

JORDAN

**EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT
DEVELOPMENTS 2021**

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KEY POLICY DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

The National Strategy for Human Resources Development 2016-2025 launched in September 2016 remains the overall arching strategy for the sector. It covers the entire education sector.

The national education system in Jordan can be regarded as well-developed, with a relatively high gross enrolment ratio for primary education and secondary education. The quality of education has been improving over the last years, as shown by PISA results for the year 2028. The scores in all three subjects have improved per half year of schooling (Reading) and nearly 1 year of schooling (Maths and Science).

As in many countries all over the world, the COVID-19 outbreak led to the closure of schools in Jordan, which affected around 2.4 million students. To mitigate the negative effects of schools' closures, the Ministry of Education turned to distance learning by setting up an official e-learning portal as a comprehensive remote education platform offering short video clip courses. Two television channels were dedicated to offer online lectures which cover the curriculum's core subjects of Arabic, English, Mathematics and Science for grades 1-12.

TVET institutions were also closed due to the lockdown and, consequently, turned to distance learning. However, the nature of the training programmes, more practically oriented than general education, and the limited readiness and capacity of these institutions to implement distance learning made it much more challenging for them to apply distance learning in TVET.

The COVID-19 crisis also had an impact on the labour market, aggravating the situation of some groups such as young people. The unemployment rate of this category reached a worrying 23.9% in the third quarter of 2020 compared with 19% in the first quarter.

Unemployment continues to affect university graduates more than young people holding a lower education level, and many more women than men. The unemployment rate in 2020 was higher for graduates holding a bachelor's degree or higher than low educated young people, and it is higher for women.

Not only does unemployment affect much more women than men but being educated is rather an obstacle for women to enter the labour market.

The activity rate in 2020 was 35% (53.6% for men and 14.2% for women). While the female activity rate has been stable over the last decade, the male rate has been declining, bringing the overall rate from 39.5% in 2010 to 35% in 2020. Labour force participation in Jordan is among the lowest in the world, in particular for women.

The absence of a comprehensive system for identifying and anticipating labour market needs may be one of the main reasons for the high unemployment rates of educated people in Jordan. The recently established sector skills councils may bring the education and training sector closer to the economy and bring some information about skills demand.

1. KEY POLITICAL, HEALTH, DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

▪ Political developments and the health situation

Jordan is a constitutional monarchy in which the King holds broad executive powers, while the powers of the Prime Minister are limited. The King appoints the Prime Minister, who heads the Cabinet, also appointed by the King. The King may dismiss the Prime Minister and Cabinet, and dissolve Parliament, at his own discretion. Jordan has a bicameral National Assembly consisting of a 65-seat upper house (the Senate), appointed by the King, and a 130-seat lower house (the House of Representatives). The lower house is elected for a 4-year term or until parliament is dissolved. Some 15 seats are reserved for women.

In September 2020, the King dissolved parliament. General elections were held on November 2020 to elect the members of the House of Representatives. Voter turnout was only 29.88%, the lowest in a decade. The elections took place at a time when the country was experiencing a surge in COVID-19 cases. As a result, there were numerous calls on social media channels to boycott the elections, particularly as no alternatives to in-person voting were offered.

The members of the new parliament did not include any liberals, leftists or pan-Arabists; rather, they were tribal and pro-government candidates. The Islamists won some seats, but fewer than they had had in 2016.

To prevent and contain the spread of the COVID19 pandemic, between March and May 2020, Jordan implemented what has been described as the 'world's strictest lockdown'. The clear priority in managing the crisis was to protect lives and avoid the collapse of the health system. By mid-March 2020, the lockdown was extended to all non-essential sectors, the Defence Law was passed (declaring the state of emergency) and all flights were suspended. By the end of May, containment measures were progressively lifted. By the end of September 2020, the surge in COVID-19 cases led the government to switch to remote education and to order a weekend and night curfew. All economic activities, except recreational activities and sports, were allowed to operate.

On 1 September 2021, the Jordan government ended all curfew restrictions and reopened all sectors and recreational facilities. In terms of COVID19 vaccination, by mid-September 2021, Jordan had vaccinated around 32% of the country's population.

▪ Demographics

The population is estimated to be 10.8 million inhabitants (as of 2021, Department of Statistics). Jordan's population is remarkably young – in 2019, around one third (33%) of the total population was under the age of 15. People of working age (15-64) accounted for 63%, while only 4% were older than 64. According to forecasts by the Higher Population Council (2009), Jordan will enter the 'Demographic window of opportunity' by 2030 – a stage that is reached when the working age population grows significantly higher than that of dependents (< 15 or > 64 years). Accounting for such development and the respective potential welfare implications require a strengthened focus on adapting employment policies.

Approximately 42% of inhabitants reside in the capital, Amman.

Migration traditionally plays a crucial role with regard to the Jordanian economy. Emigration, especially to Gulf countries, considerably increased with the oil boom of the early 1970s. Since then, the economic situation has led an increasing number of Jordanians seeking work abroad.

Based on estimates by Bel Air, the Jordan Strategy Forum (2018) reports that in 2016, a total of 786,000 Jordanians were living abroad, i.e. 10.5% of the total population. 80% of Jordanian migrants reside in the Arab Gulf States. Consequently, personal remittances are a crucial element of the Jordanian economy. In 2014, remittances represented around 17% of gross domestic product (GDP) but decreased to around 10% in 2019. Thus, remittances are an important flow of foreign currency, which is essential for equilibrating the balance of payments.

Most foreign workers (64.9%) are Arabs, mainly from Egypt (61% of all foreign workers). Young people make up the largest share, with around 69% on average for the last 6 years of foreign workers in the 25-35 age group. Around half of migrant workers (47%) reside in Amman. While labour export predominantly involves high-skilled workers, most labour migrants residing in Jordan are low-skilled and employed in low-wage jobs. They are mostly employed in agriculture (31%), manufacturing (25%) or social personal services (22%) (Ayadi et al., 2018a). Overall, 93% of expatriate workers have secondary school education or below. In 2019, the outflow of remittances represented 1.1% of GDP (CBJ, Annual Report, 2020). It has to be noted, however, that due to the importance of informal channels, official estimates of both in- and outflows of remittances tend to underestimate the phenomenon.

2. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

2.1 Trends and challenges

An overall strategic framework for human resource development covering all levels and types of education and training was officially launched in September 2016. The National Strategy for Human Resources Development (NSHRD) 2016-2025 defines, inter alia, the objective of ensuring that all children complete equitable and quality primary and secondary education, leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.

The Education Strategic Plan 2018-2022, adopted in 2018, is a key policy document for the entire education sector, with six domains: (1) Early Childhood Education and Development; (2) Access and Equity; (3) System Strengthening; (4) Quality; (5) Human Resources; and (6) Vocational education, including a comprehensive set of key performance indicators.

The national education system in Jordan can be regarded as well-developed. Jordan achieved a fairly high rate of expected years of schooling of 11.4 in 2020, while the gross enrolment ratio for primary education reached 81% and 63% for secondary education. The government dedicated 3.6% of the GDP to the education sector.

However, the system still faces major challenges in providing education for all children residing in Jordan (including refugee children from Syria, Iraq, Palestine and other countries) and particularly in improving the quality of education service delivery. In terms of access to education, and equity, the situation for Jordanian boys and girls is significantly better than that for Syrians and others.

In addition, the number of students enrolled in basic and secondary education exceeded 1.5 million over the last 3 years, which has resulted in overcrowding in some schools and increased the number of schools operating on double shifts. In addition, the number of rented schools has increased. These schools are not equipped by the Ministry of Education and usually lack essential educational facilities such as libraries, science labs and computer labs, and consequently do not provide the same educational quality as permanent schools.

Nearly all children complete primary school but dropping out of school during lower secondary (grades 7-10) remains a problem. The incidence of Syrian children dropping out before completing grade 6 is considerably higher than for Jordanian children and children of other nationalities. A UNICEF report on out-of-school shows that certain individual, household and community-related factors are associated with a higher risk of dropout before completion of basic education (grades 1-10). The study found out (based on a sample) that the dropout rate before completing grade 6 was 2.4% in 2020 (14.1% for Syrians), while it reached 9.4% for children in grades 7-10 (22.5% for Syrians).

- **PISA results**

Jordan is the second non-OECD country that has improved the most since 2015. Scores in all three subjects have improved per half year of schooling (Reading) and nearly 1 year of schooling (Mathematics and Science) in this period. Jordan has substantially closed the gap with the OECD average. The percentage of students not achieving the basic proficiency level in Reading is at an all-time low, though still at 41%, with 59.3% in Mathematics and 40.4% in science.

- **Young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)**

Young people aged 15-24 not in employment, education, or training (NEETs) represented 36% in 2019 (29.3% for men and 43.8% for women). The situation has slightly improved since 2017, but this has been of more benefit to men than women.

- **Education during the COVID-19 pandemic**

As in many countries all over the world, the COVID-19 outbreak led to the closure of schools in Jordan. In its response to the crisis, in mid-March 2020 the Jordanian government enforced a lockdown and national closure of all educational institutions. This closure affected around 2.4 million students in pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary education.

To mitigate the negative effects of schools' closures on students from grades 1-12, the Ministry of Education (MoE) turned to distance learning. In collaboration with the Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship and private sector providers Edraak, Mawdoo3, Abwaab and Jo Academy, the MoE developed an official e-learning portal ('Darsak'), as a comprehensive remote education platform which offers short video clip courses. Two television channels are dedicated for offering online lectures through Darsak 1 and Darsak 2, which cover the curriculum's core subjects of Arabic, English, Mathematics and Science for grades 1-12. In addition, the country's television sports channel is being used to broadcast educational material tailored to students preparing for the General Secondary Certificate Exams ('Darsak Tawjihi platform').

Therefore, students can follow broadcast lessons on the dedicated television channels and online. Darsak platforms do not provide interactive features, but teachers can upload homework and tests on the platforms for their students, who can also respond through the platforms. In addition, teachers and students can communicate through groups using social media.

In addition, the MoE launched a platform offering free online courses to develop teachers' teaching techniques and competencies, including distance learning. These online courses include distance learning tools, Educational Technology, 'Blended' learning, Flipped classroom, Contemplative teaching and Online tutoring.

MoE teachers have successfully completed a total of around 112,000 courses.

- **Strategic and legal framework for VET and adult learning**

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

The TVSDC is responsible for approving the TVET sector's strategies, policies, and plans. The TVET sector's relating law proposals, approval of occupational standards and coordination with other education, economic, social and human resources councils are also part of its mandate. It is also responsible for accrediting and supervising TVET providers, developing TVET programme standards,

registering qualifications in the National Qualification Framework (NQF), identifying TVET teachers and trainer selection standards, classifying them and developing their skills and abilities, institutionalising public private partnership (PPP) in TVET and licensing TVET providers.

The TVSDC has designed an Action Plan 2020-2024 built around 12 pillars that mirror the 5 pillars of the E-TVET strategy and the strategic priorities of the NSHRD.

The TVSDC is commissioned to provide a comprehensive picture of the performance of the TVET sector. The Commission collects, analyses and disseminates data and information at the level of governance, financing, service providers, partners (national and international), beneficiaries and target groups. For that purpose, it makes use of a monitoring and evaluation system composed of 22 indicators that mirror those of the Torino Process.

All VET providers report back to the TVSDC on their performance with regards to these indicators.

- **VET governance and financing arrangements**

The primary source of TVET financing is public finance through the Ministry of Finance (MoF). Each institution that provides TVET programmes deals directly with the MoF. Despite this, no central body allocates the funds based on needs or decides on the priority of specific projects. Moreover, the budget decisions are not based on the programmes or organisations' performances, but rather on an historical basis.

The public VET providers rely on international funding such as EU grants and international donors' programmes to invest in new equipment, innovation and the transformation of the sector, and on government funding to cover operational costs. Therefore, the donor community's support is crucial, and the coordination, unification and streamlining of donors' efforts to prevent work duplication are highly necessary.

The TVSDC mandate is to approve TVET programme budgets based on specific criteria and supervise TVET spending. Having a central body for disbursement allocations to TVET institutions is expected to lead to greater fairness in allocating financial resources to TVET providers. In addition, the establishment of a Skills development and TVET activities support fund (to replace the former ETVET Fund) within the Commission will increase funding for implementing TVET programmes. There is no evidence that the TVSDC has revised the funding mechanisms and procedures to better allocate funds to providers.

- **Quality and quality assurance**

The NSHRD has well summed up the quality assurance system in Jordan: 'Quality assurance of TVET in Jordan is highly fragmented, with separate quality assurance processes and bodies in each of the three ministries involved with TVET provision.' Each institution has its own mechanisms for data collection, monitoring and evaluation. Two institutions previously oversaw quality assurance in the country, namely the former Accreditation and Quality Assurance Centre (CAQA) and the Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Higher Education Institutions (AQACHEI) and used different criteria and approaches when registering qualifications. While the latter is still in charge of higher education institutions, the TVSDC has taken over the mandate of the CAQA. Some efforts are being made by the two bodies to harmonise their accreditation systems.

At provider level, the MoE and the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) have separate quality control procedures, while community colleges follow AQACHEI procedures. In general, the procedures

focus on internal quality control, looking at competence within establishments in terms of inputs, processes and outputs. There is little external quality control or evaluation of the effectiveness of institutions' outputs. Institutions and trainers are not held accountable for training outcomes. Funds are transferred to public institutions based on previous budgets, regardless of performance.

- **Work-based learning arrangements**

Work-based training in Jordan is regulated by labour law No 8 of 1996 and its amendments. The law sets up some requirements for conducting workplace training in companies such as the adequateness of the workplace conditions for training, the qualification of the in-company trainer and the existence of a contract signed between the employer and the trainee.

Currently, almost all VTC training programs use work-based training methodology in cooperation with firms of various sizes and in different economic sectors. In addition to VTC, work-based training is used by the National Employment and Training company in implementing its training programmes. In addition, it is used in implementing training and employment projects/ initiatives supported and financed by the Ministry of Labour (MoL), the former ETVET Fund and chambers of industry and commerce.

Large-scale companies such as the Jordan Petroleum Company, Phosphate Company and electricity companies have their own training centres and conduct training courses according to their own needs, either alone or in cooperation with VTCs using mainly work-based training.

Vocational education students in MoE schools are required to practice their specialisation for 24 days in either workplaces in the labour market or in their schools' workshops during the summer holidays (Rawashdeh/ UNESCO, 2019).

At the technical level, only two colleges have been implementing work-based learning schemes, namely the Al Salt technical college in BAU and the Al Hussein Technical University, which included --on-the-job training for one or two semesters (Rawashdeh/ UNESCO, 2019).

The NSHRD -identified a strategic objective within the TVET sector, stating, 'Innovate funding and provision in the sector through transforming the E-TVET Fund, PPPs and expanding innovative modes of delivery'. Accordingly, a project entitled 'Expand apprenticeship programmes' is aimed at increasing the number of young people learning practical qualifications and experience through work-based programmes. A draft national apprenticeship framework has been designed, but not yet approved by the Cabinet.

- **Digital education and skills**

Regarding preparedness for wide-scale digital learning in Jordan, an analysis based on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2018, conducted on a nationally representative sample of 15-year-old students, gives an idea about this preparedness within three dimensions: 1. Access to digital devices and the internet; 2. Use of online resources; and 3. School and teacher preparedness. The key findings were as following:

- over 16% of students in Jordan lack internet access.
- one third does not have a computer that can be used for schoolwork.
- 43% of 15-year-old students in Jordan attend schools with an effective online learning support platform.

- 35% of teachers lack the necessary technical and pedagogical skills to digital resources in their instruction.
- 44% of schools have professional resources for teachers to learn how to use digital devices.

The final evaluation tests of the second term of 2019/2021 for MoE students in grades 4-11 were conducted remotely through the Darsak platform.

- **Donor support to education and VET for young people and adults**

The main donors involved in projects relating to employment and TVET in Jordan during the period 2012-2022 include: USA, GAC/ Canada, the European Union, BMZ/ Germany, Department for International Development (DFID)/ UK, JICA/ Japan, KOICA/ South Korea, Ministry of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation (MINBUZA)/ Netherlands, UNHCR, World Food Programme, Finland, Iceland, Australia and the World Bank.

During this period, there were 36 projects for a total budget of JOD 223 349 127. Nearly 50% of the projects (and funding) expired in 2019. The projects were distributed over the 12 governorates although the Amman, Irbid, Zarqa and Mafraq Governorates had the highest number of projects as they had the highest population levels in their kingdoms.

Almost all projects spanned several activities and areas of intervention category. 47% of project interventions focused on Job Placement Services, 42% on Enhancement of workforce participations in the labour market and 33% on career guidance and TVET training & further training.

The two key target groups across all projects are women and young people; 80% of projects focused on youth activities (young people aged 16-30), while 70% focused on women (GIZ, 2018b).

3. LABOUR MARKET AND EMPLOYMENT

3.1 Trends and challenges

- **Labour market and employment challenges in general**

According to the Jordanian Department of Statistics (DOS), in 2019 the labour force was 1,702,187 with 1,377,905 employed and 324,282 unemployed. In 2020, the refined economic activity rate (15 years and older) was 35% (53.6% for men and 14.2% for women). While the female activity rate was stable over the last decade, the male rate has been declining, bringing the overall rate from 39.5% in 2010 to 35% in 2020.

The labour force participation in Jordan is therefore among the lowest in the world, in particular for women.

The gender gap is very pronounced in Jordan and also involves a substantial wage differential (Alshyab, et al. 2018). Accordingly, the Global Gender Gap Index 2020 of the World Economic Forum ranks Jordan 138 out of 153 countries for economic participation and opportunity, which is an indicator combining gender differences in economic participation and wage levels (World Economic Forum, 2020).

The Jordanian population is characterised by relatively high educational levels. The most recent Employment and Unemployment Survey of the DoS (3rd Quarter 2020) estimated that around 41.5% of Jordanians (15+) hold a secondary education degree or above, including 18.6% with a bachelor's degree or above. The proportion of 15-24-year-olds enrolled in vocational education remains very low, at 1.2%. Attitudes towards vocational education are highly negative in Jordan, with a bias towards higher education, irrespective of market demands. Vocational education is associated with low educational achievement, while career counselling and guidance are insufficient. The Jordanian education system is reinforcing such a dynamic by channelling low-achievers into vocational streams. In this context, it also has to be mentioned that Jordan lacks a long-standing tradition with regard to apprenticeship schemes in general; instead, the traditional – and still prevalent – method of learning crafts or distinct trades is work-based learning in informal settings (see also UNESCO, 2018).

Due to the prestige of public sector jobs and the respective benefit packages, the public sector represents the employer of first choice for the majority of Jordanian young people. As in many MENA countries, there is a deep-seated belief of entitlement and the expectation that the government has to provide employment opportunities. However, necessary cutbacks over the past decades have led to a decreasing number of available civil service positions. Persisting expectations of public employment are increasing the economic inactivity of young people, with many graduates queueing for public sector jobs, while waiting lists for certain positions even exceed 10 years (ILO, date unknown). As of January 2021, there were around 338,000 applicants on the waiting list. With around 7,000 vacancies per year, the public sector can only absorb around 10% of annual graduates (Ammon News, 2021).

The responsible body for filling public sector positions is the Civil Service Bureau, through which all applications are handled.

Labour market challenges in Jordan include:

- The persistent high unemployment rate, particularly among young people in the 15-24 age group (39.2%) and specifically among women (58.6%) compared to men (38.4%). Unemployment also affects illiterate or -low skilled men (20.3%) and women with high education degrees (31.1%) (DOS 2018).
- The very low activity rate among women (14.2%), which is the lowest in the world (DOS 2018).
- The weak involvement of labour market institutions and employers in the different levels and stages of TVET in Jordan, including national governance, funding, curriculum design, training implementation and evaluation (NHRDS, 2016-2025).
- Immigrant workers, particularly Egyptian and Syrian refugee workers in the labour market. Acceptance of immigrant workers, particularly at semi-skilled and skilled occupational levels in specific sectors (construction, agriculture and services) to work for lower pay led to a situation where employers preferred hiring them instead of Jordanian workers.
- The mismatch between Education/ TVET and labour market needs. This was stated clearly in the NHRDS (2016-2025): 'there are some fundamental mismatches between the skills required for 21st century employment and the outputs from the current TVET system'.
- The weak ability of the Jordan economy in offering enough employment opportunities for the new labour market entrants. As in 2018, the number of new jobs created according to the DOS stood at around 38 906, while the number of graduates from Jordan universities (2017/2018) in various educational studies was around 56,466 (MOHESR, 2017/18).
- Relatively low pay and inappropriate working conditions. The ILO youth transition study found that young men rejected job offers in the majority of cases on the grounds of low pay (58%), while inappropriate workplace conditions (28%), followed by low pay (26%), were the main reasons given by young women (ILO, 2014).

▪ **Unemployment**

Unemployment has been one of the most serious challenges, especially for young people. It has continuously risen, from 13% in 2015 to 19.1% in 2019. It reached 19.3% in the first quarter of 2020 and a worrying 23.9% in the third quarter of 2020 (21.2% for men against 33.6% for women). For men, the rate has increased by 4.1%, and for women by 6.1% compared to the third quarter of 2019. This increase may be attributed to the COVID19 pandemic as many sectors have been heavily impacted by this crisis such the tourism sector, where losses by the end of 2020 were expected to exceed 85% of the tourism contribution to GDP, according to the Jordan Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities.

Unemployment affects university graduates more than young people holding a lower education level, and many more women than men. While the unemployment rate in 2020 was around 23.2%, it was 26.7% for young men holding a bachelor's degree or more, but 33.6% for women of the same educational level, while it was 22% for those with a low educational level and 25% for medium education level. Not only does unemployment affect many more women than men but being educated is also an obstacle for women trying to enter the labour market.

▪ **Statistical data collection and labour market information**

No comprehensive system for identifying and anticipating labour market needs linked with education in general, and the TVET system in particular, is available in Jordan. Since 2019 and with the support of international organisations, some sector skills councils have been established, which may bring some intelligence about skills demand in their respective sector. They are targeting the main economic sectors such as tourism and hospitality, chemicals and allied industries, printing and packaging, wood and furniture, as well as clothing and textiles. According to TVSD law, those councils are national consultative councils representing employers, employees and government, and, among other tasks, they will be responsible for identifying priority skills and training needs in various sectors. This initiative, which is still at an early stage, is expected to improve the relevance of TVET programme

provision and may facilitate vertical permeability in TVET, particularly with the adoption of the NQF in Jordan in 2029.

However, some studies, projects and systems provide some information or indicators relating to labour market skills demand. These include:

- Several sectorial survey studies conducted by the National Center for Human Resources Development (NCHRD) on behalf of the MoL and financed by the ETVET Fund. The surveys cover both the demand side (numbers and skills) and the supply side, provided by the TVET institutions. Some 18 studies have been completed since 2013, covering priority sectors as identified by the ETVET Council. However, there is no evidence that training providers such as the VTC, community colleges or vocational education schools have adapted their curricula or their provision to the results and recommendations of these studies (TPR, 2016-2017).
- In addition, the NCHRD, through the Al Manar project, published HRI statistics on its website, consisting of two parts. The first part is the Education Database, which includes information about students and graduates of education institutions in Jordan, including TVET providers (NET, VTC, VE/ MoE and community colleges). The second part is the Labour Force Database, which includes in particular data about the employed, unemployed and licensed foreign workers (Rawashdeh/ UNESCO, 2019).
- The National Electronic Employment System (NEES) in the MoL, which was supposed to provide an online platform to match jobseekers and employers. Jordanian companies can register their available vacancies directly online in the system, with the required qualifications, work experience, age and gender as well as the salaries offered and other incentives. Jobseekers can register directly online or through employment offices with the support of dedicated staff trained in using the system.

Other services were initially planned to be provided through the NEES, including career guidance, labour market sectors, information and electronic/online training but these are not operational so far (Rawashdeh/ UNESCO, 2019).

There is no evidence that TVET institutions have used the results of the above-mentioned resources to inform improvement of policies relating to their TVET policies and programmes.

At institutional level, some of the main TVET providers, such as the VTC and, to a lesser extent, the MoE, conduct tracer studies that include feedback from employers and graduates on the skills needed. However, also here, there is no evidence that the results are used to inform improvements.

3.2 Employment policy and institutional setting

- **Strategy and legal framework in the employment policy field**

For the last decade, the national employment strategy was the main policy document in the area of employment. The strategy covered the period 2011-2020 but has not been updated or replaced by a new strategy. It was aimed at 'improving the living standards of Jordanians, through increased employment, wages and benefits, and productivity improvements.' The goal on the supply side as identified by the strategy is 'to graduate a skilled and motivated labour force, armed with the employable skills and technical know-how demanded by the labour market.' Among the policies identified for achieving the goal is 'enhancing the quality of educational and vocational training outcomes.'

Even though the strategy is outdated, it is still referred as the strategy on the Ministry of Labour website.

No new employment strategy has been devised so far.

- **Initiatives to boost employment**

Different initiatives were developed over the last decade and implemented in Jordan to boost employment.

The first is the 'Satellite factories initiative/project' which was launched in 2008 by the Ministry of Labour as part of its efforts to reduce unemployment, particularly among women in rural areas. It is aimed at encouraging companies/investors to establish sub/new factories in the targeted areas to provide employment opportunities, mainly for women (Rawashdeh/ UNESCO, 2019). Until 2018, there were 24 satellite factories established and operating among the various governorates of Jordan, with 5,866 employees, of which 2,200 were women. In 2020, the total number of workers in these factories was around 2,434 according to the 2020 Ministry of Labour annual report. Five new factories were established during 2020, all in the clothing industry.

The Khedmat Watan programme is another initiative to boost employment. Launched in 2019, it targets young people aged 18-27 and provides them with training opportunities in the construction, industry and tourism sector. The programme is aimed at providing training to 20,000 young Jordanians, to enhance employability and incentivise vocational careers and self-employment. The first intake enrolled approximately 2,500 men and women, while the second intake is aimed at training and employing 6,000 young people. The plan is to expand the target age group to individuals aged 18-30 years.

- **Initiatives to increase the capacity of the public employment services**

The responsibility for the provision of public employment services (PES) and labour market programmes (LMPs) lies with the Ministry of Labour. The MoL is the public body in charge of regulating the labour market in Jordan, inspecting facilities and working conditions, issuing instructions to provide job opportunities, promoting labour education and vocational training, and fostering national and international cooperation.

The MoL undertakes several measures relating to employment: it promotes events aimed at training and employing jobseekers in -private sector companies and institutions and has a role in promoting support for training and employment projects through the Employment, Training and Vocational and Technical Education Fund (MoL, 2017 Strategic Plan 2017-2020, in Arabic).

The MoL has a capacity of 824 employees, representing around 0.05% of the Jordanian labour force. The Employment Directorate, one of the Ministry's 14 directorates, is responsible for all matters relating to employment, intermediation tasks and the licensing of private employment agencies.

All of the MoL's services are delivered to citizens in the various governorates by the Labour Directorates throughout the national territory. Overall, there are 88 staff members directly dealing with employment and employment services in Jordan. Table 1.1 shows the capacity and regional distribution of the PES.

Employment services are targeted at Jordanian jobseekers in the private sector only, while migrants are excluded from benefitting from the services provided by the Employment and Labour Directorates. Distinct client groups are disabled persons, young people, and in particular young graduates, for whom counselling is mostly done in cooperation with the King Abdallah II Fund. Even though female jobseekers are served by the PES, there are no specific activities targeting women.

The PES's services only target employment promotion in the private sector, reflecting Jordan's long-standing policy priority to steer jobseekers, especially young graduates, towards -private sector employment.

In addition, around 42 private employment agencies are licensed to provide services. Private employment agencies are mostly concerned with matching and intermediation of Jordanian jobseekers abroad.

- **Donor support to the employment policy field**

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

The EU is supporting the TVET system in Jordan through a EUR 65 million Sector Reform Performance Contract, providing support to the quality of education and TVET.

The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit – GIZ (German Agency for International Cooperation) remains one of the major bilateral cooperation agencies providing support to employment policies in Jordan. Two programmes are worth mentioning:

'Improving Jordan's employment policy to future-proof its labour market' (2020-2024) commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development provides advice to the MoL on the development of a future-oriented employment policy, facilitates dialogue between those involved on employment policy in general and particularly on future work practices, and supports the scaling-up of successful approaches for promoting sustainable employment.

'Employment Promotion' (2016-2022), implemented by the GIZ, focuses on building capacities and strengthening structures for employment promotion among key stakeholders at local, regional and national level. It supports the expansion of labour market policy measures such as job matching services for both public and private providers and offers assistance for -self-employment.

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STATISTICAL ANNEX, REFERENCES & ACRONYMS -JORDAN

This annex includes annual data from 2010, 2015, 2019 and 2020, or the last available year.

	Indicator	2010	2015	2019	2020	
1	Total Population (000) ⁽¹⁾	7,261.5	9,266.6	10,101.7	10,203.1	
2	Relative size of youth population (age group 15–24 and age in the denominator 15–64) (%) ^{(1) C}	33.0	32.1	31.0	30.7	
3	GDP growth rate (%)	2.3	2.5	2.0	-1.6	
4	GDP by sector (%)	Agriculture added value	3.6	4.4	4.9	5.2
		Industry added value	26.3	25.2	24.5	23.9
		Services added value	59.1	60.1	60.9	61.6
5	Public expenditure on education (as % of GDP)	M.D.	3.5 (2016)	3.0	3.1	
6	Public expenditure on education (as % of total public expenditure)	M.D.	12.2 (2016)	10.0	M.D.	
7	Adult literacy (%)	92.6	M.D.	98.2 ^(e) (2018)	M.D.	
8	Educational attainment of adult population (aged 25–64 or 15+) (%) ⁽²⁾ ⁽³⁾ ⁽⁴⁾ ⁽⁵⁾	Low	50.5	51.7	50.0	49.4
		Medium	23.1	20.0	16.6	16.5
		High	26.3	28.3	33.4	34.0
9	Early leavers from education and training (aged 18–24) (%) ^C	Total	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
		Male	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
		Female	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
10	Gross enrolment rates in upper secondary education (ISCED level 3) (%)	67.4	M.D.	54.0	M.D.	
11	Share of VET students in upper secondary education (ISCED level 3) (%)	12.4	13.1 (2014)	10.7	M.D.	
12	Tertiary education attainment (aged 30–34) (%) ^C	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	
13	Participation in training/lifelong learning (aged 25–64) (%) ^C	Total	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
		Male	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
		Female	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
14	Low achievement in reading, mathematics and science – PISA (%)	Reading	48.0 (2009)	46.3	N.A.	N.A.
		Mathematics	65.3 (2009)	67.5	N.A.	N.A.
		Science	45.6 (2009)	49.8	N.A.	N.A.
15	Activity rate (aged 15+) (%) ⁽³⁾ ⁽⁵⁾	Total	39.5	36.7	34.3	34.0
		Male	63.5	60.0	54.0	53.6
		Female	14.7	13.3	14.0	14.2

16	Inactivity rate (aged 15+) (%) ^{(5) (3)}	Total	60.5	63.3	65.7	66.0
		Male	36.5	40.0	46.0	46.4
		Female	85.3	86.7	86.0	85.8
17	Employment rate (aged 15+) (%) ^{(3) (5)}	Total	34.5	31.9	27.8	26.1
		Male	56.9	53.4	44.8	42.2
		Female	11.5	10.3	10.2	9.8
18	Employment rate by educational attainment (% aged 15+) ^{(4) (5) (3)}	Low	28.9	27.4	24.1	22.3
		Medium	32.7	28.2	22.0	20.2
		High	62.1	55.8	46.5	45.6
19	Employment by sector (%) ^{(5) (3)}	Agriculture	2.0	1.7	1.7	1.7
		Industry	18.7	17.8	16.4	17.2
		Services	79.2	80.6	81.9	81.2
20	Incidence of self-employment (%) ^{(5) (3)}		16.3	12.4	15.2	14.4
21	Incidence of vulnerable employment (%) ^{(5) (3)}		9.8	8.3	11.0	10.2
22	Unemployment rate (aged 15+) (%) ^{(5) (3)}	Total	12.5	13.0	19.1	23.2
		Male	10.4	11.0	17.1	21.2
		Female	21.7	22.5	27.0	30.7
23	Unemployment rate by educational attainment (aged 15+) (%) ^{(3) (4) (5)}	Low	11.4	11.1	17.4	22.6
		Medium	10.6	10.3	13.1	17.8
		High	16.1	18.6	24.5	26.7
24	Long-term unemployment rate (aged 15+) (%) ^{(5) (3)}		M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
25	Youth unemployment rate (aged 15--24) (%) ^{(5) (3)}	Total	28.1	30.8	40.6	46.0
		Male	23.8	26.7	36.5	41.6
		Female	46.8	53.3	59.0	65.9
26	Proportion of people aged 15--24 not in employment, education or training (NEETs) (%)	Total	M.D.	24.6 (2012)	36.0 ^c	M.D.
		Male	M.D.	15.2 (2012)	29.3 ^c	M.D.
		Female	M.D.	34.8 (2012)	43.8 ^c	M.D.

Last update : September 2021

Sources:

Indicators: 8, 9, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 & 25 – (DOS), Jordan.

Indicator 26 – ILOSTAT.

Indicators: 5, 6, 7, 10 & 11 – UNESCO, Institute for Statistics.

Indicator 14 – OECD.

Indicators 1, 2, 3 & 4 – The World Bank, World Development Indicators database.

Notes:

1. The values shown are mid-year estimates.
2. Active population.
3. The Jordanian population is taken into account.
4. Low = Less than secondary + Illiterate; Medium = Secondary + Intermediate diploma (includes VET); High = Bachelor's degree and above. Vocational apprenticeships, for which a Secondary Education Certificate is not awarded, are included in 'Low'.
5. ETF calculation based on DoS data.
6. Definition differs. There is no specific question about enrolling in the last 4 weeks for teaching or training. There is only a question about the status of enrolment of the individual currently, so this question has been adapted to calculate the indicator.

Legend:

c = calculated data

e = estimated data

NA = Not applicable

MD = Missing data

ANNEX: DEFINITIONS OF INDICATORS

	Description	Definition
1	Total population (000)	The total population is estimated as the number of persons having their usual residence in a country on 1 January of the respective year. When information on the usually resident population is not available, countries may report legal or registered residents.
2	Relative size of youth population (age group 15–24) (%)	This is the ratio of the youth population (aged 15–24) to the working-age population, usually aged 15–64 (74)/15+.
3	GDP growth rate (%)	Annual percentage growth rate of GDP at market prices based on constant local currency. Aggregates are based on constant 2010 U.S. dollars. GDP is the sum of gross value added by all resident producers in the economy plus any product taxes and minus any subsidies not included in the value of the products. It is calculated without making deductions for depreciation of fabricated assets or for depletion and degradation of natural resources.
4	GDP by sector (%)	The share of value added from Agriculture, Industry and Services. Agriculture corresponds to ISIC divisions 1–5 and includes forestry, hunting, and fishing, as well as cultivation of crops and livestock production. Value added is the net output of a sector after adding up all outputs and subtracting intermediate inputs. It is calculated without making deductions for depreciation of fabricated assets or depletion and degradation of natural resources. The origin of value added is determined by the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC), revision 3 or 4.
5	Public expenditure on education (as % of GDP)	Public expenditure on education expressed as a percentage of GDP. Generally, the public sector funds education either by directly bearing the current and capital expenses of educational institutions, or by supporting students and their families with scholarships and public loans as well as by transferring public subsidies for educational activities to private firms or non-profit organisations (transfer to private households and enterprises). Both types of transactions together are reported as total public expenditure on education.
6	Public expenditure on education (as % of total public expenditure)	Public expenditure on education expressed as a percentage of total public expenditure. Generally, the public sector funds education either by directly bearing the current and capital expenses of educational institutions, or by supporting students and their families with scholarships and public loans as well as by transferring public subsidies for educational activities to private firms or non-profit organisations (transfer to private households and enterprises). Both types of transactions together are reported as total public expenditure on education.
7	Adult literacy (%)	Adult literacy is the percentage of the population aged 15 years and over who can both read and write a short simple statement on his/her everyday life and understand it. Generally, 'literacy' also encompasses 'numeracy' – the ability to make simple arithmetic calculations.
8	Educational attainment of adult population (25–64 or aged 15+) (%)	Educational attainment refers to the highest educational level achieved by individuals expressed as a percentage of all persons in that age group. This is usually measured in terms of the highest educational programme successfully completed, which is typically certified

		by a recognised qualification. Recognised intermediate qualifications are classified at a lower level than the programme itself.
9	Early leavers from education and training (age group 18–24) (%)	Early leavers from education and training are defined as the percentage of the population aged 18–24 with at most lower secondary education who were not in further education or training during the four weeks preceding the survey. Lower secondary education refers to ISCED 1997 levels 0–2 and 3C short (i.e. programmes lasting under two years) for data up to 2013 and to ISCED 2011 levels 0–2 for data from 2014 onwards.
10	Gross enrolment rates in upper secondary education (ISCED level 3) (%)	Number of students enrolled in a given level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education.
11	Share of VET students in upper secondary education (ISCED level 3) (%)	Total number of students enrolled in vocational programmes at a given level of education (in this case upper secondary), expressed as a percentage of the total number of students enrolled in all programmes (vocational and general) at that level.
12	Tertiary education attainment (aged 30–34) (%)	Tertiary attainment is calculated as the percentage of the population aged 30–34 who have successfully completed tertiary studies (e.g. university, higher technical institution). Educational attainment refers to ISCED 1997 level 5–6 up to 2013 and ISCED 2011 level 5–8 from 2014 onwards.
13	Participation in training/lifelong learning (age group 25–64) by sex (%)	Participants in lifelong learning refers to persons aged 25–64 who stated that they received education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey (numerator). The denominator is the total population of the same age group, excluding those who did not answer the question on participation in education and training. The information collected relates to all education or training, whether or not it is relevant to the respondent's current or possible future job. If a different reference period is used, this should be indicated.
14	Low achievement in reading, maths and science – PISA (%)	Low achievers are the 15-year-olds who are failing to reach level 2 on the PISA scale for reading, mathematics and science.
15	Activity rate (aged 15+) (%)	The activity rate is calculated by dividing the active population by the population of the same age group. The active population (also called 'labour force') is defined as the sum of employed and unemployed persons. The inactive population consists of all persons who are classified as neither employed nor unemployed.
16	Inactivity rate (aged 15+) (%)	The inactivity/out of the labour force rate is calculated by dividing the inactive population by the population of the same age group. The inactive population consists of all persons who are classified as neither employed nor unemployed.
17	Employment rate (aged 15+) (%)	The employment rate is calculated by dividing the number of employed persons by the population of the same age group. Employed persons are all persons who worked at least one hour for pay or profit during the reference period or were temporarily absent from such work. If a different age group is used, this should be indicated.
18	Employment rate by educational attainment (% aged 15+)	The employment rate is calculated by dividing the number of employed persons by the population of the same age group. Employed persons are all persons who worked at least one hour for pay or profit during the reference period or were temporarily absent from such work. If a different age group is used, this should be indicated. Educational levels refer to the highest educational level successfully completed. Three levels are considered: Low

		(ISCED level 0–2), Medium (ISCED level 3–4) and High (ISCED 1997 level 5–6, and ISCED 2011 level 5–8)
19	Employment by sector (%)	This indicator provides information on the relative importance of different economic activities with regard to employment. Data are presented by broad branches of economic activity (i.e. Agriculture/Industry/Services) based on the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC). In Europe, the NACE classification is consistent with ISIC.
20	Incidence of self-employment (%)	The incidence of self-employment is expressed by the self-employed (i.e. employers + own-account workers + contributing family workers) as a proportion of the total employed.
21	Incidence of vulnerable employment (%)	The incidence of vulnerable employment is expressed by the Own-account workers and Contributing family workers as a proportion of the total employed.
22	Unemployment rate (aged 15+) (%)	The unemployment rate represents unemployed persons as a percentage of the labour force. The labour force is the total number of people who are employed or unemployed. Unemployed persons comprise those aged 15–64 or 15+ who were without work during the reference week; are currently available for work (were available for paid employment or self-employment before the end of the two weeks following the reference week); are actively seeking work, i.e. had taken specific steps in the four-week period ending with the reference week to seek paid employment or self-employment, or had found a job to start later (within a period of, at most, three months).
23	Unemployment rate by educational attainment (aged 15+) (%)	The unemployment rate represents unemployed persons as a percentage of the labour force. The labour force is the total number of people who are employed or unemployed. Unemployed persons comprise those aged 15–64 or 15+ who were without work during the reference week; are currently available for work (were available for paid employment or self-employment before the end of the two weeks following the reference week); are actively seeking work (had taken specific steps in the four-week period ending with the reference week to seek paid employment or self-employment, or had found a job to start later (within a period of, at most, three months)). Educational levels refer to the highest educational level successfully completed. Three levels are considered: Low (ISCED level 0–2), Medium (ISCED level 3–4) and High (ISCED 1997 level 5–6, and ISCED 2011 level 5–8)
24	Long-term unemployment rate (aged 15+) (%)	The long-term unemployment rate is the share of people in the total active population who have been unemployed for 12 months or more, expressed as a percentage. The duration of unemployment is defined as the duration of a search for a job or as the period of time since the last job was held (if this period is shorter than the duration of the search for a job).
25	Youth unemployment rate (aged 15–24) (%)	The youth unemployment ratio is calculated by dividing the number of unemployed persons aged 15–24 by the total population of the same age group.
26	Proportion of people aged 15–24 not in employment, education or training (NEETs) (%)	The indicator provides information on young people aged 15–24 who meet the following two conditions: first, they are not employed (i.e. unemployed or inactive according to the ILO definition); and second, they have not received any education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey. Data are expressed as a percentage of the total population of the same age group and gender, excluding the respondents who have not answered the question on participation in education and training.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ALMP	Active labour-market programmes
AQACHEI	Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission for Higher Education institutions
CAQA	Centre for Accreditation and Quality Assurance
CBJ	Central Bank of Jordan
DOS	Department of Statistics
GDP	Gross domestic product
ILO	International Labour Organization
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoHESR	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
MoL	Ministry of Labour
NCHRD	National Centre for Human Resources Development
NEES	National Electronic Employment System
NEETs	Not in education, employment or training
NES	National Employment Strategy
NQF	National Qualification Framework
NSHRD	National Strategy for Human Resources Development
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PES	Public Employment Services
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PPP	Public Private Partnership
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
TVSDC	Technical and Vocational Skills Development Commission
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
VET	Vocational education and training
VTC	Vocational Training Corporation

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