

EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS FOR PALESTINIANS IN EUROPE AND THE GULF: INSIGHTS FROM ONLINE LABOUR MARKET DATA

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FOREWORD

The Ministry of Labor of the State of Palestine extends its sincere appreciation to all partners, contributors, and institutions whose efforts have made this study possible. We particularly value the collaboration of international and national stakeholders, researchers, and data providers whose contributions have strengthened the evidence base and analytical rigor of this work.

From the perspective of the State of Palestine, this study comes at a critical and timely period. The Palestinian labour market continues to operate under exceptional constraints, imposed by prolonged occupation, restricted mobility, and structural economic challenges that have impacted employment opportunities for decades. Despite these realities, the Palestinian workforce has consistently demonstrated remarkable resilience, adaptability, and a strong educational foundation. This is further reflected in a dynamic and highly skilled workforce that continues to contribute across global labour markets.

The findings of this study clearly demonstrate that Palestinian talent is not only competitive but increasingly aligned with evolving global demand—particularly in highly skilled, digital, and cross-border sectors across Europe and the Gulf region. Such findings present both a strategic opportunity and a call to action. They highlight the importance of strengthening national systems to more effectively connect Palestinian job seekers with international opportunities through targeted skills development, modern labour market intermediation, and enabling frameworks that support remote and platform-based work.

Moreover, the study reinforces the need to deepen structured partnerships with international stakeholders, while leveraging the Palestinian diaspora as a key driver of knowledge exchange, investment, and sustainable opportunity creation. It provides a solid, evidence-based foundation to guide future interventions and policy directions aimed at expanding access to decent work, enhancing labour mobility, and positioning Palestinian talent within the global economy.

The Palestinian labour sector continues to face significant hurdles; however, with the right tools, partnerships, and support, these challenges can be transformed into opportunities for resilience, growth, and sustainable employment.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Palestinian labour market is shaped by a distinctive combination of protracted conflict, political fragmentation, mobility restrictions and structural economic constraints. High unemployment, particularly among youth and graduates, coexists with a comparatively well-educated population and a large, highly skilled diaspora. At the same time, rapid digitalisation and the expansion of online and platform-based labour markets are transforming employment systems worldwide, opening new forms of cross-border participation in economic activity that do not always require physical mobility. In this context, understanding how global online labour markets intersect with the skills, qualifications and employment trajectories of Palestinians is both a policy imperative and an analytical challenge.

This report provides new evidence on employment prospects for Palestinians in Europe and the Gulf. On the demand side, it uses a global dataset of 56,697 unique online job postings collected between 2019 and 2025 through keyword-based searches related to Palestine*. These postings are drawn from multiple international job portals and platforms and include information on location, occupation, sector and requested skills, as well as, where available, indicators of work modality (e.g. remote, platform-based, traditional full-time employment). On the supply side, the report uses anonymised data from 31,834 online social and professional profiles in which Palestine is reported as the country of education. These profiles provide information on educational institutions, current and past occupations, current countries of residence and declared skills.

Geographically, the postings are concentrated in a limited set of destination countries that are strategically important for Palestinian mobility. Over the full period, the United Kingdom accounts for 13,825 postings and the United States for 7,074. At regional level, Anglophone destinations (United Kingdom, United States, Canada, Australia, Ireland, New Zealand and Singapore) absorb around 42.6% of all postings in the dataset, highlighting the centrality of English-speaking markets for high-skilled, often remote or digitally mediated work. The MENA region, including Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and other neighbouring states, accounts for about 15.4% of postings, reflecting historical ties, geographic proximity and the continued relevance of regional labour migration. EU and EFTA countries together represent roughly 9.4% of postings, suggesting significant but more selective potential for mobility and skills partnerships with Europe.

Within this regional picture, GCC countries stand out as a particularly important sub-region. Across the period 2019–2025, the GCC accounts for 1,938 postings, with the United Arab Emirates (1,045 postings) and Saudi Arabia (660 postings) emerging as the main hubs. Demand in the GCC grows from negligible levels in 2020 to 201 postings in 2021, 316 in 2022, 359 in 2023, 563 in 2024 and 493 in the partial year 2025, indicating a sustained expansion of opportunities in sectors such as finance, ICT, logistics, construction, tourism and business services. This confirms the GCC's dual role as a traditional destination for Palestinian workers and as a rapidly evolving market for high-skilled, digitally connected occupations.

The occupational structure of demand is strongly skewed towards high-skilled roles. Using the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) major groups, approximately 44.7% of postings correspond to professionals and 19.8% to managers, while 11.9% are for technicians and associate professionals. In total, around three quarters of the vacancies captured in the dataset are concentrated in these three high-skill groups. Clerical support workers, service and sales workers, craft and related trades workers, plant and machine operators and elementary occupations account for much smaller shares. This profile aligns closely with the expectation that online job postings

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over-represent white-collar and ICT-intensive occupations, but it also reflects the real configuration of global demand in sectors most relevant to remote and cross-border work.

The occupational analysis based on the ESCO classification sheds further light on the kinds of roles on offer. Programme funding managers, project managers, business analysts, financial auditors, human resources managers, software developers, ICT system analysts, investment managers, accountants, commercial sales representatives and enterprise development workers are among the most frequently occurring occupations. Many of these roles sit at the intersection of project and programme management, business and finance, ICT and data, and development and humanitarian work.

The skills requested in job postings confirm the centrality of both transversal and technical competencies. Communication skills are the single most frequently mentioned item, appearing in 1,153 postings, followed by management and operations skills. Sales, customer and client-facing competencies also feature prominently. At the same time, specialised skills such as project management, marketing, finance, Microsoft Excel, computer science, SQL, agile methodology, data analysis and Python are recurrent, underlining the importance of advanced digital and analytical capabilities. English is the dominant language requirement, far outstripping any other language, although French, Arabic and several other languages also appear as assets in specific contexts. Taken together, this configuration describes a global opportunity space that favours well-educated professionals and managers who combine robust transversal skills with digital and language proficiency, and who are able to operate in project-based, international environments.

The profiles dataset documents 31,834 individuals who report Palestine as their country of education and who have since dispersed across the globe. The geographic distribution confirms both the historical importance of the region and the diversification of Palestinian mobility. The United Arab Emirates hosts 3,092 profiles, the United States 1,867, Israel 1,651, Saudi Arabia 1,436, Jordan 734, Egypt 509 and the United Kingdom 501. When grouped by region, about 25.5% of profiles are located in MENA, with the Gulf alone accounting for 15.9%; EU and EFTA countries host around 5.5% of profiles, while North America (United States and Canada) accounts for about 7.1%. The remaining profiles are scattered across Asia, Latin America and other regions, illustrating the breadth of the Palestinian diaspora. The educational background of the profiled individuals is dominated by Palestinian higher education institutions. Birzeit University, An-Najah National University, Al-Quds University, Al-Quds Open University, Palestine Polytechnic University and the Arab American University together account for a large share of profiles, complemented by institutions such as Al-Azhar University, Bethlehem University and the University of Palestine. This pattern indicates that Palestinian universities and TVET institutions are central to the formation of the country's human capital, and that they are strongly connected, through their graduates, to regional and global labour markets. The occupational and sectoral outcomes associated with these institutions point to particular strengths in business and management, engineering and ICT, education and training, and social sciences. At the level of skills, the profiles dataset reveals a broad set of competencies that largely mirror the demand-side evidence. Business skills are the most frequently recorded, followed closely by administration, customer and client support, sales, media and communications, marketing and public relations, and science and research. These skills are not distributed randomly but tend to form coherent bundles that underpin typical career profiles. One cluster combines business, administration, sales and customer support skills, characteristic of roles in commercial services, business support functions and client-facing work. Another cluster links science and research with media, communications and marketing, common in think tanks, academia, NGOs and knowledge-intensive services. A third cluster brings together administrative and business skills with physical and inherent abilities, associated with logistics, operations management and field-based projects.

The current occupations reported by Palestinians abroad reinforce the picture of a highly skilled diaspora. Project managers are the single most frequent occupation, followed by students (reflecting a continuing pipeline of tertiary and postgraduate education), owners/founders, software developers and

engineers, accountants, operations managers, general managers, college professors, training and development specialists, graphic designers, media and talent directors, civil engineers and interpreters/translators. Many of these roles correspond closely to the occupations most in demand in the online postings dataset.

The data show that many Palestinians who worked as college professors, training and development specialists or project managers in Palestine continue in similar or more senior roles abroad, often in universities, international organisations and large NGOs. Others who began their careers as administrative clerks, customer service representatives or logistics coordinators in Palestine have moved into operations manager, project manager, general manager or owner/founder roles in destination countries, indicating significant upward mobility. Accounting and auditing profiles show clear ladders from accountant and auditor roles in Palestine into audit management, tax specialisation and broader financial management positions abroad. In ICT and engineering, software developers, civil engineers and data analysts follow internationally recognisable advancement routes into more senior technical and analytical roles. These trajectories are confirmed by detailed transition data that classify moves as advancement, lateral advancement, lateral transition or similar, and link them to specific skill bundles. Project management, finance and accounting, data analysis and business intelligence, digital tools and platforms, and advanced communication and language skills emerge as cross-cutting enablers of both vertical progression and lateral transitions. The analysis also shows that opportunities exist at both high-skill and middle-skill levels: for example, production workers and construction helpers can move into more stable technician and supervisory roles if they acquire targeted technical and organisational competencies. When considered in relation to Palestinian policy frameworks, particularly the Labour Sector Strategy 2021–2023 and the National Employment Strategy 2021–2025, the findings of the report carry several implications. First, they confirm that the broad priorities of these strategies (skills development and TVET, youth employment, digitalisation and innovation, active labour market policies, entrepreneurship and self-employment, labour mobility and diaspora engagement) are well aligned with the structure of global demand and the actual behaviour of Palestinian workers. Second, they underscore the importance of shifting from generic interventions to more targeted, evidence-based measures that reflect specific occupational ladders and skill bundles documented in online data. This includes training vouchers, wage subsidies and mobility schemes on clearly defined pathways (such as junior accounting to tax specialist, logistics technician to logistics manager, junior developer to software systems engineer) and ensuring that curricula in TVET and higher education integrate the competencies that underpin these careers.

The analysis highlights the central role of digitalisation, not only in terms of infrastructure, but also in terms of digital skills, online labour intermediation and regulatory frameworks for remote and platform-based work. Given that the entire empirical base of this report consists of online postings and profiles, it also demonstrates that digital platforms are already a core component of labour market functioning for Palestinians, both at home and abroad. Strengthening the capacity of national institutions to use online labour market analytics, and integrating such analytics into public employment services, career guidance and provider-level planning, would therefore represent a significant step towards more agile and responsive policy making. Palestinians abroad are strongly embedded in key sectors of their host economies and occupy roles that are central to the digital and green transitions, to innovation and to knowledge-intensive services. More systematic and structured engagement with these professionals (as mentors, employers, investors and knowledge brokers) could amplify the developmental impact of migration and support the creation of high-quality employment opportunities for youth in Palestine.

The evidence presented in this report shows that Palestinian workers, wherever they are located, possess substantial assets in terms of education, skills and international experience. Global labour markets, particularly in Europe and the Gulf, offer a complex but opportunity-rich environment in which these assets can be deployed. Realising this potential requires a combination of domestic reforms in skills and employment systems, improved labour intermediation and digital infrastructure, and structured international partnerships that link Palestinian institutions, diaspora networks and

employers in key destination countries. The analytical framework and findings developed here are intended to support such efforts by providing a robust, data-driven basis for policy dialogue and programme design.

INTRODUCTION

The Palestinian labour market is shaped by a unique combination of protracted conflict, political fragmentation, mobility restrictions, and structural economic constraints. High unemployment, especially among youth and graduates, coexists with a relatively well-educated population and a large, highly skilled diaspora. At the same time, rapid digitalisation and the expansion of platform work and remote employment are transforming labour markets worldwide, opening new forms of cross-border participation in economic activity that do not always require physical mobility (World Bank, 2019).

For Palestinians, these global shifts present both an opportunity and a risk. On the one hand, online job portals and freelance platforms can connect Palestinian workers and graduates, whether residing in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem or abroad, to employers and clients in a wide range of countries and sectors. Remote and platform-based work can partially circumvent some of the physical and administrative barriers that have long limited access to regional and international labour markets. On the other hand, unequal access to digital infrastructure, skills gaps, language barriers and regulatory uncertainties may limit who benefits from these opportunities and under what conditions (World Bank, 2023).

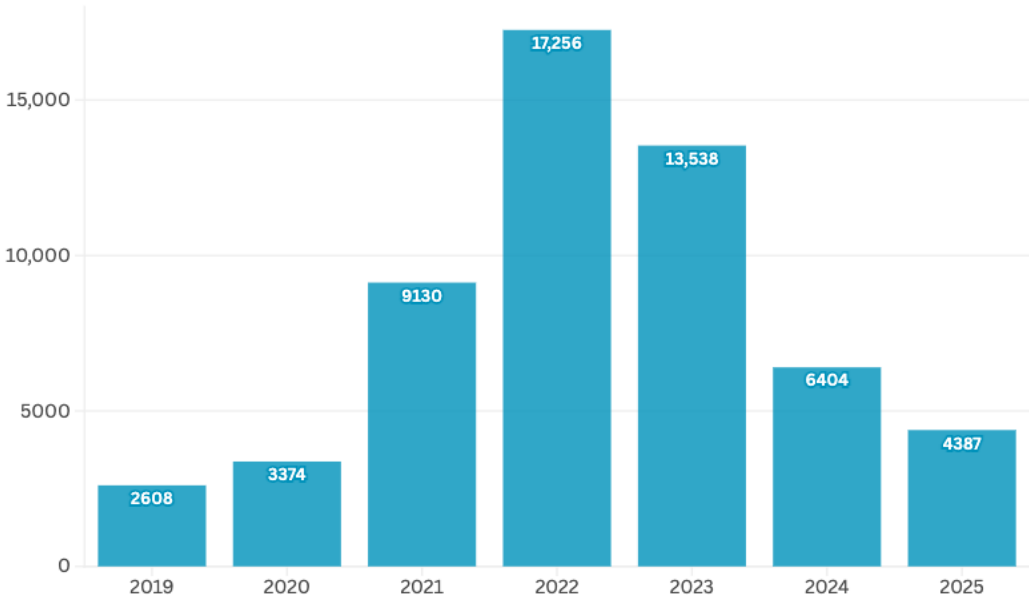
Against this backdrop, the European Training Foundation (ETF) seeks to deepen its understanding of how global online labour markets intersect with the skills, qualifications and employment trajectories of Palestinians. This report uses large-scale data from online job postings and anonymised social media profiles to shed light on:

- The demand for occupations, skills and sectors that are relevant to Palestinian jobseekers, including opportunities in platform work and remote employment.
- The skills, qualifications and current employment patterns of Palestinians abroad, as reflected in their online professional profiles.
- The degree of alignment or mismatch between the skills in demand globally and the skills available within the Palestinian labour force and diaspora.

The analysis combines two complementary data sources:

- **Global online job postings** (demand side - Lightcast Global Postings): A dataset of online job vacancies was compiled from international job boards and platforms using keyword-based filters related to Palestine, relevant occupations and skills. After cleaning and harmonising the data, the final dataset comprises 56,697 unique job postings. These postings span multiple years (from 2019 to 2025) and a wide range of countries, enabling the report to analyse temporal trends, geographic patterns and the distribution of opportunities across sectors and job types (including platform work, remote roles and traditional full-time employment).
- **Anonymised social media profiles** (supply side - Lightcast Social Profiles): To capture the skills and employment trajectories of Palestinians, anonymised data were collected from professional and social networking platforms (such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Github, etc) where Palestine is mentioned in the education country field. The resulting dataset includes 31,834 individual profiles.

Figure 1: Number of job postings mentioning "Palestine refugees" by year



Source: Lightcast Job Postings. Author's elaboration.

The data allow for analysis of:

- Educational backgrounds and Palestinian institutions most frequently mentioned.
- Current occupations and sectors of employment.
- Current countries of residence and patterns of geographic mobility.
- Reported skills, including technical, digital and transversal competencies.

Both datasets are used in a complementary manner. The postings dataset provides a near real-time view of global labour demand, including emerging opportunities for remote and platform-based work. The profiles dataset offers a window into the skills base and careers of Palestinians engaged in the global labour market. By cross-analysing these two sources, the report identifies where Palestinian skills are well-matched to global demand, where significant gaps exist, and how these findings relate to the priorities of the Palestinian Labour Sector Strategy 2021–2023 and the National Employment Strategy 2021–2025 (Ministry of Labour (State of Palestine), 2021).

While online data cannot fully substitute for official statistics or labour force surveys, they offer a rich and timely complementary perspective on changing labour market dynamics, particularly in relation to digital and cross-border work. This report leverages that perspective to inform the support to Palestinian partners and to contribute to a more evidence-based dialogue on skills, employment and the future of work in Palestine.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

This section describes the datasets and methods used in the analysis, including the selection of online job postings, the construction of the social media profiles dataset, and the main characteristics of both sources.

The report relies on two primary data sources:

Online job postings dataset (demand side)

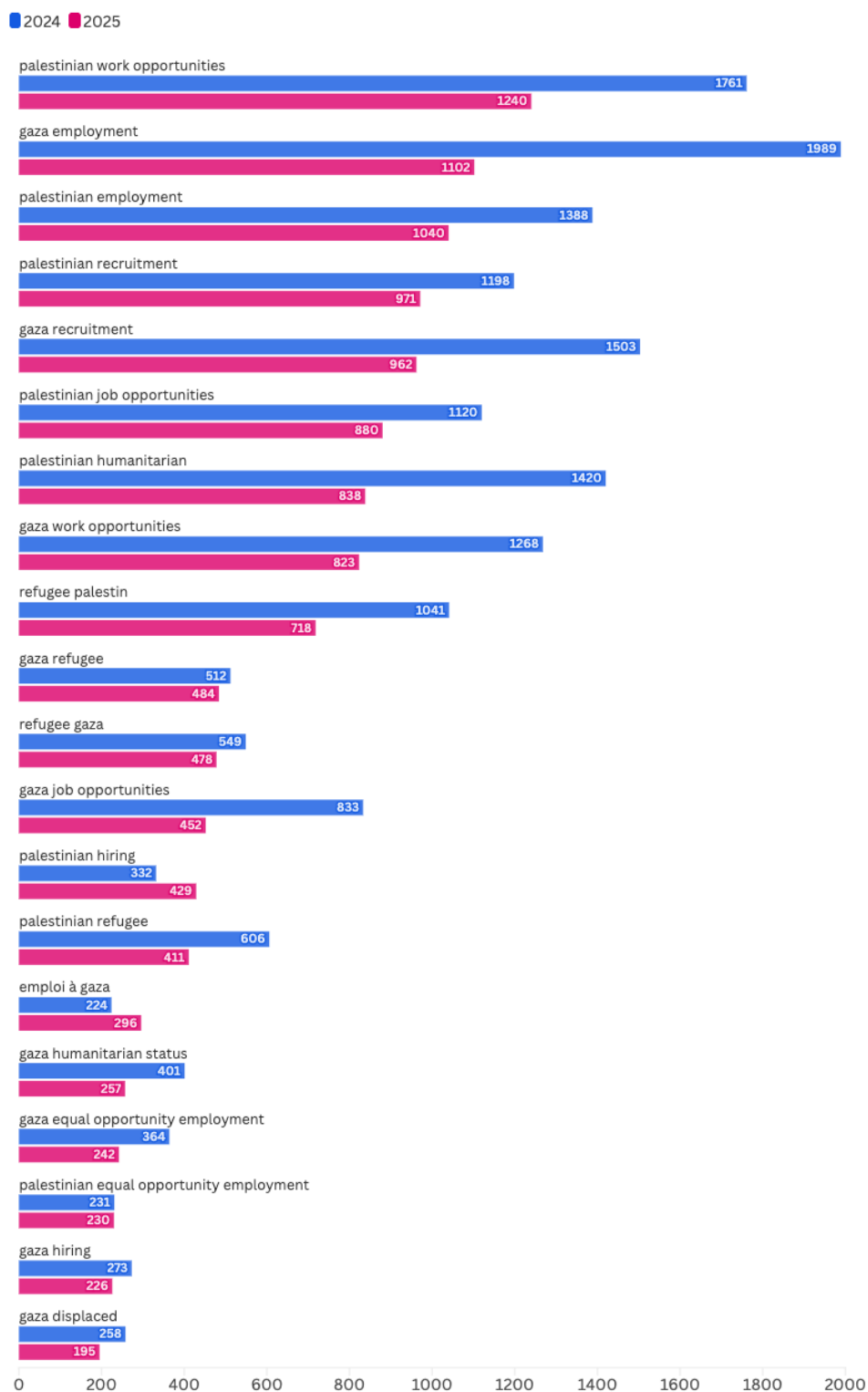
A dataset of vacancies sourced from multiple international job portals and platforms (Vrolijk, 2022) was compiled for this analysis. Postings were collected over the period 2019-2025 using keyword-based searches related to Palestine and selected occupations and skills of interest. Searches were conducted in six languages - English, French, Greek, Arabic, Spanish, and Italian - to ensure broad geographic and linguistic coverage. After data cleaning (removal of duplicates, obvious noise, and incomplete entries) and harmonisation across languages, the final dataset used in this report contains 56,697 unique job postings.

Each entry includes, at minimum, the year of publication, the country of the employer or job location, and a unique posting identifier. Where available, additional information covers occupation titles, sectors, skills, and contract types (full-time, part-time, freelance/platform, remote, etc.).

Job postings were identified through a targeted keyword strategy designed to capture roles and opportunities that are particularly relevant for Palestinian jobseekers, including those suitable for remote and platform-based work. The keyword strategy comprised terms related to “Palestine” and major Palestinian cities or regions, used where relevant (e.g. postings that explicitly reference Palestinian territories, Palestinian beneficiaries, or programmes targeting Palestinians).

These keywords were applied in combination across job title, job description and, where available, tag fields. The goal was not to capture all global postings, but to extract a large and policy-relevant subset that is both representative of opportunities accessible to Palestinians and rich enough to support trend and skills analysis.

Figure 2: List of the top keywords used to filter the job postings, with the number of mentions in 2024 and 2025



Source: Lightcast Job Postings. Author's elaboration.

The final postings dataset covers a broad range of destination countries. Aggregating unique postings by country over the period 2019–2025, the top 20 countries by volume of postings in the dataset are:

Table 1: Number of selected postings (mentioning at least one keyword) by year

Country	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Jordan		14	91	719	569	665	430
France	59	67	209	259	831	385	326
United States	794	373	505	512	4297	357	236
Saudi Arabia		1	10	44	115	259	231
United Arab Emirates		4	185	242	185	234	195
Egypt		3	41	311	435	372	171
Lebanon		24	198	436	289	198	168
India		3	28	62	87	30	151
Israel		25	170	162	228	216	148
United Kingdom	73	1632	6313	5199	358	107	143
Canada	370	189	44	47	329	87	130
Austria	1	7	1	4			116
Mexico		1	34	69	205	179	99
Spain	71	149	107	95	89	83	62
Germany	18	58	332	16	115	32	50
Switzerland	1	2	38	87	22	31	44
Argentina				45	52	6	42
Bangladesh				3	18	51	39
Netherlands	1	8	8	12	122	10	34
Qatar			1	9	19	41	33
Australia	102	50	28	40	58	45	33
Kenya		12	9	26	28	44	33
Ireland		3	2	2	2	4	29
Syria		18	13	203	80	37	28
Iraq			2	13	22	25	27
Italy	4	1	4	12	11	3	21
Kuwait		1	4	11	13	12	18
Hungary	4	23	43	68	110	46	16
Japan					2	2	13
South Africa			8	3	18	16	12
Oman				6	18	6	12

Table source: Lightcast job postings. Author's elaboration.

This distribution highlights both traditional destination countries for skilled migration (e.g. United Kingdom, United States, Canada, Germany) and regional neighbours (e.g. Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Gulf countries) where Palestinians historically have strong labour and mobility links. It also evidences the global reach of digital labour markets, with significant numbers of postings from countries not typically associated with Palestinian migration but which may be accessible through remote work.

Anonymised social media profiles dataset (supply side)

A dataset of 31,834 individual profiles collected from professional and social networking platforms.

Profiles were included when Palestine (or a Palestinian location) was mentioned as the country of education, ensuring that the sample focuses on individuals with an educational link to Palestine, regardless of their current country of residence.

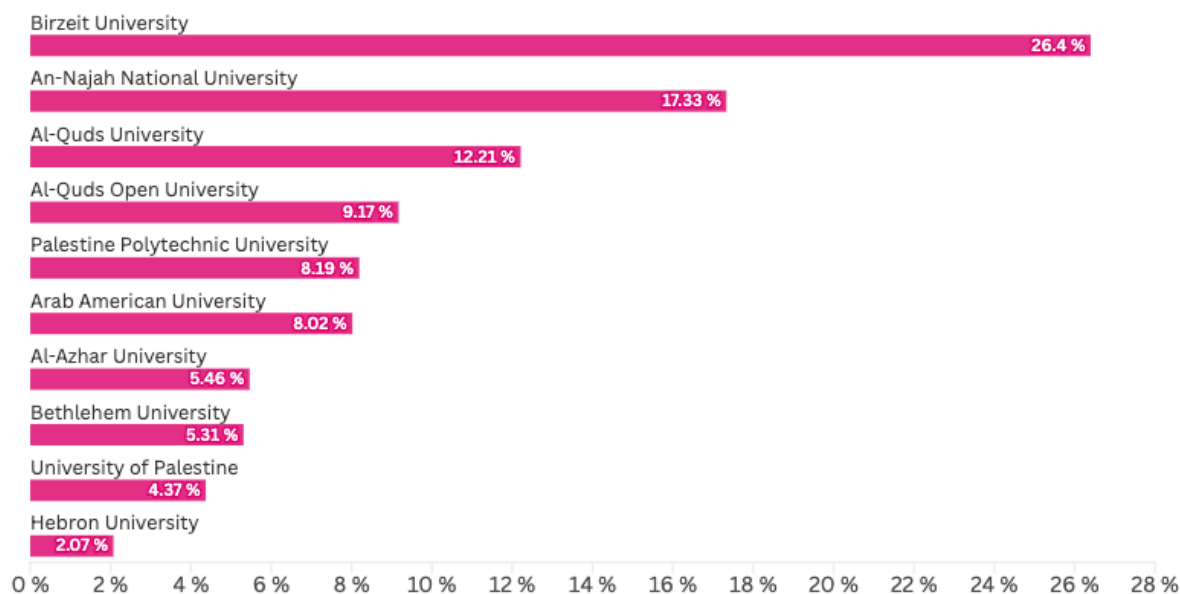
The dataset is structured into thematic variables, including:

- By Education (educational institutions and fields of study),
- By Current Occupation,
- By Current Country,
- Jobs in Palestine,

- By Skills, etc.

Personal identifiers are removed or anonymised; analysis is conducted at aggregate level. Within the profiles dataset, the education information were used to characterise the educational background of Palestinians. The main education-related variable is School Name, which records the educational institution associated with each profile's studies in Palestine. The institutions most frequently appearing in this analysis include:

Figure 3: The institutions most frequently appearing in the Palestine Social Profiles



Source: Lightcast Social Profiles. Author's elaboration.

These institutions, together with a wider set of universities, colleges and training centres present in the data, constitute the core of the Palestinian higher education and TVET system as represented in online profiles. They provide the basis for analysing:

- The distribution of fields of study among Palestinians.
- The linkage between specific institutions and subsequent occupational trajectories.
- Potential connections between institutional specialisations and the global demand patterns observed in the online postings dataset.

While online job postings and social media profiles provide a rich, high-frequency perspective on labour market dynamics, they are subject to several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings (OECD, 2024). First, digital bias is inherent in these sources; online data tend to over-represent high-skilled, white-collar, and ICT-intensive occupations, while under-representing manual labour, informal work, and sectors with lower digital penetration. Second, the representativeness of the profiles dataset is limited to individuals who maintain an active online professional presence; this may exclude older workers, those in rural areas with limited connectivity, or those in traditional sectors. Third, data quality and completeness vary, as social media profiles are self-reported and job postings may contain ambiguous titles or missing information regarding contract types and specific skill requirements. Finally, the keyword-based selection for postings, while targeted, may not capture the entirety of the global market, but rather a specific subset that matches the predefined criteria. Consequently, these findings should be viewed as a powerful complement to, rather than a replacement for, official national statistics and traditional labour force surveys.

Global Demand for Occupations, Skills and Sectors Relevant to Palestinian Jobseekers

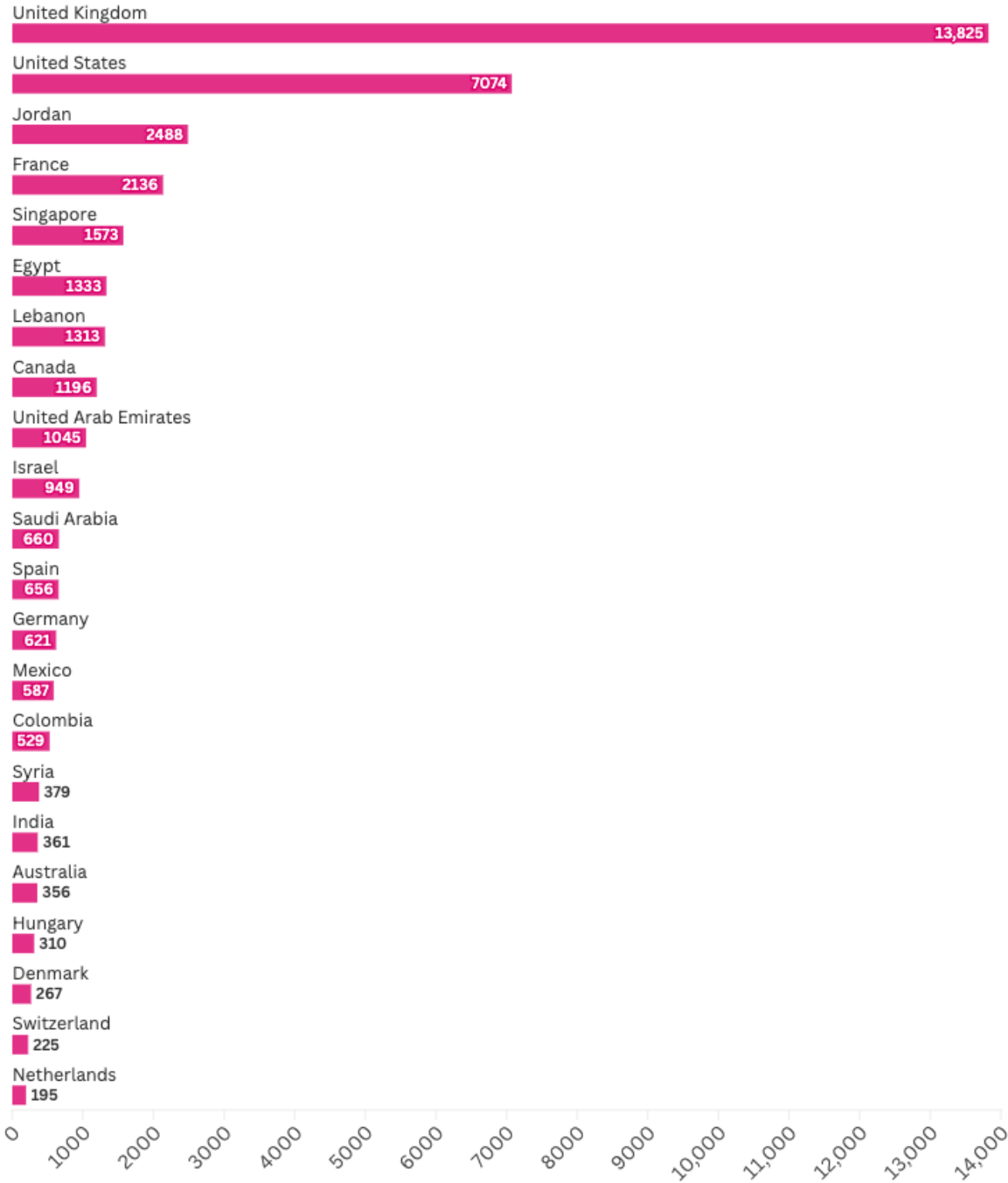
The online vacancy data reveal a rapid expansion of global demand for occupations and skills relevant to Palestinian jobseekers. Across the full period from 2019 to 2025, the dataset contains 56,697 unique job postings. In 2019, there were 2,608 postings matching the Palestine-filters. This rose modestly to 3,374 in 2020, then accelerated sharply: 9,130 postings in 2021 and a peak of 17,256 in 2022. In just three years, from 2019 to 2022, the volume of relevant vacancies increased by more than six-fold.

After 2022, demand in the dataset begins to contract, though it remains well above pre-pandemic levels. In 2023 the number of postings dropped to 13,538, still more than five times the 2019 level. In 2024 the count fell further to 6,404, and in 2025, there are 4,387 postings recorded.

The 56,697 postings are distributed across a broad set of destination countries, but the pattern is clearly concentrated in a few key labour markets that are particularly relevant to Palestinians, either through diaspora links, geographic proximity or the prevalence of remote work. Over the full period, the **United Kingdom** accounts for the largest single share, with 13,825 postings. The **United States** follows with 7,074 postings. In the region, **Jordan** records 2,488 postings, while **France** contributes 2,136 and Singapore 1,573. Other important destinations include **Egypt** (1,333 postings), **Lebanon** (1,313), **Canada** (1,196), the **United Arab Emirates** (1,045), **Israel** (949), **Saudi Arabia** (660), **Spain** (656), **Germany** (621), **Mexico** (587), **Colombia** (529), **Syria** (379), **India** (361), **Australia** (356), **Hungary** (310) and **Denmark** (267).

When these countries are grouped by region, the dominance of Anglophone and regional markets becomes clear. Across the whole dataset, Anglophone destinations (understood here as the United Kingdom, United States, Canada, Australia, Ireland, New Zealand and Singapore) account for approximately 24,154 postings, or 42.6% of all vacancies captured. The MENA region (including Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Gulf countries, Israel and other neighbouring states) represents around 8,749 postings, or 15.4% of the total. By contrast, EU and EFTA countries together account for about 5,308 postings, roughly 9.4% of the dataset. The remaining 32.6% of postings are spread across other parts of the world, including Latin America and Asia.

Figure 4: Total number of postings mentioning Palestine-refugees



Source: Lightcast Job Postings. Author's elaboration.

The time dimension adds nuance to this geographic picture. In the United Kingdom, postings climb from only 73 in 2019 to 1,632 in 2020 and a remarkable 6,313 in 2021, followed by 5,199 in 2022. After this surge, demand falls sharply to 358 postings in 2023 and just over a hundred postings in each of 2024 and 2025. In the United States, the pattern is different: there are 794 postings in 2019, fewer in 2020 (373) and 2021 (505), but a large spike to 4,297 postings in 2023. Regional neighbours show a more gradual accumulation: postings for Jordan grow from 14 in 2020 to 91 in 2021 and 719 in 2022, and remain high thereafter with 569 in 2023, 665 in 2024 and 430 in 2025; Egypt moves from

just 3 postings in 2020 to 311 in 2022 and 435 in 2023, while Lebanon rises from 24 postings in 2020 to 198 in 2021 and 436 in 2022.

From the perspective of Palestinian jobseekers, these figures indicate three complementary geographic avenues. First, Anglophone countries, particularly the United Kingdom and United States, offer a large volume of opportunities, many of which are those most compatible with remote or platform work. Second, neighbouring MENA labour markets, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Gulf states, show sustained demand that may be more accessible for candidates who are geographically mobile or able to work under regional contracts. Third, European and EFTA countries, while representing a smaller share of postings in this dataset, nonetheless constitute a significant potential destination for highly skilled Palestinians, especially through targeted mobility schemes and remote cooperation.

To complement the analysis above, the data point to a distinct cluster of opportunities emerging in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, which remain a traditional and strategically important labour destination for Palestinians. Across the period 2019–2025, the GCC accounts for a total of 1,938 job postings in the dataset, making it one of the most relevant sub-regions within MENA in terms of demand volume and diversity of roles.

Within the GCC, the United Arab Emirates stands out with 1,045 postings, more than half of the GCC total and reflecting Dubai and Abu Dhabi's role as regional hubs for finance, ICT, logistics, tourism and business services. Saudi Arabia follows with 660 postings, while Qatar registers 103, Kuwait 59, Oman 42 and Bahrain 29. This distribution aligns with long-standing migration patterns but is now increasingly complemented by remote and hybrid roles connected to the Gulf's expanding digital economy.

The temporal profile for the GCC also shows a clear growth trajectory. The data begin with a very small number of postings in 2020 (6 postings), followed by a sharp rise to 201 postings in 2021 and 316 in 2022. Demand then continues to build rather than fall: 359 postings in 2023, 563 in 2024 and 493 in 2025 (partial year).

Remote and platform-based work

The vacancy data indicate that remote work constitutes a meaningful but structurally under-recorded segment of demand. In the data analysed, covering 30,448 postings with a remote-work field, 3,572 postings (11.7%) mention Remote and 113 (0.4%) as Hybrid Remote.

From a platform perspective, explicitly freelancing-oriented websites contribute only a very small fraction of total postings (e.g. peopleperhour.com: 17; himalayas.app: 4), representing well under 0.1% of all vacancies. This indicates that classic gig-platform freelancing is not the primary channel captured in this vacancy dataset.

However, this does not imply that remote or platform-based hiring is marginal. Rather, it appears that remote work is primarily mediated through large, mainstream recruitment ecosystems rather than niche freelancing sites. Major aggregator and professional networking platforms account for a substantial share of postings in the broader source distribution. These platforms increasingly function as cross-border recruitment infrastructures, enabling firms to advertise remote or geographically flexible roles without classifying them as “freelance.”

In practice, this suggests three analytical conclusions:

- Remote work is structurally embedded in mainstream hiring channels, not confined to gig platforms.
- The observed remote share likely understates the true availability of remote-compatible roles due to incomplete modality coding.

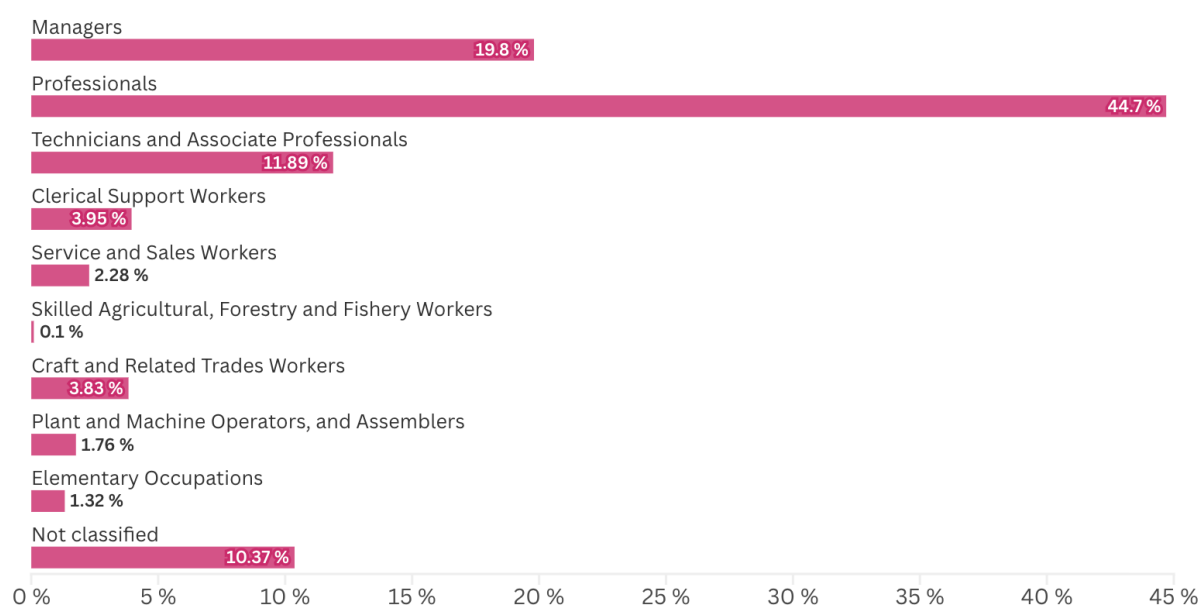
- Platform-mediated hiring in this dataset reflects more formalised, employer-driven remote recruitment (corporate, professional, development-sector roles) rather than pure task-based freelancing.

The data point toward a model of digital labour market integration that is increasingly mediated by global job-board and professional networking platforms, where remote employment is embedded within standard occupational pipelines rather than segmented into a distinct gig economy channel.

Sectoral and occupational demand

The occupational structure of the 56,697 postings is heavily skewed towards high-skilled roles. Using ISCO major groups, almost 44.7% of postings (25,342 vacancies) fall under “Professionals”, while 19.8% (11,226 postings) are for managers. A further 11.9% (6,739 postings) correspond to technicians and associate professionals. In contrast, clerical support workers account for 4.0% (2,240 postings), service and sales workers for 2.3% (1,294), craft and related trades workers for 3.8% (2,174), plant and machine operators for 1.8% (1,000), and elementary occupations for 1.3% (748). About 10.4% of postings (5,880) are occupationally unclassified or missing coding.

Figure 5: Occupation structure by ISCO Occupation



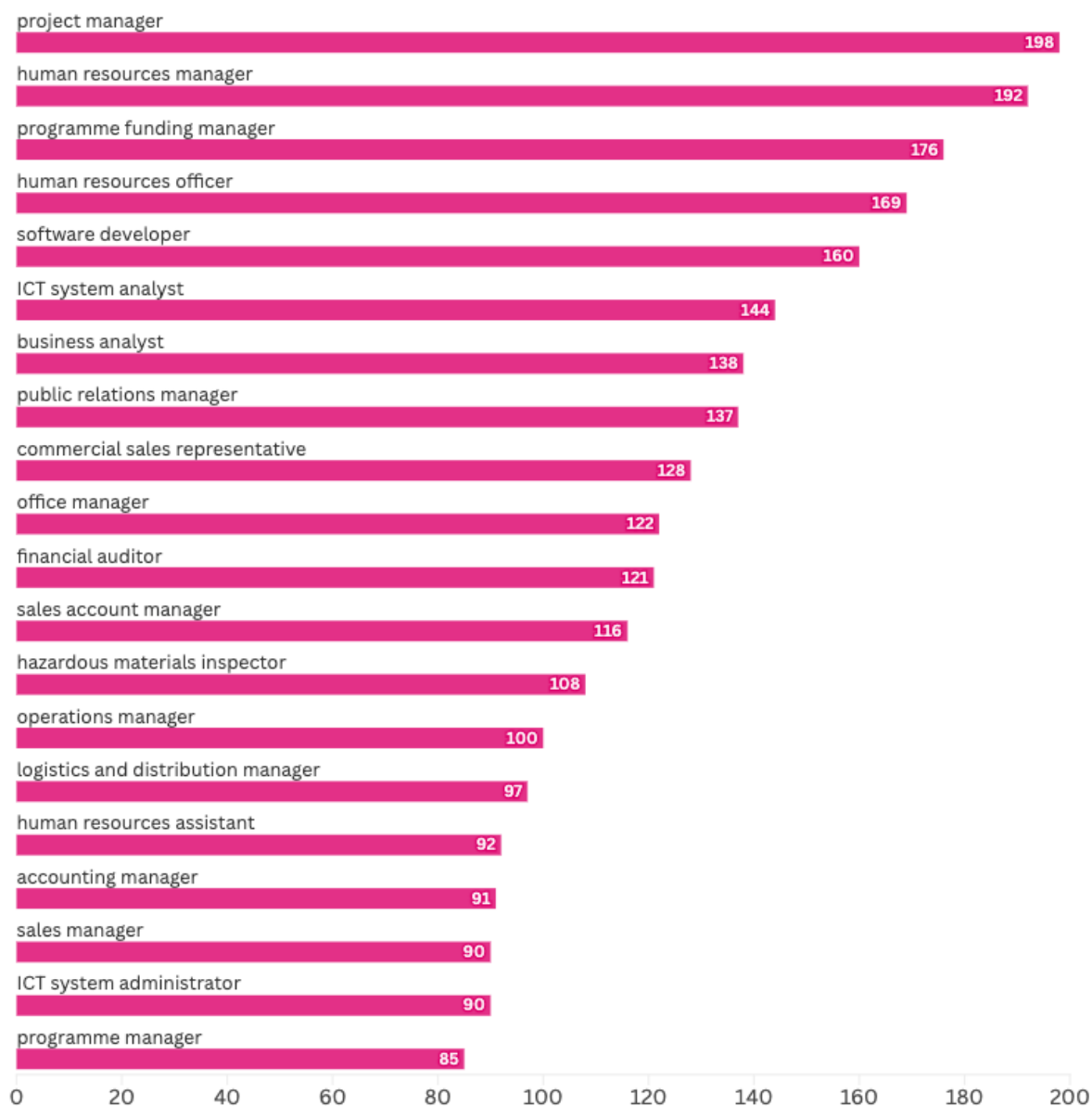
Source: Lightcast Job Postings. Author's elaboration.

This distribution means that three quarters of the captured demand is concentrated in professional, managerial and associate professional roles, which aligns closely with the profile of many Palestinian graduates and diaspora workers. In 2019, there were 1,048 postings for professionals and 736 for managers; by 2022 these numbers had risen to 8,367 and 3,665 respectively, demonstrating how the post-pandemic expansion of online labour markets was driven above all by high-skilled occupations. Even after the overall contraction, in 2023 there were still 4,762 postings for professionals and 2,007 for managers, indicating that these categories remain the backbone of demand.

Looking at specific occupations through the [ESCO classification](#) further clarifies the types of roles on offer. Across the full period, “programme funding manager” accounts for around 2,172 postings, reflecting the strong presence of development cooperation, humanitarian and NGO-type positions. “Project manager” roles appear in approximately 1,770 postings, often linked to ICT, engineering, construction and social projects. “Business analyst” roles contribute about 1,519 postings, and

“financial auditor” around 1,202, signalling a sustained demand for business, finance and risk-related expertise. “Human resources manager” positions number about 1,080, while “software developer” roles reach 929 postings and “ICT system analyst” around 678, underlining the key role of ICT in the opportunity landscape. Other important roles include “investment manager” with 878 postings, “accountant” with 590, “commercial sales representative” with 519, and “enterprise development worker” with 561.

Figure 6: Relevant occupations by demand (2025)



Source: Lightcast Job Postings. Author's elaboration.

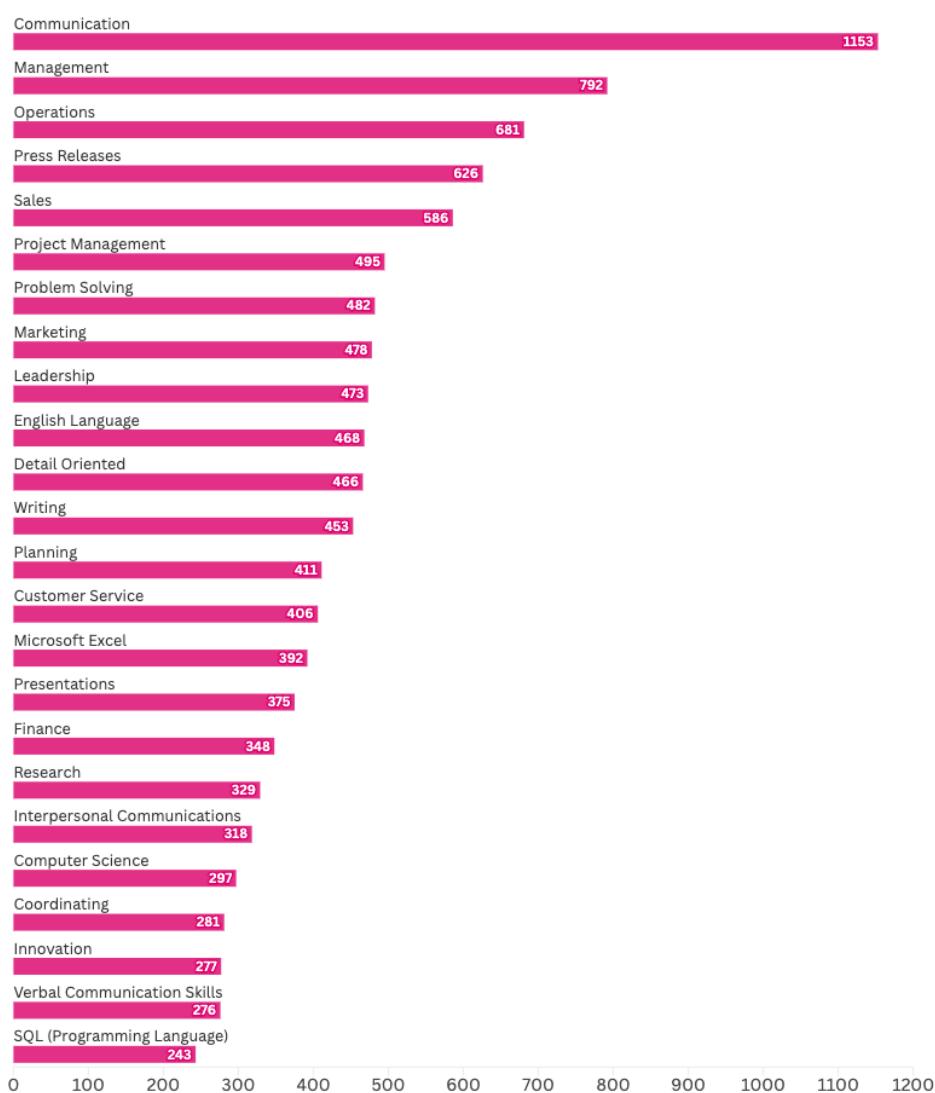
Taken together, this occupational mix suggests that global demand relevant to Palestinian jobseekers is anchored in three intersecting domains: **ICT and digital services, business, finance and risk management, and development, humanitarian and public sector-related project work**. At the same time, the presence of craft, service and operational roles indicates that there is also demand in more traditional sectors where Palestinian workers with vocational backgrounds could engage,

particularly in regional labour markets such as the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries (e.g. the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Saudi Arabia), Jordan, Egypt and Türkiye, where construction, services, logistics and light industry sectors regularly absorb migrant labour.

Demand for skills

The data reinforce this picture of high-skilled, project-based and digitally intensive demand. Across the postings, the single most frequently requested skill is “Communication”, which appears in 1,153 postings. This is followed by “Management” with 792 postings and “Operations” with 681, showing that employers consistently expect candidates to be able to coordinate teams, manage processes and operate effectively in complex organisational environments. “Sales” appears in 586 postings, reflecting the importance of commercial and client-facing competencies even in technical or project roles.

Figure 7: Relevant skills by demand



Source: Lightcast Job Postings. Author's elaboration.

Alongside these transversal competencies, there is strong demand for more specialised and digital skills. “Project Management” is explicitly referenced as a specialised skill in 495 postings, “Marketing”

in 478, “Finance” in 348, and “Microsoft Excel” in 392. Technical ICT and data skills are also prominent: “Computer Science” in 297, “SQL (Programming Language)” in 243, “Agile Methodology” in 229, “Data Analysis” in 222 and “Python (Programming Language)” in 221. These are precisely the types of capabilities that are readily deployed in remote and platform-based work, including software development, data services and digital marketing.

Language skills form another visible dimension of demand. “English Language” is required in 468 postings, far outstripping other languages and confirming its role as the primary working language of cross-border digital labour markets. “French Language” appears in 68 postings, “Arabic Language” in 40, and a variety of other languages (including Russian, German, Portuguese, Spanish and Italian) appear with lower but non-negligible frequencies. For Palestinian jobseekers, especially those targeting EU, MENA or North American markets, this pattern underscores the importance of strong English proficiency, with French and Arabic offering additional advantages in specific destinations and sectors.

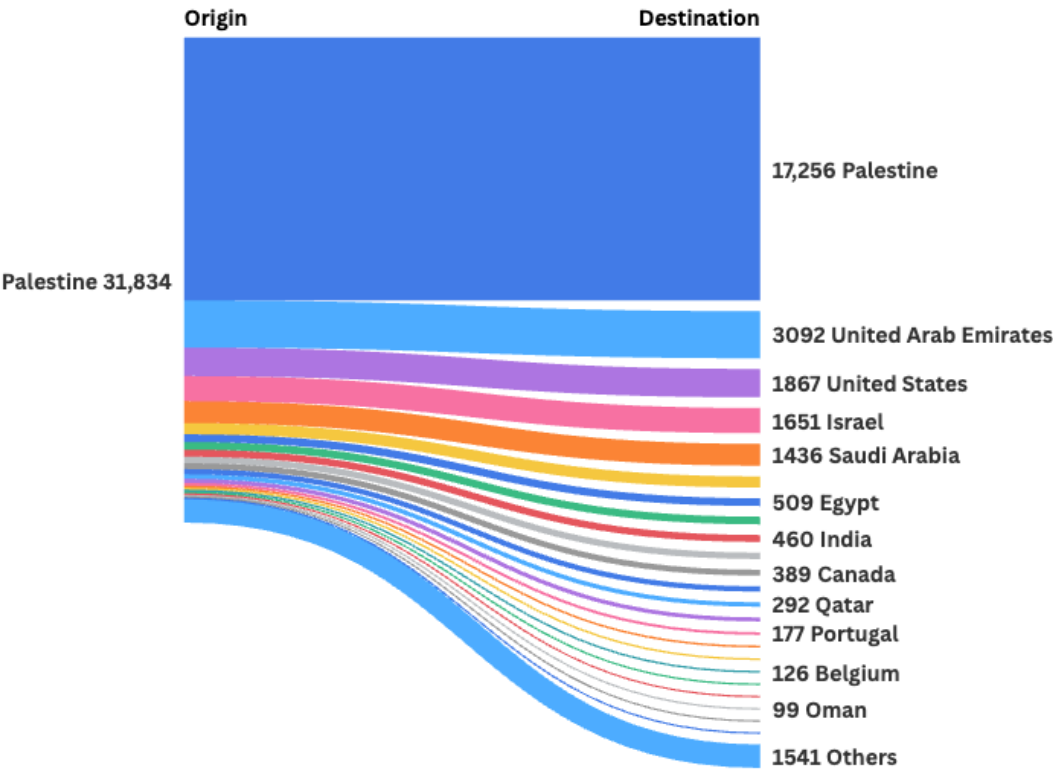
From the perspective of work modalities, many of the most in-demand skills are highly portable and compatible with remote and platform work. Software development languages, data analysis, agile methods, project management, digital marketing and advanced office productivity tools can all be delivered online, which is reflected in the strong representation of Anglophone and geographically distant countries in the demand data. In contrast, skills more closely associated with traditional on-site roles – such as face-to-face customer service, certain operational or craft activities, and hands-on technical work – are present but less dominant in this dataset.

The global demand captured here describes a labour market that favours well-educated professionals and managers who combine strong transversal competencies – communication, problem-solving, leadership – with digital and language skills. For Palestinians, particularly graduates and skilled workers in the diaspora or with reliable internet access, this configuration creates a significant opportunity space in remote and platform-based roles, while also highlighting the need for targeted upskilling in specific technical and language areas to fully exploit that demand.

Profiles of Palestinians Abroad: Skills, Qualifications and Employment Trajectories

The profiles dataset captures 31,834 Palestinians who mention Palestine as their country of education and who are now dispersed across the globe. The geographic distribution confirms both the historical importance of the region and the growing diversification of Palestinian mobility. The single largest concentration of profiles is found in the **United Arab Emirates**, with 3,092 individuals, underscoring the central role of the UAE as a regional employment hub. The **United States** hosts 1,867 profiles, followed by **Israel** with 1,651, **Saudi Arabia** with 1,436, **Jordan** with 734, **Egypt** with 509, and the **United Kingdom** with 501 profiles. Significant clusters also appear in **India** (460 profiles), **Germany** (422) and **Canada** (389).

Figure 8: Destinations of Palestinians after completing their studies



Source: Lightcast Social Profiles. Author's elaboration.

When grouped by region, around 8,111 profiles – roughly 25.5% of the total – are located in the MENA region, with the Gulf alone (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates) accounting for 5,070 profiles, or about 15.9%. EU and EFTA countries together host 1,757 profiles, equivalent to 5.5%, while North America (United States and Canada) accounts for 2,256 profiles, around 7.1%. The remaining 46.0% are spread across the rest of the world, including Asia, Latin America and other emerging destinations.

This distribution suggests that Palestinian talent is strongly present in regional labour markets and the Gulf, while also having a meaningful footprint in North America and Europe.

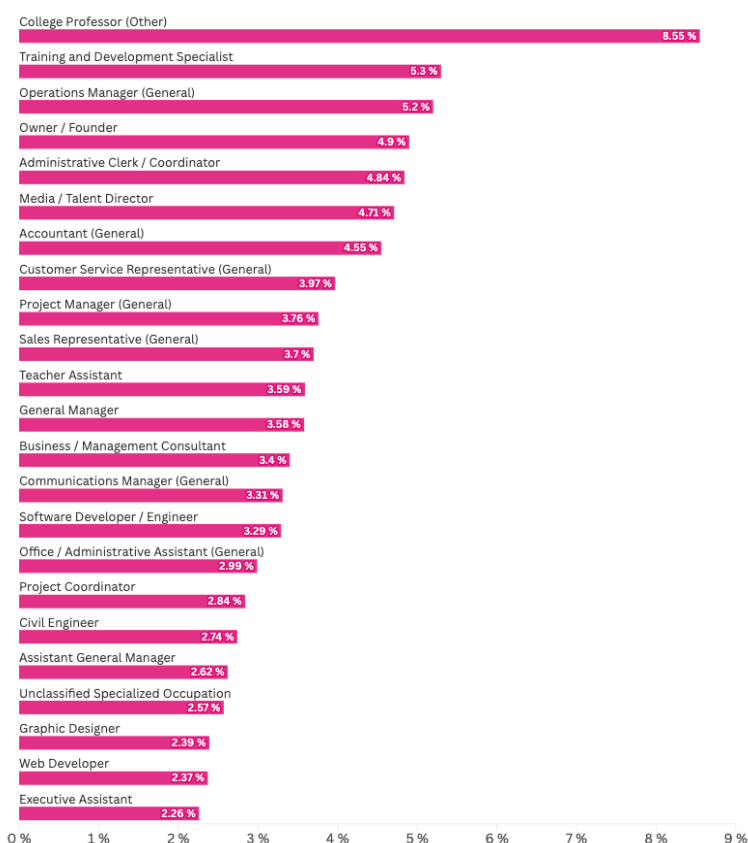
Educational background

The educational landscape of the profiles dataset is dominated by Palestinian higher education institutions, reflecting the central role of domestic universities and colleges in shaping the country's human capital. The most frequently mentioned institution is Birzeit University, associated with 8,134 profiles. It is followed by An-Najah National University with 5,338 profiles, Al-Quds University with 3,761, Al-Quds Open University with 2,824, Palestine Polytechnic University with 2,524, and the Arab American University with 2,472. Other key institutions include Al-Azhar University (1,683 profiles), Bethlehem University (1,635) and the University of Palestine (1,347).

Taken together, these ten institutions account for a large share of recorded profiles and point to the significant role of Palestinian higher education in shaping an internationally mobile workforce. However, qualification information in the profile dataset is frequently missing or incomplete. As a result, educational attainment cannot be systematically quantified. Where qualifications are discussed, they are inferred indirectly from job titles and occupational classifications rather than from explicitly recorded degree levels. While the prominence of professional and technical roles suggests substantial tertiary-level training, this interpretation should be treated as indicative rather than definitive. At the same time, the presence of craft, service and operational roles signals a more heterogeneous skills base that likely includes vocational and technical pathways alongside university-based education

The combination of institutions and current occupations (see below) points to strong representation in business and management, engineering and ICT, education, and social sciences. Birzeit, An-Najah and Al-Quds, for example, are known for producing graduates in business administration, economics, engineering and ICT; Palestine Polytechnic University and the Arab American University also have strong technical and applied programmes. The presence of institutions such as Bethlehem University, Al-Azhar University and specialised colleges suggests additional strengths in education, health-related disciplines, and humanities and social sciences.

Figure 9: Current occupations extracted from the profiles analysis (Lightcast Occupations)



Source: Lightcast Social Profiles. Author's elaboration.

Skills profile

The skills reported in the profiles dataset are aggregated into broad skill categories, which provide a high-level picture of Palestinian competencies as presented online. The most frequent category is “Business”, with 11,910 profiles listing business-related skills in at least one way, and another 8,980 and 5,252 profiles appearing under related “Business” categories in the classification, underscoring the centrality of business and commercial capabilities. “Administration” skills are nearly as prevalent, with 9,932 and 7,700 profiles in the main administrative categories and additional sub-groups bringing the total even higher. These two categories are reported separately because they are distinct in the underlying skill taxonomy: “Business” primarily captures commercial, managerial and strategic competences (e.g. finance, marketing, business development), whereas “Administration” refers more to organisational, coordination and support functions (e.g. office management, documentation, scheduling and clerical work).

Figure 10: Skills profiles



Source: Lightcast Social Profiles. Author's elaboration.

Client-facing and service skills feature strongly: “Customer and Client Support” is associated with 9,215 profiles, and “Sales” with 9,174. “Media and Communications” skills appear in categories totalling 8,248 and 5,808 profiles, reflecting a significant presence in journalism, public relations, digital media and content production. “Marketing and Public Relations” skills account for 6,539 profiles. Technical and analytical capabilities are captured in categories such as “Science and Research”, which is linked to 8,233 profiles, while “Physical and Inherent Abilities” categories, appearing with 7,515 and 4,972 profiles, capture roles that depend on physical performance, endurance or context-specific abilities.

Table 2: Top 20 Skills by category in the analysed profiles

Category	Skills	Unique Profiles	Share
Business	Management	11910	37%
Administration	Microsoft Office	9932	31%
Customer and Client Support	Customer Service	9215	29%
Sales	Sales	9174	29%
Business	Project Management	8980	28%
Media and Communications	Communication	8248	26%
Science and Research	Research	8233	26%
Administration	Microsoft Excel	7700	24%
Physical and Inherent Abilities	Leadership	7515	23%
Marketing and Public Relations	Marketing	6539	20%
Media and Communications	English Language	5808	18%
Business	Operations	5252	16%

Administration	Microsoft Word	5047	16%
Physical and Inherent Abilities	Teamwork	4972	16%
Business	Team Leadership	4951	15%
Physical and Inherent Abilities	Strategic Planning	4729	15%
Administration	Microsoft PowerPoint	4569	14%
Physical and Inherent Abilities	Planning	4499	14%
Finance	Accounting	4140	13%

Table source: Lightcast Social Profiles and Lightcast Career Pathways. Author's elaboration

Although language skills are not broken out as a separate top-level category in this summary, the occupational and geographic patterns make it clear that bilingual and multilingual profiles are common, particularly in Arabic–English, and in some cases Arabic–English–French combinations. Moreover, the strong presence in North American, Gulf and European labour markets implies that English-medium professional communication is widespread among the profiled population.

These patterns point to several typical skill bundles among Palestinians abroad. One prominent cluster combines business, administration, and sales skills with customer support and marketing, typical of roles in commercial services, retail chains, and business support functions. Another combines science and research with media, communications and marketing, which is common in think tanks, NGOs, academia, and knowledge-intensive services. A third cluster links administrative and business skills with physical and inherent abilities, indicative of operations management, logistics coordination and field-based project roles. Each of these bundles is broadly aligned with the skills demanded in the global postings dataset, particularly in the domains of project management, business analysis, ICT-enabled services and development work.

Current occupations and sectors

The current occupations reported by Palestinians in the dataset confirm a strong tilt towards higher-skilled roles and leadership positions. The single most frequent occupation is “Project Manager (General)”, with 813 profiles, signalling a widespread capacity to design, coordinate and implement complex projects, competencies that are highly valued in both private and non-profit sectors worldwide. “Student” appears with 733 profiles, indicating a continuing pipeline of Palestinians engaged in tertiary or postgraduate studies abroad.

Entrepreneurship and self-employment emerge as a major theme: “Owner / Founder” is the third most common occupation, with 696 profiles. This suggests that many Palestinians abroad are not only employees but also business creators, running small and medium-sized enterprises or start-ups across a range of sectors. In the ICT domain, “Software Developer / Engineer” appears in 689 profiles, highlighting a sizable pool of digital talent that is well-positioned for remote and platform-based work. In finance and professional services, “Accountant (General)” is held by 662 individuals, while “Operations Manager (General)” appears with 659 profiles and “General Manager” with 592.

Education and knowledge roles are also prominent: “College Professor (Other)” is the current occupation of 539 profiles, and “Training and Development Specialist” of 433. These two categories alone underscore the presence of a strong academic and training-oriented segment within the diaspora, with direct relevance for skills development initiatives in Palestine. Creative and

communication-intensive roles such as “Graphic Designer” (411 profiles) and “Media / Talent Director” (396) point to a dynamic presence in design, advertising, media production and cultural industries. Finally, “Civil Engineer” (404) and “Interpreter / Translator” (380) illustrate technical and language-based specialisations with clear relevance to both regional and global labour markets.

When compared with the demand-side data from job postings, many of these occupations match closely with high-demand roles such as project managers, software developers, business analysts, accountants and HR professionals. This suggests a substantial alignment between Palestinian skills supply abroad and global demand, particularly in professional and managerial categories. At the same time, the postings dataset reveals high demand in certain specialised technical or ICT roles (e.g. system analysts, specific programming stacks, niche risk and compliance functions) where the profiles data may show fewer Palestinian specialists, indicating potential areas for targeted upskilling.

Employment trajectories and mobility

The profiles dataset allows a direct comparison between roles held in Palestine and the current occupations of Palestinians abroad, illuminating typical employment trajectories.

In Palestine, the most frequent past occupation in the dataset is “College Professor (Other)”, with 2,723 profiles. This is followed by “Student” with 2,373 profiles, “Training and Development Specialist” with 1,687, “Operations Manager (General)” with 1,655, “Owner / Founder” with 1,561, and “Administrative Clerk / Coordinator” with 1,542. “Media / Talent Director” appears as a Palestinian job for 1,498 profiles, “Accountant (General)” for 1,449, “Customer Service Representative (General)” for 1,263, and “Project Manager (General)” for 1,197.

Table 3: Employment Trajectories of Palestinians: From Jobs in Palestine to Current Occupations Abroad

Past Occupation in Palestine	N°	Typical Current Occupations Abroad	Dominant Trajectory Type	Notes
College Professor (Other)	2723	College Professor (Other); Training and Development Specialist; Researcher / Academic	High-skilled continuity	Academic staff moving into similar higher education, research and training roles in foreign universities, institutes and international organisations.
Student	2373	Student; Junior Professional; Researcher / PhD Candidate	Education / early-career development	Individuals continuing studies abroad or transitioning from study into early professional roles, often in knowledge-intensive sectors.
Training and Development Specialist	1687	Training and Development Specialist; Learning & Development Manager; HR / Talent Development roles	High-skilled continuity	Specialists remain in training, capacity-building and HRD functions across NGOs, international organisations and private firms.
Operations Manager (General)	1655	Operations Manager (General); General Manager; Project Manager (General)	Vertical progression	Operational leaders often move into broader general management or multi-country operations roles abroad.
Owner / Founder	1561	Owner / Founder; Entrepreneur; Independent Consultant / Freelancer	Entrepreneurship / self-employment	Entrepreneurial profiles frequently maintain or expand self-employment abroad, including platform and remote work models.
Administrative Clerk / Coordinator	1542	Administrative Clerk / Coordinator; Operations Manager; Project Manager (General)	Vertical progression	Clerical and coordination roles often serve as a stepping stone towards supervisory, operations and project management positions.
Media / Talent Director	1498	Media / Talent Director; Creative Director; Communications / Media Manager	Sectoral continuity in creative industries	Media professionals continue in content, production and creative leadership roles in regional and international media markets.
Accountant (General)	1449	Accountant (General); Financial Analyst; Finance / Accounting Manager	Vertical progression	Accounting professionals move into senior finance, analysis and control functions in larger firms and international organisations.
Customer Service Representative (General)	1263	Customer Service Representative; Account Manager; Sales / Customer Success roles	Vertical progression	Customer-facing experience in Palestine underpins subsequent moves into account management and commercial roles abroad.
Project Manager (General)	1197	Project Manager (General); Programme / Portfolio Manager; Owner / Founder	High-skilled continuity and progression	Experienced project managers often retain project roles while expanding into programme leadership or entrepreneurship.

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Project Manager (General)	1197	Project Manager (General); Programme / Portfolio Manager; Owner / Founder	High-skilled continuity and progression	Experienced project managers often retain project roles while expanding into programme leadership or entrepreneurship.

Table source: Lightcast Social Profiles and Lightcast Career Pathways. Author's elaboration.

Comparing these roles with current occupations abroad suggests several characteristic trajectories. First, there is a continuity at the high end of the skills spectrum: academics, trainers and project managers who worked in Palestine often continue in related roles abroad, either in universities, training institutions, NGOs or international organisations. The prominence of jobs like “College Professor” and “Training and Development Specialist” indicates that Palestinian higher education and training professionals are mobile and integrated into global knowledge networks. Second, there is evidence of vertical progression and role expansion. Many individuals who were “Administrative Clerk / Coordinator” or “Customer Service Representative” in Palestine now appear as “Operations Manager”, “General Manager”, “Project Manager” or “Owner / Founder” abroad. This points to upward mobility associated with migration, international exposure and the accumulation of experience and networks. Third, there is a notable shift towards entrepreneurship and self-employment. The high counts of “Owner / Founder” imply that entrepreneurship is not only a survival strategy in a constrained domestic labour market but also a viable, and sometimes preferred, pathway abroad. These trajectories are particularly relevant for platform and remote work, where many Palestinians operate as independent professionals servicing clients in multiple countries.

To better understand how these patterns play out in one of the most important regional destinations, it is useful to zoom in on the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. Within the 31,834 profiles, **the Gulf hosts 5,070 Palestinians (about 15.9% of the entire dataset)** making it one of the most significant regional poles of Palestinian talent. The United Arab Emirates alone accounts for 3,092 profiles, while Saudi Arabia hosts 1,436; the remaining profiles are distributed across Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman. This concentration mirrors long-standing labour migration links between Palestine and the Gulf, but the occupational and skills structure suggests an increasingly high-skilled, service- and knowledge-intensive diaspora rather than predominantly low-skilled or manual work.

Educationally, the Palestinian professionals in GCC countries draw heavily on the same domestic institutions that dominate the overall sample, Birzeit University, An-Najah National University, Al-Quds University, Al-Quds Open University, Palestine Polytechnic University and the Arab American University. These universities provide the business, engineering, ICT and social science graduates who populate Gulf labour markets. Many of them subsequently augment their qualifications with professional certifications, language skills and on-the-job upskilling in Gulf firms and organisations. This suggests that GCC destinations function as a major outlet for Palestinian higher education, particularly in applied disciplines aligned with business services, engineering, ICT and management.

In terms of occupations, Palestinians in the Gulf are strongly represented in roles that match the broader professional and managerial profile of the diaspora. While the GCC-specific breakdown is embedded within the overall occupation tables, qualitative patterns are clear: project managers, operations managers, accountants, software developers, general managers, HR professionals, training and development specialists and business consultants feature prominently among Gulf-based profiles. Many of these roles are situated in sectors such as construction and infrastructure, finance and banking, ICT, logistics, retail and hospitality, education and training, and the oil- and gas-linked services economy. The presence of media roles – including graphic designers and media/talent professionals, points to a growing integration into the Gulf's expanding cultural and digital industries.

Skills reported by Palestinians in GCC countries align closely with employer demand in the region. Business and administration skills are essential in the large corporate, governmental and semi-governmental organisations that dominate Gulf economies; customer and client support capabilities are central in retail, hospitality and financial services; and English–Arabic bilingualism is a key asset in multinational and regional companies. Many Gulf-based Palestinians also report ICT, data analysis, project management and marketing skills, mirroring the global push towards digital transformation in Gulf states. Given that the online postings for GCC countries (1,938 vacancies in total) show strong demand in professional and managerial occupations, this points to a relatively good alignment between the skills Palestinians bring and the competencies sought by Gulf employers.

From a trajectory perspective, GCC countries appear to play a dual role. For some Palestinians, especially those educated in Palestinian universities, the Gulf is a first destination where they transition from entry-level roles (such as administrative clerks, customer service representatives or junior professionals) into mid-level and senior positions like project manager, operations manager or general manager. For others, the Gulf is a second step in a more international career. In both cases, GCC labour markets offer not only higher wages but also access to regional and global value chains, exposure to large-scale projects, and opportunities to participate in digitally driven sectors such as fintech and e-commerce. The GCC focus reinforces three central messages of the profiles analysis. First, Palestinians in the Gulf are highly skilled and strongly embedded in core sectors of the regional economy. Second, their skills and occupations are broadly consistent with global demand trends, particularly in business, ICT, project management and services. Third, given the significant overlap between the skills demanded in Gulf postings and those possessed by Palestinians, there is substantial potential for deeper skills partnerships, circular mobility schemes and remote work arrangements that link Palestinian workers in the Gulf, domestic institutions in Palestine, and employers across the wider MENA and European neighbourhood.

Career Pathways of Palestinians

The profiles and employment histories in the dataset make it possible to reconstruct typical career pathways followed by Palestinians as they move from education and work in Palestine into occupations abroad. These pathways are shaped by the structure of the Palestinian education system, local labour market constraints, and the opportunities available in regional and global labour markets. Several recurrent patterns emerge, and they are strongly confirmed by the detailed mapping of jobs into “advancement”, “lateral advancement”, “lateral transition” and “similar” roles, together with the underlying skills required (Brown, 2024).

Methodologically, career transitions were reconstructed by sequencing individual employment histories chronologically and identifying observed job-to-job moves across occupations. Each transition was then mapped to a standard occupational framework and compared in terms of skill similarity, seniority level and typical wage positioning. Based on these dimensions, transitions were classified into four categories: advancement (movement to higher-seniority or higher-wage roles), lateral advancement (moves at a similar level but with broader responsibilities or stronger progression prospects), lateral transition (horizontal shifts across related occupations with overlapping skill sets), and similar roles (moves within the same or closely equivalent occupation). This approach allows for a structured assessment of mobility patterns beyond simple job-title changes.

The classification draws on the logic of the Lightcast Career Pathways framework, which models occupational mobility based on large-scale labour market data. In this framework, occupations are connected through empirically observed job transitions and quantified measures of skill overlap. Career pathways are identified by analysing which occupations share similar core skills and where workers have historically moved between roles. Progression is inferred using indicators such as wage differentials, skill complexity and seniority profiles. Applying this framework to the Palestinian profile dataset enables the identification of plausible progression routes and cross-occupational mobility patterns grounded in skill similarity rather than solely in formal qualification requirements.

Figure 11: Employment Trajectories of Palestinians- insights from Career Pathways

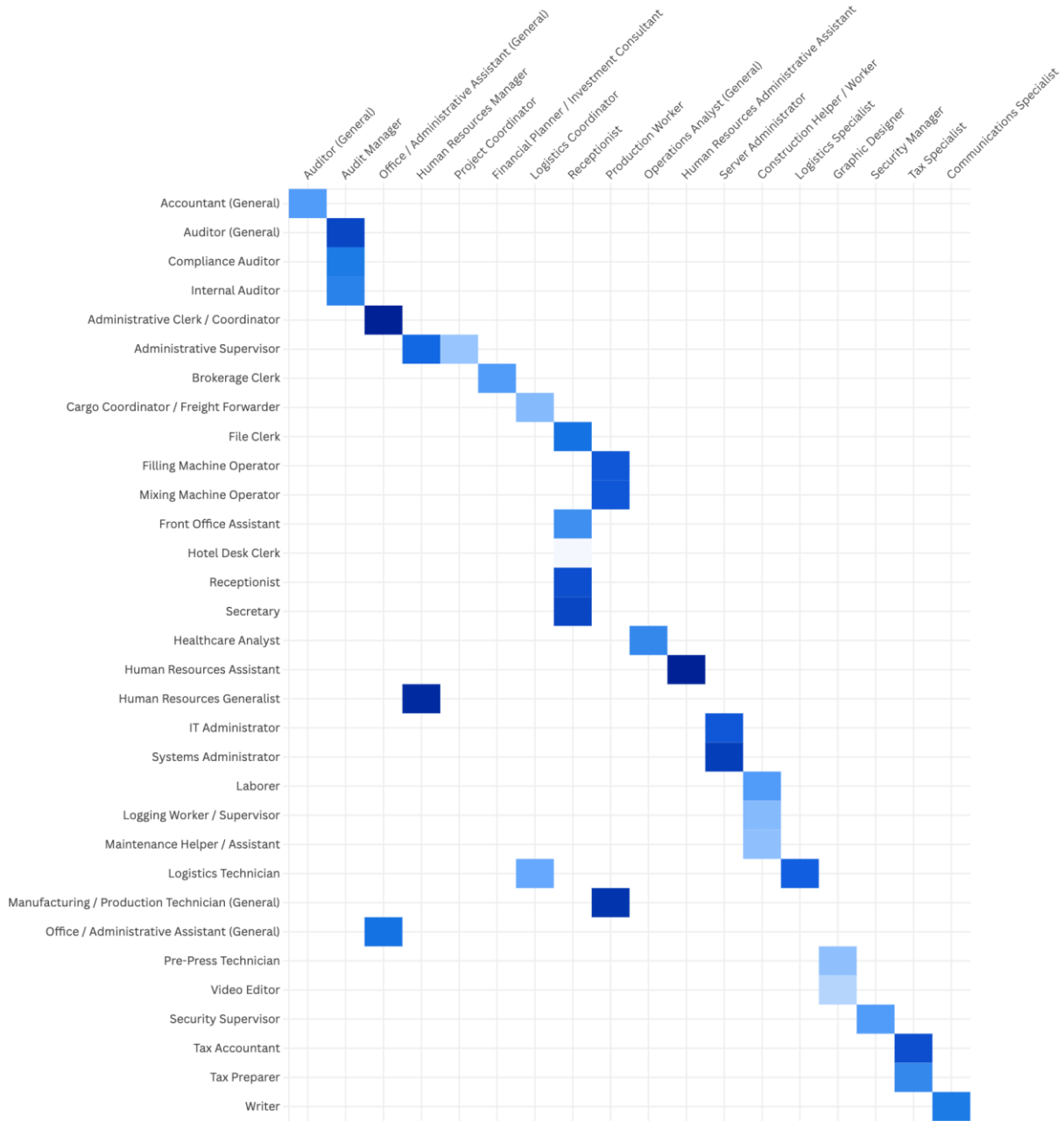


Table source: Lightcast Social Profiles and Lightcast Career Pathways. Author's elaboration.

A first pathway starts in higher education, training and social programmes, and often leads into programme and policy roles abroad. Many individuals begin as students, college professors or training specialists in Palestinian universities and NGOs. The transition data show that roles like Program Coordinator and Career Counsellor can progress into Program Officer positions (229 postings), with skills such as project management, programme development, evaluation, finance and working with beneficiaries (e.g. children, human services, social work) as key building blocks. Likewise, Training and Development Specialists have clear advancement routes to Training Consultant and Training and Development Manager, relying heavily on skills in organisational development, change management, process improvement and data analysis. This confirms that the

academic and training-oriented careers observed in the Palestinian profiles are well aligned with international pathways into programme management, capacity development and policy analysis.

A second pathway begins in accounting, auditing and tax and leads into senior financial management. In Palestine, large numbers of individuals have experience as Accountant (General) or Auditor (General). The global transition data show strong advancement ladders from Auditor (General) to Audit Manager (132 postings) and from Tax Accountant / Tax Analyst / Tax Preparer into Tax Specialist and Tax Manager (General) (85 and 76 postings respectively). The core skills that drive these transitions include audit engagements, public accounting, financial statements, tax planning, tax compliance and financial analysis, as well as tools such as QuickBooks, SAP and general accounting software. Further up the ladder, roles like Financial Manager (General) (48 postings) are closely linked to Financial Operations Specialist and Financial Analyst, requiring financial modelling, P&L management, variance analysis, financial planning and IFRS-related competencies. This evidence reinforces the idea that Palestinians who start as accountants or auditors in Palestine can realistically move into specialised tax roles, audit management and broader finance leadership positions abroad, provided they accumulate both technical and business development skills.

A third pathway runs through operations, logistics and administration into supervisory and managerial roles. The Palestinian profiles show many past jobs as Administrative Clerk / Coordinator, Logistics Coordinator, and customer-facing support staff. The transitions data map Logistics Technician and Logistics Coordinator into Logistics Specialist (62 postings) and further into Logistics Manager (33 postings), with skills such as logistics management, supply chain, procurement, invoicing, warehousing and key performance indicators underpinning progression. Similarly, Office / Administrative Assistant and Receptionist roles advance from Administrative Clerk / Coordinator, Secretary or Front Office Assistant, adding competencies such as travel arrangements, invoicing, data entry, expense reporting and office management. For security and facility-related pathways, Security Supervisor and Armed Security Officer transition into Security Manager (55 postings), with emphasis on risk management, contract compliance, security management and project management. These patterns confirm that the early-career administrative and operational work common in Palestinian job histories can be a platform for vertical progression into logistics, operations and facilities management internationally.

A fourth pathway is rooted in ICT, data and engineering, and leads into highly mobile technical and analytical careers. The Palestinian profiles show strong presence in roles such as Software Developer / Engineer, Civil Engineer, Data Analyst and Interpreter / Translator. The transition table illustrates how Software Developer / Engineer maps into Application Developer, Software Systems Engineer and Software Architect, with critical skills in software engineering, software development, C++, JavaScript, React, AWS, SQL, debugging and version control. Data Analysts have clear lateral advancement into Business Intelligence Analyst, Tableau Developer and Data Specialist, leveraging data analysis, statistics, Python, SQL, dashboards, machine learning and data governance. In engineering, Civil Engineer is directly linked to Civil Engineering Technician, Transportation Engineer and Water/Wastewater Engineer, with skills such as project management, structural engineering, land development, stormwater management and AutoCAD Civil 3D driving these moves. These pathways align very closely with global demand for digital and technical skills and show that Palestinian ICT professionals can move along well-defined international career ladders.

A fifth pathway lies in business development, consulting, communications and creative work, often bridging into high-level strategic roles. The Palestinian dataset includes many Media / Talent Directors, Graphic Designers, Business / Management Consultants, Human Resources Managers, Public Relations Officers and Communications Specialists. The transition mapping illustrates how a Media / Talent Director can move into Corporate Development Manager (40 postings), with key skills in due diligence, mergers and acquisitions, business development, accounting and private equity. Business / Management Consultants transition into Management Consulting Partner, Operations Analyst and Business Analysis Manager, driven by management

consulting, auditing, risk management, regulatory compliance and agile methodology. Communications / Public Relations Specialists and Public Relations Officers have lateral and advancement paths into marketing communications specialists, community relations managers and writers, with skill bundles built around journalism, media relations, strategic communication, PR, fundraising, investor relations and press/media coverage. In human resources, HR Assistants and HR Administrative Assistants advance to HR Generalists, HR Business Partners and HR Managers, relying on HR strategy, HRIS, performance appraisal, succession planning, change management and talent acquisition. These patterns highlight that Palestinian professionals with strong communication, media, HR and business skills can access strategic corporate and advisory roles across industries and regions.

The transition and skills data show that Palestinian work histories are not only compatible with but well aligned to global career ladders. Early roles in Palestine, whether in academia, administration, accounting, logistics, ICT or media, map onto clear advancement and lateral pathways abroad, provided individuals can build and signal the right combinations of technical, managerial and transversal skills (project management, finance, data analysis, communication, digital tools).

Five key take-aways from the career pathways and transition data

- **Clear ladders of advancement exist in key professions**

Occupations common in Palestinian job histories, such as Accountant (General), Auditor (General), Logistics Coordinator, HR Assistant, Training and Development Specialist, Project Coordinator, map onto higher-level roles like Audit Manager, Tax Manager, Logistics Manager, HR Manager, Training Consultant, Program Officer and Financial Manager. The transition data explicitly label many of these moves as “Advancement” with high similarity scores (often above 90%), confirming that they are recognised and realistic promotion pathways in international labour markets.

- **Project management, finance and data skills are cross-cutting enablers**

Across very different pathways, programme work, logistics, HR, consulting, ICT, engineering, project management appears as a core skill (e.g. in Program Officer, Project Manager, Project Coordinator, Training Consultant, Policy Analyst, Civil Engineer). Finance and accounting skills (finance, financial planning, P&L, tax management, auditing) and data skills (data analysis, BI tools, SQL, Python, dashboards) are also central in many transitions. For Palestinian workers, investing in these cross-sectoral competencies significantly widens the range of accessible international trajectories.

- **Lateral transitions open new sectors without starting from zero**

Many transitions are defined as “LateralTransition” or “LateralAdvancement”, showing that professionals can move sideways into related sectors: from Media / Talent Director to Corporate Development Manager, from Environmental Planner to Environmental Compliance Specialist, from Communications Specialist to Advertising/Marketing roles, from Civil Engineer to Transportation or Water/Wastewater Engineer, or from Data Analyst to BI or Tableau Developer. This means Palestinian professionals do not have to change careers completely; they can leverage existing experience and skill bundles to pivot into adjacent, often higher-demand niches.

- **Opportunities exist at both high-skill and middle-skill levels**

The data capture not only advanced roles (e.g. Financial Manager, Corporate Development Manager, Software Architect, HR Manager) but also transitions from more manual or routine work, such as Production Worker, Construction Helper, Logistics Technician, Receptionist, Van/Taxi/Shuttle Driver, into more stable or better-organised positions within the same family (e.g. Manufacturing Technician, Warehouse/Distribution Supervisor, Light Truck Delivery Driver, Office/Administrative Assistant). For Palestinians whose initial work experience is in lower-skilled jobs, there are structured pathways for

incremental progression, especially if they can add targeted skills (logistics management, customer service, basic digital tools).

- **Skill bundles matter more than individual skills**

The transitions table shows that successful moves are typically supported by coherent bundles of skills rather than single competencies:

- a) Programme careers: project management + programme development + evaluation + finance + social work/human services.
- b) Finance and tax: auditing + public accounting + tax planning + financial analysis + accounting software/ERP.
- c) ICT and data: software engineering + cloud platforms + programming languages + version control, or data analysis + BI tools + statistics + machine learning.
- d) HR and people functions: HR strategy + HRIS + performance appraisal + succession planning + change management.

For Palestinian workers and policymakers, this suggests that training and upskilling efforts should focus on building complete skill packages that match recognised international profiles, rather than isolated courses, thereby maximising the chances of both vertical progression and successful lateral moves in global labour markets.

CONCLUSIONS, POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND ALIGNMENT WITH PALESTINIAN LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT STRATEGIES

The analysis of online job postings (demand) and social profiles (supply) paints a coherent picture of a highly qualified and internationally dispersed Palestinian workforce facing a labour market that is both challenging and opportunity-rich. On the demand side, online postings between 2019 and 2025 show a strong and geographically diversified need for professional, managerial and technical occupations, particularly in project management, ICT, finance, business services, education, logistics and development/NGO roles. Demand is concentrated in Anglophone countries, the EU/EFTA region, MENA and especially GCC states, with 2022 marking a peak year in many destinations, followed by stabilisation at relatively high levels in the Gulf and selected markets.

On the supply side, 31,834 Palestinian profiles highlight a talent base that is highly educated (mainly via Palestinian universities), strongly represented in professional and managerial roles, and equipped with rich skill bundles in business, administration, customer and client services, media and communications, science and research, and ICT. The most common occupations (project managers, software developers, accountants, operations managers, college professors, trainers, consultants and entrepreneurs) mirror many of the roles in highest global demand.

The intersection of demand and supply reveals three key messages. First, there is significant alignment between Palestinian skills and global labour market needs, particularly in professional and managerial categories. Second, there are gaps and mismatches at the margin, such as under-representation in some highly specialised or emerging technical roles, and structural barriers to converting skills into decent work at scale (e.g. visa regimes, recognition of qualifications, political constraints). Third, the data demonstrate that career progression is possible and frequent: Palestinians commonly move from clerical, customer service or junior professional roles in Palestine into senior operations, project, financial and managerial roles abroad, often combining this with entrepreneurship and platform-based work. The composition of vacancy sources provides important context for interpreting the demand signal. The dataset exhibits a highly skewed distribution: while several hundred domains appear, a relatively small number account for a substantial share of postings. The largest single source is jobs.ps (5,316 postings), followed by apply.deloitte.co.uk (4,699) and jsfirm.com (3,773). Large international aggregators and job ecosystems also feature prominently, including Indeed UK (1,784), palestine.tanqeeb.com (1,761) and ps.opensooq.com (1,727). In addition, development and humanitarian platforms - such as ReliefWeb (1,088), unjobnet.org (1,200), unjobs.org (972) and Impactpool (928) - collectively represent a significant segment of postings. Altogether, the top 15-20 domains account for well over half of all unique vacancies, indicating that observed demand patterns are shaped disproportionately by local Palestinian portals, large multinational corporate recruitment systems, and the international development labour market. Platform-based and digitally mediated work constitutes a visible segment of postings. Dedicated freelancing and gig-oriented domains (e.g. peopleperhour.com and himalayas.app), together with remote-first or global talent platforms (e.g. angel.co), account for a modest number of explicit postings. In addition, large professional ecosystems such as LinkedIn Indeed facilitate access to remote and cross-border roles, some of which are compatible with freelance or contract-based engagement. While explicitly platform-based postings represent a relatively small percentage of total vacancies compared to formal employer-driven recruitment, their presence - combined with the strong representation of ICT, business services and digital skills- supports the finding that part of Palestinian labour market integration occurs through flexible, digitally mediated and cross-border work arrangements.

To sustain and deepen these insights, the report points to several next steps:

- Regular updates of online labour market intelligence: Online postings and social profiles change rapidly. Establishing a regular (e.g. annual or semi-annual) monitoring cycle would allow Palestinian stakeholders to track shifts in demanded occupations, skills and locations, and to adjust education, training and employment interventions accordingly.
- Deep dives by sector: The cross-sectoral analysis should be complemented by sector-specific modules (for instance in ICT, health, education, logistics and creative industries) to examine detailed skill requirements, typical career ladders and emerging specialisations. This is especially important for priority sectors in the national strategies and ETF programming.
- Integration into EU and other donors' programming and partner initiatives: The findings can directly inform external support to Palestine in the fields of skills anticipation, TVET reform, entrepreneurial learning, digitalisation and migration/diaspora. Embedding online labour market intelligence into existing external support (e.g. country projects, regional initiatives, peer learning) would help Palestinian authorities and partners move from ad hoc evidence to systematic, data-driven decision-making.

The evidence suggests that Palestinian workers possess substantial assets that can be better leveraged through targeted skills development, improved labour intermediation, and structured engagement with diaspora and destination-country employers.

Relevance to the Labour Sector Strategy 2021–2023

The Labour Sector Strategy 2021-2023 prioritises skills development and TVET, youth employment, and digitalisation and innovation. The online labour market findings broadly support and sharpen these priorities.

Skills development and TVET. The strong representation of Palestinian graduates in business, ICT, engineering, education and social sciences, combined with the robust pathways into roles such as project manager, software developer, accountant, trainer and engineer, indicates that the core academic system is producing highly employable graduates. However, the transitions and skills data also show that specific skill bundles make the difference in achieving upward mobility: project management, financial literacy, data analysis, digital tools, languages and soft skills. This confirms that TVET and higher education reforms should:

- Strengthen applied, project-based learning and practical work experience.
- Integrate digital, entrepreneurial and transversal skills systematically into curricula.
- Align training content with international competency frameworks and online job requirements in key destination markets.

Youth employment. The large number of students and early-career profiles in the dataset, as well as clear evidence of vertical progression abroad, point to both a risk and an opportunity. Youth in Palestine often start in low-paid or precarious roles, but those who can connect to international labour markets show significant progression into professional and managerial jobs. This underlines the importance of:

- Strengthening career guidance, mentoring and exposure to global labour market information.
- Supporting youth transitions into first jobs that are connected to clear pathways (e.g. junior analyst to senior analyst, trainee engineer to project engineer).
- Expanding internships, apprenticeships and remote work experiences linked to employers abroad, especially in ICT and business services.

Digitalisation and innovation. The prominence of ICT, data and digital communication skills on both sides of the market, and the evident scope for remote and platform-based work, directly supports the strategy's emphasis on digitalisation. The findings call for:

- Accelerated investment in digital infrastructure, digital skills at all levels, and innovation ecosystems (incubators, accelerators, co-working spaces).
- Policy frameworks that make it easier to work online across borders, including payment systems, contractual templates and taxation rules for freelancers and small digital businesses.

Relevance to the National Employment Strategy 2021-2025

The National Employment Strategy emphasises active labour market policies, entrepreneurship and self-employment, labour mobility and diaspora engagement, and digital platforms for job matching. The online labour market evidence has direct implications for each of these pillars.

Active labour market policies. The detailed mapping of occupations, skills and career trajectories provides a strong basis for more targeted actions, moving beyond generic training or subsidy schemes. For example:

- Training vouchers and wage subsidies could prioritise pathways with clear international ladders, such as junior accounting to tax specialist, logistics technician to logistics manager, junior programmer to software systems engineer.
- Public employment services could use online labour market data to tailor counselling, pointing jobseekers towards realistic advancement and lateral transition options, and the specific skills needed to make those moves.

Entrepreneurship and self-employment. The high incidence of Owner / Founder in both Palestinian and current jobs abroad shows that entrepreneurship is already a central strategy for Palestinian workers, including via digital platforms. Policy responses should:

- Provide tailored support for opportunity-driven entrepreneurs in ICT, consulting, media, education and professional services.
- Facilitate cross-border entrepreneurship (e.g. allowing diaspora Palestinians to invest, mentor or co-found ventures with partners in Palestine).
- Embed entrepreneurial learning in TVET and higher education, using evidence of successful international trajectories.

Labour mobility and diaspora engagement. The profiles and postings jointly show that Palestinian workers are deeply integrated into key regional and global labour markets, particularly in the GCC, MENA and Anglophone countries. This highlights the potential for:

- Managed mobility schemes in sectors with clear skill matches (e.g. ICT, health, education, logistics, finance), aligned with partner-country needs and worker protections.
- Diaspora engagement mechanisms that mobilise Palestinian professionals abroad as mentors, employers, investors and knowledge brokers for youth and institutions in Palestine.
- Use of digital platforms for job matching

Since the analysis is based on online postings and profiles, it underscores how digital platforms are already central to labour intermediation. The strategy can build on this by:

- Integrating online labour market analytics into national employment services and job-matching tools.

- Promoting digital profiles and portfolios for Palestinian jobseekers, explicitly aligned with the skills and keywords in international postings.
- Supporting local and regional platforms that connect Palestinian talent to employers in key destination countries, including for remote work.

The way ahead

The findings point to a clear value-added of transition towards a more evidence-informed, outward-looking labour and skills system. Possible priorities include:

Skills anticipation and forecasting. Institutionalise online labour market intelligence as part of Palestine's skills anticipation system, combining postings data, profiles, employer surveys and tracer studies. This could involve:

- Methodological support to national institutions (ministries, PES, TVET agencies) on how to collect, clean and interpret online data.
- Periodic skills foresight exercises focusing on priority sectors (ICT, health, education, logistics, green economy).
- Strengthening data systems to monitor online labour markets
- Develop or upgrade data infrastructures and dashboards that track postings, profiles, skill trends and career pathways over time.
- This would:
- Provide timely evidence for policy reviews and strategy updates.
- Support providers, counsellors and local actors in aligning their interventions with real labour market signals.

Fostering partnerships with platforms and employers. The analysis highlights specific destination countries, sectors and occupations where Palestinian skills and global demand are well aligned. Palestinian authorities could prioritize:

- Dialogue and partnership agreements between Palestinian institutions and major global platforms (job boards, freelancing platforms) and leading employers in the EU, GCC and beyond.
- Pilot projects that connect Palestinian learners and graduates to remote internships, apprenticeships and entry-level jobs abroad, particularly in ICT, business services and education.

Recommendations

For Palestinian authorities, with the support of the European and international community:

- Embed online labour market intelligence into the core of labour, education and migration policies, with regular reporting and cross-ministerial coordination.
- Prioritise skill bundles linked to clear international pathways (project management, finance, data/BI, software development, logistics management, HR and communications) in TVET and higher education reforms.
- Design active policies and mobility schemes that are tightly linked to evidence-based career ladders and that protect workers' rights in destination countries.
- Develop frameworks to support remote and platform-based work, including legal, fiscal and social protection aspects.

- Continue to support skills anticipation, TVET modernisation and digitalisation in Palestine, using online labour market data as a key input.
- Facilitate regional and international partnerships that open structured mobility and remote-work channels for Palestinian workers and graduates.
- Invest in capacity-building for national institutions on the use of big data and AI tools for labour market analysis, ensuring sustainability beyond the project cycle.

For education and training providers:

- Align curricula and assessment with competency profiles observed in real job postings, especially for occupations like project manager, software developer, accountant, logistics manager, HR specialist and communication/PR roles.
- Strengthen work-based learning, internships and projects that mimic the tasks and tools used in international workplaces (e.g. Agile, SAP, cloud services, BI tools, digital collaboration platforms).
- Integrate career guidance, digital profiling and portfolio building into programmes so that graduates can position themselves effectively on global platforms.

For private sector, platforms and diaspora networks:

- Employers in Palestine and abroad should use these findings to co-design training, internships and graduate schemes that tap into Palestinian talent.
- Digital platforms can work with Palestinian institutions to simplify onboarding and verification of Palestinian freelancers, and to highlight skills and sectors where Palestinians are competitive.
- Diaspora networks can play a catalytic role by mentoring young Palestinians, brokering job and project opportunities, investing in high-potential ventures, and feeding back market intelligence into Palestinian policy and practice.

Taken together, these actions would help move from isolated successes to a systemic approach where Palestinian workers, wherever they are located, can build and deploy their skills in ways that support their livelihoods, contribute to national development, and respond to the evolving demands of regional and global labour markets.

ACRONYMS

EFTA	European Free Trade Association
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ISCO	International Standard Classification of Occupations
IT	Information Technology
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NES	National Employment Strategy (2021–2025)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PES	Public Employment Service
PR	Public Relations
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UK	United Kingdom

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