. I don't know
      - iv. I work as worker for a contractor (private company)
      - v. I work as a worker for a construction project for a humanitarian or donor agency (public works or cash for work)
  - c. Manufacturing – Garments
  - d. Manufacturing- Other

- e. Retail and wholesale
- f. Food and beverage (restaurants and catering)
- g. Accommodation
- h. Other
- i. Don't know/refused to answer

f. Do you have a valid work permit?

a. Yes

- i. Is the employer listed on the work permit is the same employer you worked for during the last 7 days?
  - 1. Yes
  - 2. No
- ii. Is the employer listed on the work permit as:
  - 1. Agricultural cooperative
- iii. Through agricultural cooperative?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 2. Construction union GFJTU
- iv. Through construction union GFJTU?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 2. Private/public employer
- v. Through the employer?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Don't know/refused to answer
- vi. What was the total cost associated with receiving the work permit?
  - 1. Amounting JD \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2. What did this cost include?
    - a. Cost to MOL (10 JD)
    - b. Fees charged by agricultural cooperative or GFJTU (2JD)
    - c. Fees charged by facilitators/intermediaries?
      - i. Amounting JD \_\_\_\_\_
      - ii. Don't know
    - d. Fees charged by "sponsors" who are not employers?
      - i. Amounting JD \_\_\_\_\_
      - ii. Don't know
    - e. Health certificate cost (which shouldn't be charged since they should be able to use the same health certificate they used for the MOI card) (5 JD)
    - f. Private insurance that is required for work permits associated with GFJTU. (45 JD)
    - g. I'm not aware
    - h. Don't know/refused to answer
- vii. Who paid for the work permit
  - 1. Employer
  - 2. Myself
  - 3. Shared between the employer and myself
  - 4. Don't know/refused to answer
- viii. What is the sector listed on your work permit?
  - 1. Agriculture
  - 2. Construction (Includes working on infrastructure construction, construction of buildings and repair and maintenance of building and infrastructure)
  - 3. Manufacturing – Garments
  - 4. Manufacturing- Other
  - 5. Retail and wholesale

6. Food and beverage (restaurants and catering)
7. Accommodation
8. Other
9. Don't know/refused to answer

b. No

- i. Do you believe your employer would be willing to get a work permit for you?
  1. Yes
  2. No
- ii. If your employer was willing to get a work permit for you, would you want a work permit?
  1. Yes
  2. No
  3. What is the main reason?
    - a. I am afraid of losing cash assistance (Note: if this is the answer given, enumerator should record the answer but clarify UNHCR policy): ""If you been on cash assistance for an extended period of time, you may be replaced by other refugees from the waiting list by the end of this year""
    - b. I am afraid of losing the opportunity to resettle outside of Jordan. (Note: if this is the answer given, enumerator should record the answer but clarify UNHCR policy)
    - c. I don't want to be tied to one employer
    - d. I want to keep a low profile
    - e. Other

**Contacts:**

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