

KEY POLICY DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

JORDAN

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Jordan has shown remarkable resilience in the midst of a conflict in the Middle East that has had a severe socio-economic impact on the country. Its vulnerability to external shocks, best demonstrated by the decline in tourism, which has been devastated by the conflict that started in October 2023, is not a new development. Jordan hosts an estimated 1.36 million Syrian refugees (12% of the country's population). It plays an important role in coordinating political and humanitarian support for Palestinians, while facing severe challenges of its own – from widespread water scarcity to nearly 50% youth unemployment (World Bank, 2024a).

As an upper middle-income country, Jordan also faces significant challenges in reviewing and adapting its employment policy and labour market interventions to the needs of its economy and society. To address these, in June 2022, Jordan launched a 10-year Economic Modernisation Vision (EMV) with three main pillars: economic growth, quality of life and sustainability. Under the economic growth pillar, five drivers for growth were identified. The one relevant to human capital development is 'Smart Jordan', which defines key priority areas for reform and outlines a vision for each area to be achieved by 2033. These are early childhood development (ECD), basic and secondary education (K-12), higher education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), entrepreneurship, and research and development and innovation (GoJ, 2022).

The vision aims to create one million jobs for young people by 2033, with supply-side interventions focusing on priority sectors and policy reforms to support the private sector and tackle barriers to job creation. The latter includes a reform of the VET system, with the aim of doubling women's participation in the labour force and addressing the effects of climate change by developing and implementing green policies, creating green jobs and advancing green technologies, with education at the heart of this agenda, as technological innovation and adoption require highly skilled individuals (World Bank, 2024b).

Jordan has been navigating through a low-growth equilibrium, hovering at an average of 2.2% over the last decade (2012-2022). Real GDP registered 2.4% growth in 2022, accelerating to 2.7% in Q3 2023. This growth was supported by a robust contribution from the services sector, in addition to the manufacturing industry and a rebound in agriculture. Meanwhile, the hotel and restaurant industry registered growth in the first nine months of 2023 (before the onset of the current conflict). Still, its contribution to overall growth remains marginal on account of its low weighting in the economy (1.5% of GDP) (World Bank, 2024a).

Structural impediments to growth include the very low rate of participation of women in the labour force, the mismatch between education/technical and vocational education and training and labour market needs, the inability of the Jordanian economy to provide sufficient employment opportunities for new entrants to the labour market, and the relatively low wages and inadequate working conditions. Labour force participation continued its gradual decline to 32.6% in Q3 2023, down from 39.2% in 2017, driven by male and female participation declines. Despite the lower labour market participation, unemployment rose to 22.3% in Q3 2023, still well above the pre-COVID-19 average of 15.1% (2012-2019), with youth unemployment at 46.1% after reaching a historic peak of 50% in late 2020 (World Bank, 2024a).

The National Strategy for Human Resources Development 2016-2025, which was adopted in 2016, provides the overall strategic framework for human resource development in Jordan. It covers all levels and types of education and training, and defines, among other things, the objective of providing all children with equitable access to quality primary and secondary education, leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes. VET reform initiatives and related national VET strategies and national career guidance strategies further aim to improve the situation on the education side. The most recent National Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) for the period 2023-2027 was developed under the lead of the Technical and Vocational Skills Development Commission (TVSDC) and seeks to integrate and align all relevant stakeholders.

However, TVET remains unattractive, despite a number of reforms that Jordan has introduced to make it a viable choice for young people, including on account of the better job opportunities the VET pathway offers to school graduates compared to their peers with university degrees. Despite this, Jordan is performing reasonably well in education, with a relatively high rate of expected years of schooling (11.4 in 2020) and a gross rate of enrolment in primary education of about 80%. The country is dedicating around 3% of its GDP to education (2022). Still, the system continues to face major challenges in providing education for all children residing in Jordan, especially Syrian refugees, and ensuring education and skills development that meet labour market needs.

Jordan struggles with high unemployment, particularly among young people, despite their relatively high educational level of education, with large gender gaps and very low labour force participation. Skills mismatches and negative attitudes towards certain types of employment and occupations also contribute to the high youth unemployment.

In recent years, the Jordanian government has implemented two important initiatives to boost employment. The first one is the Khedmat Watan Programme launched in 2019, which targets young people aged 18-27. It aims to provide them with training opportunities in construction, manufacturing and tourism. The second one, the National Employment Programme (Tashgeel), launched in March 2022, is much broader in scope and was designed as a pillar to support the private sector. The programme aims to stimulate the private sector and provide job opportunities to Jordanians in all sectors and governorates of the Kingdom. It is expected to create 60 000 decent jobs.

1. KEY POLITICAL, DEMOGRAPHIC, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Political developments

Over the last two decades, Jordan's socio-political landscape has been dominated by regional and global crises – from the global financial crisis to the oil price collapse in the mid-2010s, the Arab Spring, the Syrian conflict and the resulting refugee crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, the aftermath of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and, most recently, the current conflict in the Middle East. Faced with external shocks and domestic constraints to investment and export development, the country has been unable to break out of a low-growth equilibrium of 2.2% average annual growth over the past decade (2012-2022) (World Bank, 2024a). In this context, the Jordanian government is investing heavily in economic modernisation in close cooperation with development partners. The Economic Modernisation Vision (EMV) 2022-2033 seeks to align all stakeholders behind strategic objectives.

Jordan is a constitutional monarchy in which the King has broad executive powers. The Prime Minister is appointed by the King and heads the Cabinet, which is also appointed by the monarch. Jordan has a bicameral National Assembly consisting of a 65-seat upper house (the Senate), appointed by the King, and a 130-seat lower house (House of Representatives). The lower house is elected for a four-year term or until Parliament is dissolved. Approximately 15 seats are reserved for women.

In 2021-2022, the government embarked on a three-track political, economic and public sector modernisation through a consultative process in line with the Economic Modernisation Vision (EMV), with the explicit objective of strengthening the social contract between the government and citizens. The three reform dimensions are closely interlinked. Political reforms aim to modernise the political system and foster a party-driven parliamentary and political life. On this basis, a new Election Law and a new Political Parties Law were enacted, along with constitutional amendments. The Public Sector Modernisation Roadmap aims to improve government effectiveness and accountability, including through stakeholder consultation, citizen feedback loops and e-participation, and reform human resource management in the civil service (World Bank, 2024a).

Demographics

Jordan's population is estimated to be 11 337 100 (2023, World Bank (WDI)) and is remarkably young. With 63% of Jordanians under the age of 30 (UNICEF), maximising education and skills outcomes is critical for growth and development.

90% of Jordanians live in urban areas (URBANET). Approximately 42% reside in the capital, Amman, and over three-quarters live in the three largest cities (Amman, Zarqa and Irbid)¹.

Migration has traditionally played an important role in the Jordanian economy. Three major waves characterise recent migration history: (i) emigration flows of Jordanian technicians and university graduates seeking better-paid jobs in the Gulf countries in the 1960s; (ii) migrant workers, mainly from Egypt and South Asian countries in the 1970s; and (iii) recurrent immigration waves as a result of socio-political turmoil and conflicts in the region, including inflows of Palestinians (1948 and 1967), Iraqis (2003) and Syrians (since 2011) as the most populous groups.

Despite migration data scarcity, it is estimated that in 2020, the number of immigrants stood at 3 457 691, less than half a million of whom can be considered economic migrants. The inflow of Syrian refugees since 2014 has confirmed this pattern, with refugees consistently representing 87% of the total number of immigrants over the past 10 years². Jordan is currently hosting an estimated 1.36 million Syrian refugees (12% of the Jordanian population).

¹ DOS Estimated population of the Kingdom by Governorate and sex, at end-year 2022.

² UN DESA International Migrant Stock 2019, World Bank (World Development Indicators)

Personal remittances received accounted for 9.7% of the country's GDP in 2023 (World Bank, 2023), although the percentage has halved since the early 2000s (21.5% in 2000 and 19.0% in 2005)³.

Key economic developments

Jordan is classified by the World Bank as an upper middle-income country. According to the 2022 Heritage Foundation's Index of Economic Freedom, it has the fifth-largest economy in the Middle East and North Africa, after Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Israel.

Jordan registered 2.4% real GDP growth in 2022, which accelerated to 2.7% in Q3 2023, compared to a pre-COVID-19 average of 2.4% (2012-2019). This stable growth was supported by a robust contribution from the services sector (driven by transport and communications, finance and insurance, and wholesale and retail trade), in addition to the manufacturing industry and a rebound in agriculture. Meanwhile, the hotel and restaurant industry registered growth in the first nine months of 2023 (before the onset of the current conflict), but its contribution to overall growth remains marginal on account of its low weighting in the economy (1.5% of GDP) (Department of Statistics and World Bank, 2024a).

In terms of sectoral contribution, the preliminary estimates of the DOS indicate that most economic sectors achieved growth in Q2 2023 compared to the same period in 2022. The agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing sectors registered the highest growth during this period at 8.2%, contributing 0.3 percentage points to overall growth, followed by the transport, storage and communications sectors with 5.2%, contributing 0.4 percentage points. The quarrying industries grew by 4.3%, contributing 0.1 percentage points and lastly, the manufacturing industry grew by 3.7%, contributing 0.7 percentage points to the overall growth achieved.

The sectors with high potential for growth and job creation include ICT/digital, high-end tourism and medical tourism, health and pharmaceuticals, higher education, agribusiness, logistics and financial services, the creative industries, manufacturing and climate technologies (World Bank, 2024a).

However, the recent economic recovery has not translated into a large number of new jobs. According to the Department of Statistics (DOS), unemployment remained relatively high during the third quarter of 2022, at 23.1%, an increase by 0.5 percentage points compared to the second quarter of the year, before declining to 22% in 2023. In addition, the informal economy accounted for between 16% and 18% of Jordan's GDP on average over the last decade, while informal employment has steadily increased in recent years. The share of informal workers rose from 44.7% in 2017 to 53.5% in 2020 before declining slightly to 51.6% in 2021 (OECD/ILO/UNDP, 2024a).

Overall, the Jordanian state has often acted as a 'shock absorber' in the face of ongoing crises, including by providing public sector jobs (over 40% of employment) and subsidising the cost of living. This approach, however, is becoming increasingly difficult in the face of unprecedented unemployment and higher commodity prices. Jordanians remain focused on the economic situation, citing it as the most important challenge facing the country (World Bank, 2024a). Labour force participation continued its gradual decline to 32.6% in Q3 2023. In addition, labour is increasingly concentrated in low productivity and non-growing sectors, dampening aggregate productivity growth.

Moreover, Jordan is a semi-arid country that faces chronic water scarcity and growing climate hazards. Climate change will reduce water availability for agriculture, cities, businesses and social systems, while increasing water demand. Climate change is also expected to increase the frequency and intensity of droughts, further affecting water supply and increasing food insecurity. Addressing the challenges of climate change is critical to ensuring economic competitiveness and sustainability in the long term. Responses have been planned under the Economic Modernisation Vision (World Bank, 2024a).

³ Personal remittances, received (% of GDP) - Jordan | Data (worldbank.org)

Key social issues

According to UNICEF, there are 3.16 million children in Jordan, and one in five is affected by multidimensional poverty⁴. Poverty rates vary from governorate to governorate, from 11% in Amman to 27% in Ma'an, with an even higher incidence in rural areas. Jordan has extremely low employment rates for women compared to those for men, and very high unemployment rates for women compared to those for men (see annex). Marginalised Jordanian minorities are more likely to experience poverty and gaps in services. In addition to marginalised Jordanian groups, 86% of registered Syrian refugees live below Jordan's poverty line (UNICEF). The situation of refugee children in Jordan remains precarious as household savings become depleted, and employment remains challenging. Many refugee families rely on international assistance to meet their needs.

The Constitution guarantees Jordanian citizens the right to basic social and health services. Spending on social services is, therefore, relatively high. However, there is no social protection law, and the country relies instead on programmes embedded in other plans. These programmes range from subsidies to a cash transfer scheme, tax exemptions and social services. The National Aid Fund, established in 1986, runs many programmes to ensure the protection and care for families in need by raising their standard of living. The Fund provides monthly and emergency financial assistance and supports the development of the skills and abilities of its target population to facilitate access to the labour market.

Between 2019 and 2023, the Jordanian government more than doubled the National Aid Fund (NAF) budget and expanded its coverage to 220 000 households in 2023 (compared to 97 000 in 2018). The social protection system is now a model for the region (World Bank, 2024a). The ongoing World Bank's project Private Sector Employment and Skills (which supports Jordan's National Employment Programme) targets NAF beneficiaries to support greater economic empowerment and improved graduation from social assistance.

Out of Jordan's 672 952 registered refugees, 19.5% live in camps, and the rest are mostly in Jordan's urban areas, with large groups concentrated in Amman, Irbid and Al Mafraq. 60% of the families live in extreme poverty. These numbers have increased since the pandemic, which has affected sectors employing large numbers of refugees such as tourism, construction, commerce and customer services. The vast majority of refugees borrow money to pay for food or rent. According to UNHCR estimates, 85% of Syrian refugee families and 93% of refugees of other nationalities were in debt in the first quarter of 2022 – an increase from 79% and 89%, respectively, in the third quarter of 2021.

Schooling has also been a challenge. In 2020, there were 145 000 Syrian refugees in Jordanian schools, most of whom were attending double-shift schools (Brookings Institution, 2022). Refugees also often face complex medical challenges, including physical injuries and psychological trauma, which are exacerbated by poor working and housing conditions and inadequate sanitation.

⁴ [Social protection | UNICEF Jordan](#)

2. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

2.1 Trends and challenges

Education strategy and legal framework

Jordan's National Strategy for Human Resources Development 2016-2025, adopted in 2016, sets out the country's overall strategic framework for human resource development. It covers all levels and types of education and training. It also specifies, inter alia, the goal of providing all children with equitable access to quality primary and secondary education, leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.

The Strategic Plan for Education 2018-2022, adopted in 2018, is the key policy document for the entire education sector and comprises six domains: (1) early childhood education and development; (2) access and equity; (3) system strengthening; (4) quality; (5) human resources; and (6) vocational education, including a comprehensive set of key performance indicators. The plan has been extended until 2025. In addition, the EMV 2022-2033 includes a strategic reform objective in the area of education set out in the Education Sector Vision 2033 and the Strategic Roadmap 2022-2033, which defines the following priority areas for reform: (1) early childhood: providing holistic childcare that meets developmental needs; (2) basic and secondary education: developing strong foundational skills; (3) higher education: developing knowledge and skills to succeed in industry and society; and (4) TVET: developing practical skills leading to employment. Detailed objectives and roadmaps are outlined for each of the four dimensions.

National TVET strategies have been developed under the lead of the Technical and Vocational Skills Development Commission (TVSDC) and the Ministry of Education. Jordan's National TVET Strategy 2023-2027, developed by the TVSDC, is in line with the Economic Modernisation Vision, the National Strategy for Human Resource Development 2025, and the Vocational Education and Training Strategy of the Ministry of Education, and acts as a sector unifying document, seeking to engage all areas and stakeholders across the fragmented VET system. It further supports the permeability and implementation of lifelong learning. The Strategy has three main pillars: (1) improving governance and institutional development, (2) enhancing the quality and relevance of TVET provision; and (3) facilitating the transition to employment.

The outcomes under each of the three pillars represent key objectives of the strategy and can be summarised as follows: (1) enhancing the governance of TVET in Jordan to ensure clear leadership, participation, partnerships, transparency, and robust and capable institutions; (2) a TVET system that meets labour market needs through the provision of quality learning programmes in appropriate training facilities and competent teachers and trainers, supported by an efficient administration; (3) ensuring that TVET is more inclusive and becomes an attractive pathway for learners and job seekers, with increased employability rates of TVET graduates in their fields and promoting creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship.

The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MoHESR) focuses on higher education as a top national priority through ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the National Strategy for Higher Education and Scientific Research for the periods 2007-2012 and 2014-2018. Despite the challenges facing higher education, the sector has succeeded in both quantitative and qualitative terms, with the limited pathways between VET and higher education remaining a major challenge that lowers the attractiveness of TVET for students. The bias of the population towards higher education further increases the limited attractiveness of VET (UNESCO, 2023, Jordan TVET System Review).

Access, participation and early school leaving

Jordan has a relatively high number of expected years of schooling (10.5 in 2022, UNDP), with the gross enrolment ratio for primary and secondary (both sexes) reaching 95.18% overall in 2023 (UNESCO). Public spending on education as a percentage of GDP has remained stable in recent

years, at around 3% (3.2% in 2021), while public spending on education as a percentage of total public spending declined from 12.4% in 2020 to 9.7% in 2021, although it had remained relatively stable at around 11% to 12% between 2014 and 2018⁵. The decrease in spending on education may be explained by the closure of all educational institutions during the COVID pandemic in 2020 and the government's decision to continue making use of distance learning tools such as *Darsak* after the pandemic.

However, the system still faces significant challenges in providing education for all children. A total of 112 016 children in Jordan are not attending grades 1 to 10. More than 50 640 Syrians, 39 830 Jordanians and 21 530 children of other nationalities are estimated to be out of school (UNICEF, 2020). Refugee children from Syria, Iraq, Palestine and other countries are facing particular challenges in terms of access to education. According to Plan International (a development and humanitarian organisation that advances children's rights and equality for girls), about 40% of Syrian refugee children in Jordan are out of formal education. The barriers to education start at an early age, with most Syrian children aged between 0 and 5 years having no access to early childhood development services.

Regarding access and equity, the situation for Jordanian boys and girls is significantly better than that for Syrians and others. In addition, the number of students enrolled in primary and secondary education exceeded 1.5 million in the last 3 years, which has resulted in overcrowding in some schools and increased the number of schools operating on double shifts. The number of rented schools has also increased. These schools are not equipped by the Ministry of Education and usually lack essential educational facilities such as libraries, science and computer labs, and consequently do not provide conditions that are conducive to achieving the same academic quality as permanent schools.

While nearly all children complete primary school, dropout rates from lower secondary school (grades 7-10) remain a problem. The incidence of Syrian children dropping out before completing grade 6 is considerably higher than for Jordanian children and children of other nationalities. A UNICEF report on out-of-school children shows that certain individual, household and community factors are associated with a higher risk of dropping out before completing basic education (grades 1-10). The study, which was conducted using a sample, found that the dropout rate before completing grade 6 was 2.4% in 2020 (14.1% for Syrians), reaching 9.4% for children in grades 7-10 (22.5% for Syrians).

The VET system in Jordan is effective in providing and supporting access, although performance is influenced by the age of the learners. Initial VET programmes demonstrate widespread accessibility, focusing on successful progression and graduation. CVET is also well-regarded by adult learners. However, the appeal and availability of CVET are comparatively limited, suggesting potential gaps in meeting the needs of adult learners beyond VET. The limited permeability between learning pathways also poses a challenge. Transitioning from VET to higher levels of education is also difficult, contributing to a perception that VET presents a constrained choice in terms of education and career prospects (ETF Torino Process report, 2023).

PISA results

Jordan participated in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) for 2022⁶. The average 2022 results were down compared to 2018 in mathematics and were about the same in reading and science. In Jordan, 17% of students attained at least level-2 proficiency in mathematics, significantly less than the average in OECD countries (OECD average: 69%). These students can, at minimum, interpret and recognise, without direct instructions, how a simple situation can be represented mathematically (e.g. comparing the total distance across two alternative routes or converting prices into a different currency). Almost no students were among the top performers⁷ in mathematics (OECD average: 9%). At these levels, students can model complex situations

⁵ UNESCO Institute for Statistics

⁶ [Jordan | Factsheets | OECD PISA 2022 results](#)

⁷ Top performers in mathematics refers to students who attained Level 5 or 6 in the PISA mathematics test).

mathematically and select, compare and evaluate appropriate problem-solving strategies to deal with them.

Some 20% of students in Jordan attained level 2 or higher in reading (OECD average: 74%). These students can, at a minimum, identify the main idea in a text of moderate length, find information based on explicit, though sometimes complex, criteria and reflect on the purpose and form of texts when explicitly directed to do so. Almost no students scored at level 5 or higher in reading (OECD average: 7%). These students can comprehend lengthy texts, deal with concepts that are abstract or counterintuitive, and establish distinctions between fact and opinion, based on implicit cues pertaining to the content or source of the information.

Some 31% of students attained level 2 or higher in science (OECD average: 76%). These students can, at minimum, recognise the correct explanation for familiar scientific phenomena and can use this knowledge to identify, in simple cases, whether a conclusion is valid based on the data provided. Almost no students were among the top performers in science (OECD average: 7%). These students can creatively and autonomously apply their knowledge of and about science to a wide variety of situations, including ones that they are not familiar with. In conclusion, with more than 66% of the population below the age of 30, maximising education and skills outcomes should be seen as a priority and is critical for growth and development (World Bank, 2024a).

PISA questions relating to career guidance show that Jordanians are ahead of the OECD average in almost all indicators. The fact that the OECD added those questions gives access to information beyond academic learning, in line with requirements in education and training in the 21st century:

	Jordan	OECD average
Career development activities		
I did an internship.	69.9%	35.3%
I attended job shadowing or work-site visits.	65.0%	45.3%
I visited a job fair.	58.8%	35.4%
I spoke to a career advisor at my school.	64.8%	48.9%
I spoke to a career advisor outside of my school.	56.4%	33.4%
I completed a questionnaire to find out about my interests and abilities.	72.2%	63.7%
I researched the internet for information about careers.	75.5% 74.8%	79.3%
I went to an organised tour in an ISCED 3-7 institution.	55.0%	39.9%
I researched the internet for information about ISCED 3-7 programmes.	71.4%	72.0%
I researched information on student financing (e.g. student loans or grants).	60.5%	46.3%
Career thinking indicators		
Career certainty — Percentage of young people who can name an occupation that they expect to have at age 30	56.7%	61.2%
Career ambition — Percentage of young people who expect an occupation in ISCO Major Groups 1 or 2 at age 30	78.8%	62.6%
Educational ambition — Percentage of students who expect to complete tertiary education	80.3%	69.4%
Career misalignment — Percentage of students whose education and career expectations are not aligned	16.6%	20.9%

Source: OECD (PISA survey, 2022)

2.2 Initial VET and adult learning

Strategic and legal framework for initial VET and adult learning

The Jordanian government has embarked on an ambitious reform of the TVET system, particularly at the secondary level. The reform includes extending vocational education to three years starting from grade 10 and replacing the outdated national curriculum with the internationally recognised BTEC (Business and Technology Education Council) qualification to enhance the employability and mobility of graduates and equip them with the skills required on the labour market. This reform of the vocational education is expected to widen the pathways available to students as they graduate with the opportunity to further their BTEC qualifications at technical colleges, universities and in the labour market. Other significant achievements include the launch of the National TVET Strategy, the establishment of the Technical and Vocational Skills Development Council (TVSDC) in 2019 as the national coordinating body for TVET, the creation of more than 10 Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) to engage the private sector, and the development of the National Career Guidance Strategy in 2024 (World Bank 2024a, p. 20).

In the TVET sector, the introduction of BTEC, the adoption of the NQF and the development of the National TVET Strategy 2023-2027 have all been completed. The government is working to design the governance model of the new Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development and has adopted the necessary bylaws for competency-based hiring in the public sector (as above, p. 25).

The Technical and Vocational Skills Development Commission (TVSDC) was established in 2019 to improve governance across the sector of technical and vocational education and training (TVET). The objective was to have an umbrella organisation overseeing TVET in Jordan, headed by the Minister of Labour, with the participation of the Minister for Education, the Minister for Higher Education, the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Labour, the President of the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission for Higher Education institutions, a representative of the Crown Prince Foundation, private sector representatives and representatives from the tourism, industrial, commercial, construction, communications and health sectors. The private sector is strongly represented on the Commission. However, there are no trade union representatives.

The TVSDC is responsible for approving the strategies, policies and plans for the sector. The Commission's mandate also covers drafting TVET sector legislation, approving occupational standards, and coordinating with other education, economic, social, and human resources councils. It also accredits and supervises TVET providers, develops programme standards, registers qualifications in the National Qualification Framework (NQF), identifies the standards for teacher and teacher trainer selection with a view to classifying them and developing the skills and abilities of teachers and trainers, institutionalises public-private partnerships in TVET and licenses TVET providers.

The TVSDC developed an Action Plan for 2020-2024, which builds around 12 pillars that mirror the five pillars of the TVET sector strategy and the strategic priorities set out in the national strategy. The Commission is responsible for providing a comprehensive picture of the performance of TVET in Jordan. It collects, analyses and disseminates data and information at the level of governance, financing, service providers, partners (national and international), beneficiaries and target groups. For this purpose, it uses a monitoring and evaluation system composed of 22 indicators that mirror those of the ETF Torino Process (see ETF, 2023). All TVET providers report back to the Commission on their performance based on these indicators.

VET governance and financing arrangements

The new TVET Strategy 2023-2027 aims to introduce reforms under Pillar 1, 'Improving governance and institutional development' with the main outcome: 'The governance of the TVET system is rational and coherent with clear leadership, participation, partnerships, transparency and robust and capable institutions'. This outcome will be achieved through the following eight programmes: (1) Reviewing and enhancing TVET legislation; (2) Developing a multi-level governance model for TVET; (3) Business

process re-engineering, including organisational restructuring of the key players in TVET in Jordan; (4) Empowering Sector Skills Councils; (5) Supporting Jordan's National Qualifications Framework (JNQF); (6) Developing and applying a national framework for work-based learning (WBL); (7) Developing a TVET project mapping platform; and (8) Developing a green TVET strategy.

In the meantime, the situation remains as it is, with technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Jordan being delivered by a variety of public and private providers:

The Ministry of Education provides vocational education to students in grades 11 and 12 in one of four specialised courses: industry, agriculture, hospitality and home economics. Based on the results of their exams, graduates can enter the labour market or pursue further education at community colleges or technical or general universities.

The Vocational Training Corporation (VTC), a semi-autonomous agency established and operating under the Ministry of Labour, owns and operates a network of 35 vocational training centres, offering more than 120 programmes. Its primary purpose is to provide workforce training at different occupational levels.

Forty-two public and private community colleges offer technical education leading to a diploma.

As a semi-public body, the National Employment and Training Company (NET) provides a one-year vocational training programme. Initially, it focused on the construction sector but has since expanded to other sectors, sometimes competing with private training providers. Many other private training providers offer a variety of programmes.

While the TVSDC has been established to bring some coherence and ensure coordination between the different players, there is little evidence that it has succeeded in doing so. At the moment of drafting this report, further reforms of integrating VET into the new Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development with a dedicated VET department are envisaged. The new ministry will also incorporate the former Ministry of Higher Education and will consist of the following departments: Accreditation and QA department, Education department, Policy and strategy department, VET department, and Higher Education department. VTC will be under the new VET department. The new law about the new ministry is expected to be adopted by July 2025. Under the prime minister, there will be a new QA department with TVSDC and AQACHEI (Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission for Higher Education Institutions). At the same time, QA for K-12 under the lead of AQACHEI will also focus on VET. The Ministry of Education has developed a Vocational Education Reform Strategic Plan to reform technical and vocational education and training. The plan is designed to be implemented over five years, from 2022 to 2026, and aims to improve the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of the national TVET system in Jordan. The plan, which is currently being implemented with the support of donors, has not been discussed with TVSDC.

In contrast, community colleges do not report to the Commission, but rather to Al Balqa Applied University. They receive accreditation for their programmes from the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission for Higher Education Institutions, which uses different tools and methodologies to accredit programmes than those used by the TVSDC.

For the time being, the TVSDC is performing its coordination function in respect of a limited part of the vocational training system in Jordan: the Vocational Training Corporation, the National Employment and Training Company and private providers.

TVET is funded by the State through the Ministry of Finance's budget. Every institution that provides technical or/and vocational programmes deals directly with the Ministry of Finance. There is no central body that allocates funding based on needs or decides on the priority of specific projects. Moreover, budget decisions are not made on the strength of the performance of programmes or organisations, but instead on a historical basis.

Public TVET providers rely on international funding, such as EU grants and international donor programmes, to invest in new equipment, innovation, and the transformation of the sector, as well as government funding to cover operational costs. Therefore, support from the donor community is

crucial, and there is a strong need to coordinate, unify and streamline donor efforts to avoid duplication.

Qualifications, validation and recognition

In January 2019, Jordan adopted a 10-level National Qualifications Framework covering general, technical, vocational, and higher education. The framework aims to improve quality and permeability across different education sectors. It is implemented by the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission for Higher Education Institutions (AQACHEI) and the Technical and Vocational Skills Development Commission (TVSDC). Efforts, including those made through the new TVET Strategy, are ongoing to develop policies, criteria, and guidelines for applying the NQF framework. Still, a publicly accessible register of national, quality-assured qualifications has not yet been available.

The NQF framework also defines prior learning and its recognition. As a result of the UNESCO TVET system review, an action has been financed to support the TVSDC in developing mechanisms to recognise and validate all forms of informal and non-formal learning and piloting the new framework for recognition of prior learning (RPL) and its operational manual. In 2024, the TVSDC developed an RPL awareness-raising and communication strategy with technical support from the ILO.

Quality and quality assurance

The quality assurance system for technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Jordan is fragmented, with separate processes used by each ministry involved in TVET provision. TVET quality assurance is overseen by the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission for Higher Education Institutions (AQACHEI) and the Technical and Vocational Skills Development Commission (TVSDC). Efforts are being made to harmonise accreditation systems, but quality control at provider level remains disjointed. The Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) have distinct procedures, while community colleges follow AQACHEI standards. There is limited external quality control and evaluation of institutional effectiveness, with funds being allocated based on previous budgets rather than performance. However, as mentioned earlier, the new reforms seek to consolidate QA within the newly established Ministry of Education and Human Capital Development, as well as the prime minister's office.

At the practical level, teachers and trainers often lack experience and pedagogical skills. The VTC recruits trainers with practical experience but no pedagogical qualifications, while community colleges require technical theory teachers to have at least a bachelor's degree. Providers use varied approaches for professional development. The VTC requires a four-week training programme for new trainers, involving needs analysis and rigorous implementation. Headteachers and external supervisors conduct teacher and trainer performance evaluations, which affect promotions and professional development.

Work-based learning arrangements

The new TVET strategy 2023-2027 defines an indicator on the participation rate in work-based learning (WBL): apprentices and WBL students as a percentage of total TVET participants (by gender, specialisation and TVET provider). The specific programme, '1.6. Development and application of a National Framework for Work-based Learning (WBL)' under Pillar 1, 'Improving governance and institutional development', contains all projects and activities related to the development of a national framework for work-based learning in Jordan and the implementation of different modalities of WBL. Piloting is envisaged with technical support from GIZ and the Jordan River Foundation (JRF).

Labour Law No 8/1996 and its subsequent amendments regulate work-based learning in Jordan. The law sets out requirements for conducting workplace training at enterprises, such as the adequacy of workplace conditions for training, the qualifications of in-house trainers and the existence of a contract signed between the employer and the trainee. Currently, almost all Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) programmes use a work-based training methodology in cooperation with companies of various sizes and in different economic sectors. Work-based training is used by the National Employment and

Training Company to implement its training programmes. In addition, it is used in implementing training and employment projects/initiatives supported and financed by the Ministry of Labour and the chambers of industry and commerce.

Vocational education students attending schools under the Ministry of Education are required to practise their specialisation for 24 days during the summer holidays, either at their workplace or in the school's workshop (Rawashdeh/ UNESCO, 2019). A limited number of colleges have implemented work-based learning schemes at the technical level.

Digital education and skills

An analysis conducted using a nationally representative sample of 15-year-old students gives an idea of students' preparedness for digital learning in Jordan (Share America, 2023). The analysis looked at three dimensions: (1) access to digital devices and the internet; (2) use of online resources; and (3) school and teacher preparedness. The key findings were that more than 16% of students in Jordan do not have internet access, one-third do not have a computer that can be used for schoolwork, and 43% attend schools with an effective online learning support platform. Similarly, 35% of teachers do not have the necessary technical and pedagogical skills to use digital resources in their lessons, while 44% of schools have professional resources for teachers to learn how to use digital devices.

Education and training statistics

In 2014, the Ministry of Education in Jordan selected OpenEMIS as its EMIS (educational information management system) platform. It captures a wide range of information from the central directorate, field directorates and the different school levels. This includes schools, students, staff, attendance and performance records and infrastructures. It has a reporting module which generates up to 50 different reports at the central and field directorate levels. The EMIS in Jordan is managed by the Queen Rania Centre for Education and Information Technology and the Educational Planning & Research Department.

The EMIS is fully integrated with relevant public-sector databases, including the civil status and passports department database and the examinations data management information system. The development and maintenance of the EMIS still relies on external funding. The current budget allocated for OpenEMIS by the Ministry of Education does not cover all expenditure relating to maintenance, infrastructure and licensing.

3. LABOUR MARKET AND EMPLOYMENT

3.1 Trends and challenges

Labour market characteristics

In 2023, people outside the labour force accounted for 66.8% (46.8% men, 86.0% women); the figures have remained stable since 2020, similar to the employment rate, which reached 25.9% (42.8% men, 9.7% women) and has remained stable since 2020. The participation of women in the labour market (% of the female population aged 15+ years, modelled ILO estimate) accounted for 14% in 2023 and remains very low.

The gender gap in Jordan is very pronounced and involves a significant wage gap (Alshyab, et al. 2018). Accordingly, the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index 2022 ranks Jordan in 126th place (138 in 2022) out of 153 countries in terms of economic participation and opportunity, which is an indicator combining gender differences in economic participation and wage levels (World Economic Forum, 2023). This is also confirmed by the indicators in the statistical annex, with women systematically showing higher inactivity rates, unemployment rates and disconnection from the education and labour markets.

An analysis of employment by broad economic sectors (% aged 15+ years) shows that in 2023 agriculture had a share of 1.6% (1.8 men, 0.4 women), industry and construction 16.7% (18.6 men, 8.6 women) and the services sector 81.7% (79.5 men, 91.0 women). The majority of people employed were employees (85.2%), 9.8% were own account workers and 0.3% were contributing family workers. Self-employment had a share of 14.8% (17.2 men, 4.4 women) and the incidence of vulnerable employment (% aged 15+ years) was 10.1% (11.9% men, 2.7% women). 26.5% of university degree holders (bachelor and higher vocational apprenticeship; men 20.5%, women 34.4%) were unemployed during the same period of 2023, which is comparatively high in relation to other academic levels. 18% of secondary school graduates and intermediate diploma holders, including VET graduates, were also unemployed in 2023.

An important feature of the Jordanian labour market is the importance of migrant workers, representing around 8% of the total population. According to the Ministry of Labour's annual report for 2021, the total number of foreign workers who obtained work permits reached 333 283, an increase compared to 2020 (281 833). More than 50% of foreign workers are Egyptians. Industry and agriculture absorb more than half of the migrant worker population.

The share of TVET students in upper-secondary education (ISCED level 3) has been stable in recent years, at around 10.5%, suggesting that the VET stream remains unattractive. Attitudes towards vocational education are highly negative in Jordan, with a bias towards higher education, regardless of market demand. Vocational education is associated with low educational achievement, and career counselling and guidance are inadequate. The Jordanian education system reinforces this dynamic by channelling low achievers into vocational streams. In this context, it should also be mentioned that Jordan lacks a longstanding tradition of apprenticeship schemes. Instead, the traditional – and still prevalent – method of learning crafts or distinct trades is work-based learning in informal settings (UNESCO, 2018). Due to the prestige of public-sector jobs and the corresponding benefit packages, the public sector represents the employer of first choice for most young Jordanians.

As in many Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries, there is a deep-seated feeling of entitlement and the expectation that the government should provide employment opportunities. However, necessary cutbacks over the past decades have led to a decreasing number of available civil service positions.

- Labour market challenges in Jordan include a persistently high unemployment rate, particularly among young people in the age group 15-24 years (46%), and specifically among women (66.2%)

compared to men (40.9%) in 2023. Unemployment particularly affects illiterate or low-skilled men but also highly educated women (34.4%) (ETF KIESE, 2023).

- A very low activity rate among women (14%) in 2023, probably one of the lowest in the world.
- Little involvement of labour market institutions and employers in the different levels and stages of technical and vocational education and training in Jordan, including national governance, funding, curriculum design, training implementation and evaluation.
- Immigrant workers, particularly Egyptian and Syrian refugee workers in the labour market. The acceptance by migrant workers, especially at semi-skilled and skilled levels in certain sectors (construction, agriculture and services), of work for lower wages has led to a situation where employers prefer to hire them instead of Jordanian workers.
- The mismatch between education and training outcomes and labour market needs. The National Strategy for Human Resources Development 2016-2025 and the national TVET Strategy 2023-2027 clearly state that 'There is a fundamental mismatch between the skills required for 21st-century employment and the outputs of the current TVET system' and '[that] increasing numbers of unemployed among the educated indicate an increasing mismatch between educational outcomes and demand in the labour market.'
- The weak capacity of the Jordanian economy to provide sufficient employment opportunities for new entrants to the labour market. In 2022, the net number of jobs created, according to the Department of Statistics, was approximately 89 504, with the majority of these for low skilled (= illiterate and less than secondary education: 36 067), less for medium skilled (= intermediate diploma and secondary education, 18 785) and highly skilled (= bachelor's degree or higher, 34 653). Relatively low wages and inadequate working conditions. The International Labour Organisation's youth transition study found that young men most often rejected job offers because of low pay (58%), while inadequate working conditions (28%), followed by low pay (26%), were the main reasons given by young women (ILO, 2014).

Labour market and employment statistics

The Department of Statistics remains the main data provider on Jordanian labour market and employment. It exercises its functions and responsibilities in accordance with Law No 24/1950 and its subsequent amendments. This law defines the Department's functions as collecting, coordinating, analysing and publishing statistical data in various demographic, social and economic fields, as well as conducting public censuses in the areas of population, housing, agriculture, industry and others.

Another important actor is the National Centre for Human Resources Development, which has carried out a number of sectoral studies in recent years to analyse the skills needs of different sectors and the corresponding provision of training. In addition, the Centre publishes an annual bulletin of human resource indicators, which covers a wide range of indicators in the fields of demography, education and the labour market.

A third source of labour market information is the National Employment Platform (Sajjil), an online tool that matches job seekers with employers' needs. Jordanian companies can post available vacancies directly online, along with the required qualifications, work experience, age and gender, as well as the salaries offered and any additional incentives.

At the institutional level, some providers, such as the Vocational Training Corporation and to a lesser extent the Ministry of Education, conduct tracer studies that include feedback from employers and graduates on the skills required.

Finally, with the support of some international organisations, a number of sector skills councils are being established. These bodies are consultative councils representing employers, workers, and the government, and they are tasked with identifying skills and training needs in different sectors. Despite the existence of all these bodies producing labour market information, Jordan still lacks a

comprehensive system for identifying and anticipating labour market needs related to education in general and the TVET system in particular.

3.2 Employment policy and institutional setting

Employment policy strategy and legal framework

Over the last decade, the National Employment Strategy has been the main policy document in the field of employment. The Strategy covered the period 2011-2020 but has not been updated or replaced by a new strategy. It aimed to 'improve the standard of living of Jordanians through increased employment, wages and benefits, and productivity gains'. On the supply side, the Strategy states that the goal is 'to develop a skilled and motivated labour force, equipped with employable skills and the technical know-how demanded by the labour market'. Among the policies identified for achieving these goals is 'Enhancing the quality of educational and vocational training outcomes'. Although outdated, the Strategy is still referenced on the Ministry of Labour's website.

Initiatives to boost employment

Jordan's Economic Modernisation Vision under its economic growth pillar defines three key economic strategic goals: to create income-generating opportunities for citizens to increase real per capita income; and to improve Jordan's ranking in the WEF Global Competitiveness Index. The economic growth priorities of the Economic Modernisation Vision are based on five interdependent growth drivers: high-value industries, Smart Jordan, future services, Destination Jordan, and sustainable resources. A total investment of approximately JOD 41 billion is required to achieve the Vision's goals, with most private investment (72%) coming from domestic and foreign investment and public-private partnerships.

The goals of the economic growth pillar are: (1) create economic opportunities for Jordanians with the following objectives: increase the number of jobs; reduce unemployment among Jordanians; reduce the number of expatriates; double, at least, women's economic participation; increase private sector employment; expand and modernise technical and vocational education and training; (2) create sustainable and inclusive economic growth with the following objectives: increase the average per capita income; grow the economy; diversify the economy; scale up/expand potential growth sectors; expand exports; increase direct foreign investment; increase domestic private investment; and (3) strengthen Jordan's international competitiveness with the following objectives: improve Jordan's international competitiveness; improve the ease of doing business; match skills supply and demand; promote R&D and innovation; promote entrepreneurship; improve the quality of Jordan's infrastructure; improve the attractiveness of Jordan for foreign direct investment; reduce perceptions of corruption; improve international intellectual property protection; reduce electricity prices for economic activities; promote industrialisation; advance economic freedom; reduce the gender gap in the workforce; advance women's economic empowerment; improve the education base and knowledge pool; develop a globally competitive workforce; enhance transport and logistics; improve government effectiveness; enhance the rule of law for the business environment; develop digital and transparent government services; improve governance; and create an enabling environment for SMEs.

Over the past decade, several initiatives have been developed and implemented in Jordan to boost employment.

The first is the Satellite Factories Initiative/Project, which was launched in 2008 by the Ministry of Labour as part of its efforts to reduce unemployment, especially among women in rural areas. It aims to encourage companies/investors to establish new factories in targeted areas in order to provide employment opportunities, especially for women (Rawashdeh/ UNESCO, 2019). Until 2018, there were 24 satellite factories operating in the various governorates of Jordan, with 5 866 employees, of whom 2 200 were women. In 2020, the total number of workers in these factories had declined to around 2 434, according to the 2020 Ministry of Labour annual report. Five new factories were established in 2020, all in the garment industry.

The Khedmat Watan programme is another initiative aimed at boosting employment. Launched in 2019, it targets young people aged 18-27 years and aims to provide them with training opportunities in the construction, industrial and tourism sectors. The programme aimed to train 20 000 young Jordanians to enhance their employability and provide incentives for professional careers and self-employment. However, the programme was discontinued in 2020.

A new national employment programme (Tashgeel) was launched in March 2022 as a pillar to support the private sector. The programme is funded by the World Bank, with USD 117 million. It aims to stimulate the private sector and provide job opportunities for Jordanians in all sectors and governorates of the Kingdom. The programme is expected to create 60 000 decent jobs. For each worker hired, the programme provides a wage subsidy of JOD 130 (half the minimum wage), a social security contribution, and a transport allowance for six months. The National Employment Programme (Tashgeel) has helped 21 110 people find jobs in the private sector since it was launched in April 2022⁸.

Although women face many more challenges in entering the labour market than men, as evidenced by the very low inactivity rate and high unemployment among this group, neither of the recent programmes, namely Khedmat or Tashgeel, focuses specifically on women. Instead, Jordan's Economic Modernisation Vision aims to 'double, at least, women's economic participation.

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⁸ [National Employment Programme helps 21,110 find jobs since launch | Jordan Times](#)

STATISTICAL ANNEX – JORDAN

The annex includes annual data from 2015, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 or the last available year.

	Indicator	2015	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
1	Total population (in thousands) ⁽¹⁾	9494.2	10698.7	10928.7	11148.3	11285.9	11337.1	
2	Relative size of youth population (age group 15-24 years and age denominator 15-64 years.%) ^{(1) c}	32.3	30.0	29.5	29.0	28.7	28.6	
3	GDP growth rate (%)	2.5	1.8	-1.1	3.7	2.4	2.6	
4	Gross value added by sector (%)	Agriculture	4.4	4.4	4.6	4.8	4.8	4.8
		Industry	25.2	24.1	23.6	23.4	23.9	24.1
		Services	60.1	61.2	61.8	60.8	60.4	60.6
5	Public expenditure on education (as% of GDP)	M.D.	3.0	M.D.	3.2	3.2	M.D.	
6	Public expenditure on education (as% of total public expenditure)	M.D.	9.9	M.D.	9.7	9.6	M.D.	
7	Adult literacy (%)	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	98.4	M.D.	95.0	
8	Educational attainment of total population (aged 15+ years) (%) ^c	Low ⁽²⁾	60.8	59.1	58.5	58.1	57.6	57.1
		Medium ⁽³⁾	24.0	22.4	22.9	23.2	23.7	23.7
		High ⁽⁴⁾	15.1	18.7	18.6	18.6	18.6	19.2
9	Early leavers from education and training (aged 18-24 years) (%)	Total	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
		Male	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
		Female	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
10	Total NET enrolment rate (%)	Lower secondary	M.D.	70.5	70.7	72.6	73.9	M.D.
		Upper secondary	M.D.	55.0	56.5	62.2	61.9	M.D.
11	Share of VET students in upper secondary education (ISCED level 3) (%)	M.D.	10.7	10.5	10.5	10.2	M.D.	
12	Low achievement in reading, mathematics and science – PISA (%)	Reading	46.3	41.2 ⁽⁵⁾	N.A.	N.A.	79.6	N.A.
		Mathematics	67.5	59.3 ⁽⁵⁾	N.A.	N.A.	83.0	N.A.
		Science	49.8	40.3 ⁽⁵⁾	N.A.	N.A.	68.9	N.A.
13	Total	36.7	34.3	34.0	34.0	33.4	33.2	

	Indicator		2015	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
	Activity rate (aged 15+ years) (%) ^c	Male	60.0	54.0	53.6	54.0	53.1	53.2
		Female	13.3	14.0	14.2	14.0	13.9	14.0
14	Inactivity rate (aged 15+ years) (%) ^c	Total	63.3	65.7	66.0	66.0	66.6	66.8
		Male	40.0	46.0	46.4	46.0	46.9	46.8
		Female	86.7	86.0	85.8	86.0	86.1	86.0
15	Employment rate (aged 15+ years) (%) ^c	Total	31.9	27.8	26.1	25.8	25.8	25.9
		Male	53.4	44.8	42.2	41.9	42.2	42.8
		Female	10.3	10.2	9.8	9.7	9.6	9.7
16	Employment rate by educational attainment (aged 15+ years) (%) ^c	Low ⁽²⁾	27.4	24.1	22.3	21.9	22.2	22.3
		Medium ⁽³⁾	28.2	22.0	20.2	19.5	19.2	19.0
		High ⁽⁴⁾	55.8	46.5	45.6	45.9	45.2	45.2
17	Employment by sector (%) ^c	Agriculture	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.9	1.8	1.6
		Industry	17.8	16.4	17.2	17.6	16.8	16.7
		Services	80.6	81.9	81.2	80.5	81.4	81.7
18	Incidence of self-employment (%) ^c		12.7	15.2	14.4	14.0	13.7	14.8
19	Incidence of vulnerable employment (%) ^c		8.3	11.0	10.2	9.7	9.2	10.1
20	Unemployment rate (aged 15+ years) (%) ^c	Total	13.0	19.1	23.2	24.1	22.8	22.0
		Male	11.0	17.1	21.2	22.4	20.6	19.6
		Female	22.5	27.0	30.7	30.8	31.4	30.7
21	Unemployment rate by educational attainment (aged 15+ years) (%) ^c	Low ⁽²⁾	11.1	17.4	22.6	22.8	21.0	20.0
		Medium ⁽³⁾	10.3	13.1	17.8	18.4	18.2	18.0
		High ⁽⁴⁾	18.6	24.5	26.7	28.5	27.6	26.5
22	Unemployment rate (aged 15-24 years) (%) ^c	Total	30.8	40.6	46.0	49.3	47.0	46.0
		Male	26.7	36.5	41.6	45.4	43.0	40.9
		Female	53.3	59.0	65.9	67.6	64.2	66.2
23	Proportion of people aged 15-24 years not in employment, education or training (NEETs) (%)	Total	M.D.	36.0	35.4	32.8	31.5	M.D.
		Male	M.D.	29.3	30.6	28.3	27.5	M.D.
		Female	M.D.	43.8	41.1	38.3	36.1	M.D.

	Indicator		2015	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
	Proportion of people aged 15-29 years not in employment, education or training (NEETs) (%)	Total	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
		Male	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
		Female	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
24	Participation in training/lifelong learning (% aged 25-64 years)	Total	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
		Male	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
		Female	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
25	Human Development Index		0.738	0.744	0.740	0.736	0.736	M.D.

Last update: 01/10/2024.

Sources:

Indicators 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 (2021): The World Bank, World Development Indicators database

Indicators 7 (2023), 10, 11: UNESCO, Institute for Statistics

Indicators 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24: DOS data (LFS online database)

Indicator 12: OECD PISA 2018 Results (Volume I) Annex B1; OECD PISA 2022 Results (Volume I)

Indicator 25: UNDP

Indicator 23: ILOSTAT

Notes:

(1) Estimation.

(2) Low – Primary and lower; General basic.

(3) Medium – General secondary, Vocational, Secondary specialised.

(4) High – Tertiary, post-graduate.

(5) Applies to 2018.

Legend:

C = ETF calculations

N.A. = Not applicable

M.D. = Missing data

ANNEX: DEFINITIONS OF INDICATORS

	Description	Definition
1	Total population (in thousands)	The total population is estimated as the number of people having their usual residence in a country on 1 January of the respective year. When information on the usually resident population is not available, countries may report legal or registered residents.
2	Relative size of youth population (age group 15-24 years) (%)	This is the ratio of the youth population (aged 15–24) to the working-age population, usually aged 15-64 years (or 15-74 years or 15+ years).
3	GDP growth rate (%)	Annual percentage growth rate of GDP at market prices based on constant local currency. Aggregates are based on constant 2010 US dollars. GDP is the sum of gross value added by all resident producers in the economy plus any product taxes and minus any subsidies not included in the value of the products. It is calculated without making deductions for depreciation of fabricated assets or for depletion and degradation of natural resources.
4	Gross value added by sector (%)	The share of value added from agriculture, industry and services. Agriculture corresponds to ISIC divisions 1-5 and includes forestry, hunting, and fishing, as well as cultivation of crops and livestock production. Value added is the net output of a sector after adding up all outputs and subtracting intermediate inputs. It is calculated without making deductions for depreciation of fabricated assets or depletion and degradation of natural resources. The origin of value added is determined by the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC), revision 3 or 4. Industry corresponds to the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) tabulation categories C-F (revision 3) or tabulation categories B-F (revision 4) and includes mining and quarrying (including oil production), manufacturing, construction, and public utilities (electricity, gas, and water). Services correspond to ISIC divisions 50-99 and they include value added in wholesale and retail trade (including hotels and restaurants), transport, and government, financial, professional, and personal services such as education, health care, and real estate services. Also included are imputed bank service charges, import duties, and any statistical discrepancies noted by national compilers as well as discrepancies arising from rescaling.
5	Public expenditure on education (as% of GDP)	Public expenditure on education expressed as a percentage of GDP. Generally, the public sector funds education either by directly bearing the current and capital expenses of educational institutions, or by supporting students and their families with scholarships and public loans as well as by transferring public subsidies for educational activities to private firms or non-profit organisations (transfer to private households and enterprises). Both types of transactions together are reported as total public expenditure on education.
6	Public expenditure on education (as% of total public expenditure)	Public expenditure on education expressed as a percentage of total public expenditure. Generally, the public sector funds education either by directly bearing the current and capital expenses of educational institutions, or by supporting students and their families with scholarships and public loans as well as by transferring public subsidies for educational activities to private firms or non-profit organisations (transfer to private households and enterprises). Both types of transactions together are reported as total public expenditure on education.
7	Adult literacy (%)	Adult literacy is the percentage of the population aged 15 years and over who can both read and write a short simple statement on his/her everyday life and understand it. Generally, 'literacy' also encompasses 'numeracy' – the ability to make simple arithmetic calculations.

	Description	Definition
8	Educational attainment of total population (aged 15+) (%)	Educational attainment refers to the highest educational level achieved by individuals expressed as a percentage of all persons in that age group. This is usually measured in terms of the highest educational programme successfully completed, which is typically certified by a recognised qualification. Recognised intermediate qualifications are classified at a lower level than the programme itself.
9	Early leavers from education and training (aged 18-24) (%)	Early leavers from education and training are defined as the percentage of the population aged 18-24 with at most lower secondary education who were not in further education or training during the four weeks preceding the survey. Lower secondary education refers to ISCED 1997 levels 0-2 and 3C short (i.e. programmes lasting under two years) for data up to 2013 and to ISCED 2011 levels 0-2 for data from 2014 onwards.
10	Total NET enrolment rate	Total number of students of the official age group for a given level of education who are enrolled in any level of education, expressed as a percentage of the corresponding population.
11	Share of VET students in upper secondary education (ISCED level 3) (%)	Total number of students enrolled in vocational programmes at a given level of education (in this case, upper secondary), expressed as a percentage of the total number of students enrolled in all programmes (vocational and general) at that level.
12	Low achievement in reading, maths and science – PISA (%)	Low achievers are the 15-year-olds who are failing to reach level 2 on the PISA scale for reading, mathematics and science.
13	Activity rate (aged 15+years) (%)	The activity rate is calculated by dividing the active population by the population of the same age group. The active population (also called 'labour force') is defined as the sum of employed and unemployed people. The inactive population consists of all people who are classified as neither employed nor unemployed.
14	Inactivity rate (aged 15+ years) (%)	The inactivity/out of the labour force rate is calculated by dividing the inactive population by the population of the same age group. The inactive population consists of all people who are classified as neither employed nor unemployed.
15	Employment rate (aged 15+) (%)	The employment rate is calculated by dividing the number of employed people by the population of the same age group. Employed people are all people who worked at least one hour for pay or profit during the reference period or were temporarily absent from such work. If a different age group is used, this should be indicated.
16	Employment rate by educational attainment (aged 15+ years) (%)	The employment rate is calculated by dividing the number of employed persons by the population of the same age group. Employed persons are all persons who worked at least one hour for pay or profit during the reference period or were temporarily absent from such work. If a different age group is used, this should be indicated. Educational levels refer to the highest educational level successfully completed. Three levels are considered: Low (ISCED level 0-2), Medium (ISCED level 3-4) and High (ISCED 1997 level 5-6, and ISCED 2011 level 5-8).
17	Employment by sector (%)	This indicator provides information on the relative importance of different economic activities with regard to employment. Data are presented by broad branches of economic activity (i.e. Agriculture/Industry/Services) based on the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC). In Europe, the NACE classification is consistent with ISIC.
18	Incidence of self-employment (%)	The incidence of self-employment is expressed by the self-employed (i.e. employers + own-account workers + contributing family workers) as a proportion of the total employed.

	Description	Definition
19	Incidence of vulnerable employment (%)	The incidence of vulnerable employment is expressed by the own-account workers and contributing family workers as a proportion of the total employed.
20	Unemployment rate (aged 15+ years) (%)	The unemployment rate represents unemployed people as a percentage of the labour force. The labour force is the total number of people who are employed or unemployed. Unemployed people comprise those aged 15-64 years or 15+ years who were without work during the reference week; are currently available for work (were available for paid employment or self-employment before the end of the two weeks following the reference week); are actively seeking work, i.e. had taken specific steps in the four-week period ending with the reference week to seek paid employment or self-employment, or had found a job to start later (within a period of, at most, three months).
21	Unemployment rate by educational attainment (aged 15+ years) (%)	The unemployment rate represents unemployed people as a percentage of the labour force. The labour force is the total number of people who are employed or unemployed. Unemployed people comprise those aged 15-64 years or 15+ years who were without work during the reference week; are currently available for work (were available for paid employment or self-employment before the end of the two weeks following the reference week); are actively seeking work (had taken specific steps in the four-week period ending with the reference week to seek paid employment or self-employment, or had found a job to start later (within a period of, at most, three months)). Educational levels refer to the highest educational level successfully completed. Three levels are considered: low (ISCED level 0-2), medium (ISCED level 3-4) and high (ISCED 1997 level 5-6, and ISCED 2011 level 5-8).
22	Unemployment rate (aged 15-24 years) (%)	The unemployment rate represents unemployed people as a percentage of the labour force. The labour force is the total number of people who are employed or unemployed. Unemployed people comprise those aged 15-24 who were without work during the reference week; are currently available for work (were available for paid employment or self-employment before the end of the two weeks following the reference week); are actively seeking work, i.e. had taken specific steps in the four-week period ending with the reference week to seek paid employment or self-employment, or had found a job to start later (within a period of, at most, three months).
23	Proportion of people aged 15–24/15-29 years not in employment, education or training (NEETs) (%)	The indicator provides information on young people aged 15-24 years who meet the following two conditions: first, they are not employed (i.e. unemployed or inactive according to the ILO definition); and second, they have not received any education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey. Data are expressed as a percentage of the total population of the same age group and gender, excluding the respondents who have not answered the question on participation in education and training.
24	Participation in training/lifelong learning (% aged 25-64 years)	Participants in lifelong learning refers to persons aged 25-64 years who stated that they received education or training in the 12 months preceding the survey (numerator). The denominator is the total population of the same age group, excluding those who did not answer the question on participation in education and training. The information collected relates to all education or training, whether or not it is relevant to the respondent's current or possible future job. If a different reference period is used, this should be indicated.
25	Human Development Index	The index is a summary measure of average achievement in key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable and have a decent standard of living.

KEY DONOR PROJECTS IN EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

Many donors are active in TVET and employment. A mapping of donors' interventions carried out in 2016 found that 38 employment and skills development projects are underway in Jordan, with funding in the amount of €335 million provided by a dozen agencies. Many of these programmes are still in the implementation stage or have been extended.

In 2022, the TVSDC created a platform and invited all donors and international organisations to share their programmes. More than six months after its launch, many programmes seem to be missing.

The EU is funding a €65 million programme entitled 'Support for quality education and technical, vocational education and training (TVET)' to support the implementation of Jordan's Strategic Plan for Education. The programme aims to support quality and access to education and improved governance and management. Another goal is to continue to strengthen education system databases, provide technical assistance to the Ministry and enhance safe learning environments, targeting the most vulnerable groups in the population. Funding has been provided through budget support with a technical assistance component.

Another EU-funded initiative is the regional programme 'Y-NEET: Young NEETs in the Southern Neighbourhood' (2024-2026), covering Jordan. Its main objective is to improve the situation of young NEETs in the region by making public policies, practices and services more effective and responsive to their needs. The project will concentrate on three main outcome areas: (1) improving knowledge and coordination; (2) reinforcing and /or developing innovative approaches to reach and support young NEETs; and (3) piloting adapted approaches in reaching out and providing relevant employment services for young NEETs. The intervention will be implemented by the ILO in cooperation with the ETF and the Union for the Mediterranean Secretariat.

The World Bank also supports Jordan's Economic Modernisation Vision (Country Partnership Framework (CPF) FYs 2024-2029) by investing in inclusive and green growth that can underpin the country's stability and resilience to future crises. The CPF focuses on harnessing Jordan's greatest potential source of wealth, its human capital – especially its young people and women – and integrates climate action into the country's growth model. The CPF puts forward three interlinked high-level outcomes (HLOs) and two cross-cutting themes: (1) more and better (more productive) private sector jobs, especially for young people and women; (2) improved human capital outcomes; and (3) increased resilience and sustainability. Two cross-cutting themes will work across the HLOs and inform the WB's implementation approach: (1) people-centric governance and digitalisation; and (2) supporting Jordan as a refugee host country. Climate action opportunities will be mainstreamed into all objectives and cross-cutting themes.

A second World Bank intervention, in support of the education sector pillar of Smart Jordan, one of the pillars of the EMV, focuses on 'Modernising Education, Skills, and Administrative Reforms (MASAR, 2022-2033). Its main objective is to improve foundational learning, increase access to labour market-relevant TVET and enhance efficiency in the education sector. The VET strand of the intervention more specifically aims to (a) improve the labour-market relevance of TVET programmes to ensure that they are responsive to job market needs and demand in priority sectors by institutionalising linkages with the private sector and expanding apprenticeships; (b) facilitate the transition of TVET students to employment and further education opportunities, through the implementation of a competency-based equivalence system; and (c) develop a graduate tracking system to support learners with counselling and career guidance services. To improve the efficiency of the management of the education system, the objective is to strengthen the governance and management of the education system by (a) implementing the new governance structure of the education sector; and (b) increasing the efficiency of human resources management in the education system in terms of teacher recruitment, selection and recruitment policies.

UNESCO is providing technical assistance to the MoEHRD on the basis of its recent TVET system review (2023) to support the implementation of the Ministry's new strategic plan for vocational education in line with Jordan's Economic Modernisation Vision and with a view to informing a future overall national strategy for TVET under the Vision. UNESCO also supports the integration of career guidance into upper secondary vocational programmes.

The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit – GIZ (the German Agency for International Cooperation) remains one of the main bilateral cooperation agencies supporting employment policies in Jordan. Two programmes are worth mentioning: 'Improving Jordan's employment policy to future-proof its labour market' (2020-2024), commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development to provide advice to the MoL on the development of a future-oriented employment policy, facilitate dialogue between those involved in employment policy in general and in future work practices in particular, and support the scaling-up of successful approaches for promoting sustainable employment. The second programme is 'Employment Promotion' (2016-2022), implemented by the GIZ with a view to building capacity and strengthening structures for employment promotion among key stakeholders at the local, regional and national level. It supports the expansion of labour market policy measures, such as job matching and service delivery to both public and private providers, and provides assistance for self-employment. The GIZ is also implementing the second phase of the labour market oriented vocational education, higher education and training (MOVE HET II) project, which aims to support vocational training and higher education to better meet the needs of the Jordanian labour market, and the modernising TVET in Jordan project, which aims to support Jordanian educational institutions in the provision of labour-market oriented TVET and improve governance, gender equality and environmental sustainability (2023-2026).

ABBREVIATIONS

AQACHEI	Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission for Higher Education Institutions
BTEC	Business and Technology Education Council
CPF	Country Partnership Framework
CVET	Continuing Vocational Education and Training
DOS	Department of Statistics
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ENABEL	Belgian Development Agency
EMIS	Educational Information Management System
EMV	Economic Modernisation Vision
ETF	European Training Foundation
GDP	Gross domestic product
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Agency for International Cooperation)
GOJ	Government of Jordan
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
JOD	Jordanian dinar
JRF	Jordan River Foundation
K-12	Kindergarten through 12th grade
KIESE	Key Indicators of the Education System
MASAR	Modernising Education, Skills, and Administrative Reforms
MoE	Ministry of Education

MOHESR	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
MoL	Ministry of Labour
MOVE HET	Labour Market Oriented Vocational Education, Higher Education and Training
NAF	National Aid Fund
NEET	Not in employment, education or training
NET	National Employment and Training Company
NQF	National Qualification Framework
NSHRD	National Strategy for Human Resource Development
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
QA	Quality Assurance
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SSCs	Sector Skills Councils
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
TVSDC	Technical and Vocational Skills Development Commission
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
URBANET	Urban Development Network
VTC	Vocational Training Corporation
WBL	Work-Based Learning
WDI	World Development Indicators

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