

# JORDAN

## EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENTS 2020

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# KEY POLICY DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

## (SEPTEMBER 2019–AUGUST 2020)

Despite a challenging socioeconomic situation and the persistent effects of the instability in the region, particularly the crisis in Syria, the government of Jordan continued its efforts towards sustainable growth, making use of its primary resource – human capital. The international community continued to support Jordan in these endeavours, providing financial aid in response to the increasing pressure on the country's labour market and its education and training system.

Jordan is firmly committed to implementing its National Strategy for Human Resource Development 2016–2025, which entails fundamental changes to the governance of the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system in the country. It calls on the private sector to play a more prominent role through the establishment of a Technical and Vocational Skills Development Commission (TVSDC), which will oversee the main TVET training providers (Vocational Training Corporation, Al Balqa Applied University), the TVET Fund, the Centre for Accreditation and Quality Assurance, and the National Training of Trainers Institute.

During 2019 and 2020, the newly formed TVSDC worked on developing governance arrangements, including the legal framework, with a view to making them fully operational. A specific action plan went into development in 2020, led by the new chair of the Commission, who was appointed in February.

In parallel, the private sector is committed to playing a stronger role in decision making around skills development, and sector skills councils are being formed, with the support of the international donor community (the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), the European Union (EU) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO)). As a result, seven sector skills councils are in the process of being organised, though they are at different stages of development and are also dependent on the legislative framework regulating their operations, which is still under discussion.

In 2017, the government, with a view to broadening participation of Jordanians in the labour market, launched the National Employment and Empowerment Programme (2017–2021). It aims to decrease reliance on foreign labour, encourage labour-market participation by all Jordanians and enable job creation for skilled Jordanians, including through supporting entrepreneurship and fostering female participation by improving childcare services. No progress has been made in the implementation of the employment and empowerment programme due to lack of financial resources.

As in many other countries, the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020 negatively affected the ongoing reform processes in Jordan. The country was fairly quick to respond to the health emergency, imposing a strict lockdown in the early days. However, this has had consequences for both the economy, particularly the tourism sector, and the education and training sector. Counteractive measures were swiftly implemented both by the Jordanian government and the international community.

# 1. KEY DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Jordan has a growing population, which increased from about 6.7 million in 2010 to 10.1 million in 2019, as a result of both immigration and high natural population growth (3.1%). Most of the population (74.8%) is concentrated in three governorates out of 12 (42% in Amman, 14.3% in Zarqa, in the middle region, and 18.5% in Irbid, in the northern region). The relative size of the young population has remained fairly stable over the years at around 31%, putting strong demographic pressure on the country and requiring significant public investment in education, health, employment, housing and infrastructure<sup>1</sup>.

Jordan has historically been at a regional migration crossroads. On the one hand, it is a migrant-sending country: in 2019, the number of emigrants corresponded to around 600,000 people, with a majority emigrating to Saudi Arabia (234,661) and the United Arab Emirates (166,467). Remittances amounted to USD 4,510 million, corresponding to almost 10.2% of GDP<sup>2</sup>. On the other hand, Jordan is also a major migrant-receiving country. In 2019, the number of immigrants corresponded to 3,290,889 people, most of whom came from Palestine<sup>3</sup> and Syria, followed by Iraq and Egypt. Regarding refugees, in 2019, the total number of refugees in Jordan was 745,110, most of whom were from Syria, followed by Iraq and Yemen. The vast majority – 83.5% – live in urban areas, while the remaining 16.5% live in three camps<sup>4</sup>.

Jordan is classified as an upper middle-income country<sup>5</sup>. It has scarce water supplies and limited natural resources, with a high dependency on energy imports and a heavy reliance on its human resources. GDP growth has remained stable over the years and has not exceeded 2% since 2016. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the prospects for growth in the short term are limited, with the significant decrease in both international and domestic demand resulting in a projected contraction of -3.5%<sup>6</sup> in 2020. Persistent regional uncertainties are further hampering economic development prospects and trade.

Services is the economic sector that contributes most to GDP (61.8%), followed by industry (27.6%). The contribution of agriculture remains low, at 5.6%. The services sector is even more important when it comes to employment, with 81.9% employed in it, followed by 16.4% in industry and construction, and just 1.7% in agriculture.

The labour market in Jordan is dominated by micro enterprises (fewer than five employees). In 2017, 88% of enterprises were micro, 10.2% small, 1.4% medium and 0.4% large. SMEs account for more than 60% of economic output and employ around 31% of the labour force. SMEs face several

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<sup>1</sup> European Training Foundation (ETF), 'Employment Policies in Jordan', Working paper, ETF, 2014 – [http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/Employment\\_policies\\_Jordan](http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/Employment_policies_Jordan)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/migrationremittancesdiasporaissues/brief/migration-remittances-data>

<sup>3</sup> This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue

<sup>4</sup> UNHCR, Jordan Factsheet 2019 – <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/72076>

<sup>5</sup> World Bank, historical classification by country – <https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519-world-bank-country-and-lending-groups>

<sup>6</sup> The World Bank group, Jordan Economic Outlook 2020 – <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/jordan/publication/economic-update-april-2020#:~:text=Jordan%27s%20economic%20growth%20is%20projected,reduced%20domestic%20demand%20during%202020.&text=The%20coronavirus%20pandemic%20poses%20an,economic%20recovery%20and%20to%20Jordan%27s.>

constraints on their development and growth, such as limited access to finance, infrastructure, technology and labour-market rigidities. The World Bank ‘Doing Business’ ranking 2020 ranks Jordan at 75 out of 190 countries, up from 104 in 2018. This progress is attributed to a series of economic reforms enacted over the past year<sup>7</sup>.

Development of micro enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is one of the government’s priorities. However, the latest interim assessment of the SME policy index<sup>8</sup> (2018) indicates that the progress made by Jordan since the previous 2014 assessment is limited. The most important achievement was the finalisation of the National Entrepreneurship and SME Growth Strategy, developed with the support of the EU, but which has yet to be approved. A key objective of this strategy is to ‘build awareness and a culture of entrepreneurship within society through i) fostering an entrepreneurial spirit in all governorates and across all sectors, and ii) integrating the concept of entrepreneurship in school curricula at all grade levels<sup>9</sup>.

## 2. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### 2.1 Trends and challenges

As a nation with a fast-growing youth population and a lack of natural resources, Jordan considers well-educated human resources to be one of its major priorities and areas of potential. Jordan’s education system performs relatively well compared with those of its neighbours: the adult literacy rate is the highest in the region, at 99.49% in 2018<sup>10</sup>. The enrolment ratio has increased over the years to reach 80.9% for primary education, 62.2% for secondary education and 34.4% for higher education. Very slight differences exist between females and males at all education levels, but the gender-biased range of subjects narrows students’ choices when it comes to future careers (there are more girls in education, health and social services). The proportion of those aged 15–24 enrolled in vocational education (ISCED level 3) is low, at 1.2% (1.5% male and 0.9% female) in 2018<sup>11</sup>.

In general, the educational attainment of the adult population is low. In 2019, 59.1% of the population aged 15+ had a low level of education, 22.4% a medium level and 18.7% a high level. This may be linked to the fact that people leave school after primary or secondary education or they drop out of the system. Data on early leavers from education, available for 2017 only, indicate that the rate reached an alarming 51.3% that year (56.5% men and 45.7% women). In terms of access to the labour market, 46% of those employed have a high education level, compared with 24% with a low education level. Another factor here is that a large proportion of those with no or only a low level of education most likely join the informal labour market.

In Jordan, the pre-school (kindergarten) cycle lasts a maximum of two years, the basic education cycle lasts 10 years and the secondary education cycle two years.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2019/10/24/doing-business-2020-with-a-strong-reform-agenda-jordan-joins-the-top-3-global-improvers>

<sup>8</sup> OECD/EU/ETF, ‘The Mediterranean Middle East and North Africa 2018: Interim Assessment of Key SME Reforms, SME Policy Index’, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2018.

<sup>9</sup> Economic Policy Council, *Jordan Economic Growth Plan 2018–2020*, p.79 – <http://www.ssif.gov.jo/UploadFiles/JEGProgramEnglish.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> <http://uis.unesco.org/country/JO>

<sup>11</sup> *idem*

As a result of accelerated demographic growth, including the influx of migrants and refugees, the capacity of Jordan's education system is under strong pressure in terms of its infrastructure and staff. In response, many schools have introduced double shifts (morning and afternoon). According to a recent study<sup>12</sup>, during the 2016/2017 school year, the number of schools running a double shift increased to 200. In many over-crowded classrooms, the teacher-student ratio was 1:50, particularly in the city of Irbid, which has witnessed the highest enrolment rates of Syrian children in public schools. It has been necessary to reduce learning time to accommodate the double shift, with a consequent negative effect on the quality of education in these schools, particularly for the Syrians attending the second shifts.

Higher education is offered in 33 universities (10 public and 23 private). The number of higher education institutions has increased as a result of the sustained demand for higher education, which is mainly seen as a key to entering the labour market, either in Jordan or abroad. More than 300,000 students enrol in higher education every year.

Although the results of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) for 2018 indicate a positive progression in reading, mathematics and science, the share of low achievers in all three subjects (below level 2) was 28.4, compared with a share of top achievers of 1.4, both being considerably far from the OECD average (13.4 and 15.7, respectively). Scores also indicate that girls outperform boys significantly (by more than 50 points, in the case of Jordan)<sup>13</sup>.

Despite the efforts of both the government and the international community, the education and training sector in Jordan still suffers from structural challenges, which have been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly with regard to equal access to education. Like other countries in the region, Jordan responded to the crisis by implementing distance education solutions quite rapidly, to ensure continuity of the offer of compulsory education, but vocational training was almost totally discontinued for the whole period of the lockdown. It was not until May 2020 that the Ministry of Labour announced the launch of the e-learning education platform for VET. Thanks to the support of the European Union, this was able to become operational in a relatively short time<sup>14</sup>.

Distance and online learning have become top priorities for reform within the education and training system. This was announced by the King in a speech in August 2020 during an event to discuss the development of an e-learning platform for general education. He stressed the importance of devising sustainable solutions, combining classroom-based and e-learning approaches. He also emphasised that schools needed to be equipped with the necessary tools to become more digital, while also underlining the imperative need to reach all students (an estimated 16% are not able to connect to the platform<sup>15</sup>).

Although schools reopened on 6 September 2020, concerns among parents about their children's health and the increase of covid cases led to the suspension, on 14 September, of classroom-based

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<sup>12</sup> Bataineh, A. and Montalbano, P., 'The Impact of the Syrian Crisis on the Quality of Education in Jordan: A Quantitative and Qualitative Assessment', Working Papers 7/18, Sapienza University of Rome, DISS, 2018 – [http://www.diss.uniroma1.it/sites/default/files/allegati/DisSE\\_Bataineh\\_Montalbano\\_wp7\\_2018.pdf](http://www.diss.uniroma1.it/sites/default/files/allegati/DisSE_Bataineh_Montalbano_wp7_2018.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> [https://www.oecd.org/pisa/Combined\\_Executive\\_Summaries\\_PISA\\_2018.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/pisa/Combined_Executive_Summaries_PISA_2018.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> ETF, Mapping Covid 19: the overview – <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/news-and-events/news/mapping-covid-19-overview>

<sup>15</sup> News report in *The Jordan Times*, dated 30 August 2020 – <https://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/king-urges-merging-e-learning-be-part-educational-system>

schooling for a period of two weeks. Such disruptions in education and training are expected to continue if the infection continues to rise.

## 2.2 Education and training policy and institutional setting

The National Vision and Strategy for Jordan 2015–2025 (Jordan 2025) determines the framework for government actions. It outlines a comprehensive and long-term national strategy and identifies a set of social and economic goals for responding to the social and economic challenges the country is currently facing. It emphasises education as a major national asset and underlines its importance for economic growth. Complementing Jordan 2025, the National Strategy for Human Resource Development (NSHRD) (2016–2025) provides a new vision of education as a comprehensive human resource development system that aims to enhance the skills, qualifications, capabilities and behaviours of citizens in order to achieve Jordan's social and economic ambitions. To sustain these priorities, public expenditure in education (as a percentage of GDP and of public expenditure) should reflect an increase in the period covered by the strategy.

The NSHRD establishes a set of wide-ranging reforms and action plans for all sectors related to education, from early childhood education to VET and higher education. It aims to provide a range of different pathways and opportunities to students, enabling them to continue learning and developing their skills according to their capacities and interests, and seeks to make existing structures more efficient. The main priorities of the NSHRD are i) to ensure equal access to education for all students; ii) to empower educational institutions to take responsibility for their performance through delegated responsibilities and decentralised decision making; and iii) to incorporate innovative and creative educational approaches through the use of technology.

The NSHRD stresses the importance of providing secondary education and offering students career guidance and counselling services to guide them in their education and professional career paths, and to support them in better matching their skills, competencies and aspirations. Despite the efforts deployed over the past few years, however, career guidance services remain insufficient, particularly at lower levels of education.

The National Strategy for Youth 2019–2025 was launched in September 2019. Its aim is to enable young people to create, innovate and be more productive, as well as to increase their participation in society, including in political life. The strategy includes several axes, among them education and technology, but also entrepreneurship and active leadership. Since the strategy's launch, however, few concrete actions and steps appear to have been taken.

The Ministry of Education (MoE), Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MoHESR) and Ministry of Labour (MoL) have also begun to reflect on the need to develop a vision and a national strategy for adult education and lifelong learning. Though offers of both do exist in Jordan, they are marginal and not well structured. Consequently, the percentage of people aged 25–64 participating in lifelong learning programmes remains very low, at 1% in total (1.2% men and 0.7% women). The work by the ministries, which is supported by the Institute for International Cooperation of the Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V. (DVV International), is at an early stage and focuses on the development of a roadmap towards this vision and strategy. Preliminary recommendations were presented by the MoL and discussed at a conference held in Amman on 9 and 10 September 2019. Consultations continued in 2020 and preparatory work began on the Jordan National Report on Adult Education. However, the Covid-19 pandemic meant other priorities had to be added to the education and training reform agenda. During the lockdown and social-distancing periods the already limited and fragmented adult education and continuing training offers were discontinued.

In terms of governance of the education and training systems, the MoE supervises public and private schools, while the Council of Education develops curricula and contents. The MoHESR is responsible for implementing higher education policies, while the Higher Education Council formulates policies for and supervises universities and community colleges. The Higher Education Accreditation Commission monitors the compliance of higher education institutions with regulations and quality standards. It is also responsible for developing and implementing Jordan's National Qualifications Framework. The Ministry of Labour is the body responsible for vocational training. In 2019, a new Commission, the Technical and Vocational Skills Development Commission and the Council have been established to oversee the whole TVET sector.

All these government structures are supported by other institutions and organisations, such as the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) (a semi-autonomous agency under the MoL), private providers (such as Luminus), the National Centre for Human Resources Development (NCHRD), the Jordan Education Initiative, the Madrasati Initiative and other royal non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

The current system is rather rigid: based on their performance, almost 90% of students who complete the tenth grade of basic education are streamed into either general education (high performers) or vocational education in the comprehensive secondary schools. The rest (low performers) can study in one of the VTC institutes. The lack of accreditation or pathways to allow mobility (permeability) within the system isolates the TVET system further and makes this training path even less attractive.

Despite the increasing need for more technical and vocational skills, TVET careers still suffer from a negative image, for both social and economic reasons. Young people are discouraged by the unattractive wages and overall poor working conditions of the vocational career opportunities available in the labour market. As a result, students with high grades opt for general and academic education, with higher education as the preferred option, because it can offer opportunities for obtaining a stable and protected civil-service job. However, job offers in the public sector are becoming scarce, which is having a knock-on effect on the unemployment rate of higher-education graduates.

The Jordan 2025 strategy places great importance on the TVET sector as a vehicle to better equip young people for entering the labour market. Specific TVET system reforms are included in the Jordan National E-TVET Strategy (2014–2020), which aims to develop and implement a demand-driven TVET system that enables Jordanians to fulfil their career aspirations and contribute to the country's economic growth and social development. In this context of reform, in spring 2019 the parliament adopted a new technical and vocational skills development law, introducing major changes to the TVET system and its governance. The law established the new Technical and Vocational Skills Development Commission (TVSDC), the aims of which are to consolidate all previously existing bodies with responsibilities in the TVET system and supervise the TVET sector. Thus, the likes of the Centre for Accreditation and Quality Assurance (CAQA), previously an independent body, will fall under the responsibility of the new commission, with a potential reduction in autonomy. Nevertheless, the merging of different bodies into a single commission represents a step forward in mainstreaming and bringing coherence to the rather fragmented TVET system.

The TVSDC's tasks include the accreditation and supervision of TVET providers; the development of criteria for acceptance in all types and levels of TVET programmes, as well as provisions for implementing TVET programmes; the establishment of specialisations according to the requirements of sector skills councils; and the adoption of budgets for TVET programmes and supervision of their disbursement.

The TVSDC will be governed by a board (the Council) comprising 15 members: a chairperson, five representatives of ministries or public institutions responsible for the different sub-sectors of TVET,

eight representatives from the private sector and one from civil society. The fact that most of the members will come from the business sector is an important change<sup>16</sup>. However, the TVSDC council is chaired by the Minister of Labour, which may put its autonomy in decision making in doubt. The role of the Council vis a vis the Commission will also become clearer once the TVSD Commission starts implementing its action plan, following the official nomination of the TVSDC chief executive officer (nominated in February 2020).

This action plan outlines the functions and future role of the TVSDC, which are expected to be fleshed out further through specific bylaws. Governance arrangements are underway to make the commission operational, but the process has been delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic, especially as, during the lockdown period, the public administration was unable to continue working at full speed.

To support the reform process, several donors are investing efforts and funds in the TVET system in Jordan. In 2016, the Ministry of Labour carried out a mapping exercise of donors' support to the TVET sector, which revealed that 36 projects were being implemented at the time, with a total budget of JOD 223,350,000 (approximately EUR 268 million). The interventions cover job placement, enhancement of workforce participation and curricula development, and career guidance. The two key target beneficiaries across all projects are women and young people.

The EU contributed through a budget support component (EUR 43 million), which ended in February 2020, and a complementary technical assistance component (EUR 9 million), which is due to come to an end in December 2020. A new EU budget support programme covering education and training is being prepared.

The 2016 donors' mapping exercise has not been repeated, which is unfortunate, as it would be beneficial to have regular updates, as well as regular donor coordination meetings covering the education and training sector.

### 3. LABOUR MARKET AND EMPLOYMENT

#### 3.1 Trends and challenges

The labour market in Jordan faces significant structural problems, such as low rates of participation, particularly by women, and insufficient job creation to absorb the increasing influx of jobseekers. Linkages between education outputs and labour-market needs are weak and there is a mismatch in terms of quality and expectations. The labour market is fairly fragmented, with disparities between genders, between the private and public sectors, and between formal and informal jobs. In addition, as a result of immigration flows, there is clear segmentation between Jordanians, economic immigrants and Syrian refugees. The current challenging situation in the labour market contributes to the high level of informality.

Additionally, activity rates remain low and are progressively decreasing, particularly among women. The overall activity rate in 2019 was 34.3%, having constantly decreased from 2010, when it was 39.5%. The activity rate among women has been fairly stable over the past ten years, reaching its peak of 17.3% in 2017 before declining again, to 14%, in 2019. Data indicate that the activity rate among women is highest in the age group 25–49 (25% and 23.1% in 2018 and 2019, respectively),

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<sup>16</sup> It should be noted that trades unions are not represented on the board of the commission.

while it is much lower in the age group 15–24 (9.4% in 2019). The difficulties encountered by women in joining the labour market are laid bare by the facts that 90.1% of young women (aged 15–24) are out of the labour force, 48.2% are not in education, employment or training (NEET) and 58.6% are unemployed. Understanding the root causes of this low participation is crucial to devising measures to respond to the needs of this, often vulnerable, population.

Employment rates overall are still rather low, with just 27% of those aged 15+ in employment (44.8% men and only 10.2% women). In fact, employment rates have been decreasing constantly since 2010, when the overall rate was 34.5%, the rate for men was 56.9% and the rate for women was 11.5%. Thus, while the employment rate for women has been fairly stable over the last ten years, for men there has been a progressive decrease in labour-market participation.

Unemployment rates, too, have been correspondingly negative, having increased from 12.5% in 2010 to 19.1% in 2019. Again, the picture is bleaker for men, for whom the unemployment rate increased more than for women, from 10.4% in 2010 to 17.1% in 2020. While employment rates by education attainment indicate that those with a higher level of education have a better chance of being employed, unemployment rates indicate that this cohort actually has more difficulties in finding a job. In fact, the unemployment rate among those with a high level of education was 24.5% in 2019 (19.2% for men and 32% for women), which could be explained by a lack of good-quality and high-skilled jobs. Meanwhile, medium-skilled workers have more employment opportunities and the lowest unemployment rate (13.1%).

The labour-market outcomes for young Jordanians are concerning. The country's youth unemployment rate is approximately twice the rate for the overall population. In 2019, the youth unemployment rate (15–24 age group) reached 40.6% (59% for young women). Furthermore, many young people are in vulnerable, informal and low-paid employment<sup>17</sup>. Data on NEETs are only available for 2017 and indicated a total of 38.1%, with women the most affected (48.2%).

Young people with a university degree encounter more difficulties in entering the labour market. This can be explained, in part, by the fact that, traditionally, young people aspired to getting a job and pursuing a career in the public sector, as it offers better working conditions in terms of security, shorter working hours and non-wage benefits. However, while the percentage of people employed in the public sector in 2018 was 39.9%<sup>18</sup>, it can no longer absorb large numbers of university graduates. In recent years, opportunities and positions available in the public sector have decreased and the private sector has not been able to pick up the slack.

Another important labour-market trend relates to labour migration. The lack of well-remunerated domestic employment has led many Jordanians to seek employment abroad, mainly in the Gulf countries. Jordanians have traditionally regarded the Gulf countries as virtual extensions of the local labour market for skilled and experienced professionals. At the same time, Jordan faces a high influx of immigrant labour (about 400,000 workers with work permits live and work in the country, as well as another 400,000 without legal permits)<sup>19</sup>. The economy creates many low-skilled jobs, which are mostly taken by foreign immigrant workers, at wages and conditions incompatible with the rather high expectations of Jordanian workers. The main characteristics of foreign workers are that they are

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<sup>17</sup> [https://www.oecd.org/dev/inclusivesocietiesanddevelopment/Youth\\_well\\_being\\_policy\\_review\\_Jordan.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/dev/inclusivesocietiesanddevelopment/Youth_well_being_policy_review_Jordan.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> Jordan Department of Statistics, 2018

<sup>19</sup> European Training Foundation (ETF), *Migrant Support Measures from an Employment and Skills Perspective (MISMES): Jordan*, 2017 – [www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/MISMES\\_Jordan](http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/MISMES_Jordan)

mostly low skilled (62% have less than secondary education), mostly men (60%) and mostly employed in manufacturing, construction, domestic work and agriculture.

### 3.2 Employment policy and institutional setting

In 2011, Jordan adopted a comprehensive National Employment Strategy 2011–2020 (NES) to tackle employment challenges, specifically poor job growth, high structural unemployment, especially high youth unemployment, low labour-force participation of women and the lack of policy coherence. The strategy includes supply-side, demand-side and institutional elements. On the demand side, the strategy underlines the importance of enabling the private sector to move up the value chain, increase its productivity, expand its ability to export products and services, and create more and better jobs. On the supply side, the objective is to create a skilled and motivated labour force to meet labour-market demand. Institutional objectives include enhancing the government's capacities in policy planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation, as well as improving social protection and establishing a health insurance system for all. Now that the strategy is in the final year of implementation, labour-market performance indicators do not suggest a positive outcome.

In reality, the NES served as an umbrella for a collection of existing projects and was used to mobilise additional resources. Reporting on the NES is limited to updates on the stage of implementation of these projects and actions; there is no substantive reporting either on the impact of interventions or on the achievement of the strategy's objectives. In 2015, at the request of the government, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) carried out an evaluation of the NES; however, its report has never been published.

In September 2017, the government launched the National Employment and Empowerment Programme (2017–2021) with an overall budget of EUR 110 million. The aim is to reduce reliance on foreign labour, encourage labour-market participation by Jordanians, and enhance job creation for skilled Jordanians, including by supporting entrepreneurship and fostering female participation through the provision of childcare services. The programme was designed to gradually replace migrants with Jordanian workers after they'd been trained and certified, and covers the following sectors: tourism, manufacturing (excluding garment production), construction, agriculture, day-care centres and petrol stations. For each of these sectors, the programme has set annual targets for reducing the number of migrant workers, ranging from 10% for the construction sector to 25% for tourism. Owing to a lack of financial resources, however, no progress has been made so far in implementing this programme.

The MoL is responsible for employment policies and operates 21 employment offices. Three of these offices (in Amman, Irbid and Zarqa) have been transformed into 'one-stop shops', offering a range of services: i) advisory and placement services relating to vocational training; ii) information on job opportunities, collected by a local marketing specialist who liaises with the private sector and maintains a database of locally available vacancies and who organises events aimed at linking jobseekers and employers; iii) employment counselling services; and iv) referrals to micro-finance providers. Despite the existence of a dedicated section within the MoL, career guidance services are still underdeveloped within the public employment services. A further 40 private employment agencies co-exist on the market.

An online platform to match jobseekers and employers – the National Electronic Employment System (NEES) – is available to help match demand to supply. The NEES has three access points for jobseekers, companies and staff. Jobseekers can register in three ways: online, in the employment office, or in the municipality, with the support of a dedicated member of staff trained to use the system.

It is expected that the NEES will lead to the development of online career guidance, though this is not yet operational.

Several active labour-market programmes (ALMPs) have been implemented within the framework of the NES. These aim to enhance the quality of human capital, empower women economically and enhance entrepreneurship and business development. The public employment services and NGOs are the two main implementers of ALMPs. Private-sector entities are involved as the lead implementing agency in 27% of all interventions. Slightly more than half of all interventions are implemented cooperatively, that is, with different types of agencies cooperating as lead implementers. There is wide variation in the number of those benefiting from the programmes, which range from pilot projects with fewer than 100 participants to large-scale schemes targeting several thousand people<sup>20</sup>. The most commonly provided ALMPs are skills training (technical and vocational skills) and employment services, while entrepreneurship promotion and subsidised employment programmes are offered less frequently.

Entrepreneurship is a hot topic on the economic agenda, receiving attention from the government for its potential to tackle the high rates of unemployment. A programme was recently launched in partnership with the World Bank to improve SMEs' access to funds. The King Abdullah Financial District (KAFD) Productive Youth project connects young people with funding opportunities for small-business development. Another KAFD project, the Youth Empowerment Window, provides financial, technical and logistical support to turn young people's innovative ideas into start-ups. The Development Employment Fund provides financial support to small enterprises and promotes an entrepreneurial culture in universities. Other organisations, such as the Jordan Enterprise Development Corporation and the United Nations Development Programme, provide business support services and financing<sup>21</sup>.

Sources of information on the labour market and human resources are fragmented, preventing education and training from becoming more demand-driven and meeting labour-market needs. The Department of Statistics collects labour-market data by conducting various surveys, on such topics as unemployment, employment in companies and businesses, and household expenditure and income. The National Centre for Human Resources Development (NCHRD), in coordination with the MoL, conducts sector surveys that examine the current and future labour-market skills needs and match them with the current training provision. Each of the studies maps the workforce in the sector by occupation, gender and education level; it also analyses the training provision in terms of level of qualification. The studies focus on employment opportunities for women<sup>22</sup>. The NCHRD maintains a database that compiles data from the Department of Statistics, the MoL (migrant workers), the Social Security Corporation, the VTC, the MoHESR and the Civil Service Bureau. Various institutions are involved in producing labour-market data, but there is little cooperation between them, meaning there is scope to build a labour-market information system.

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<sup>20</sup> [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/documents/publication/wcms\\_598671.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_598671.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> [https://www.oecd.org/dev/inclusivesocietiesanddevelopment/Youth\\_well\\_being\\_policy\\_review\\_Jordan.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/dev/inclusivesocietiesanddevelopment/Youth_well_being_policy_review_Jordan.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.nchrd.gov.jo/>

Recent ETF Country Intelligence Products:

- [Mapping of Covid-19 impact on education and training](#)
- ETF Torino process assessment (yet to be published in the ETF website)
- NQF Inventory Country Page <https://openspace.etf.europa.eu/nqf-inventories>

# JORDAN: STATISTICAL ANNEX

Annex includes annual data from 2010, 2015, 2018 and 2019 or the last available year.

	Indicator	2010	2015	2018	2019
1	Total Population (000) <sup>(1)</sup>	7,261.5	9,266.6	9,956.0	10,101.7
2	Relative size of youth population (age group 15–24 and age in the denominator 15–64) (%) <sup>(1) C</sup>	33.0	32.1	31.2	31.0
3	GDP growth rate (%)	2.3	2.4	1.9	2.0
4	GDP by sector (%)	Agriculture added value	4.1	5.1	5.6
		Industry added value	28.8	28.2	27.6
		Services added value	60.2	61.1	61.8
5	Public expenditure on education (as % of GDP)	M.D.	M.D.	3.6	M.D.
6	Public expenditure on education (as % of total public expenditure)	M.D.	M.D.	11.6	M.D.
7	Adult literacy (%)	92.6	M.D.	98.2 <sup>(e)</sup>	M.D.
8	Educational attainment of adult population (aged 25–64 or 15+) (%) <sup>(2) (3) (4) (5)</sup>	Low	50.5	51.7	49.2
		Medium	23.1	20.0	17.3
		High	26.3	28.3	33.5
9	Early leavers from education and training (aged 18–24) (%) <sup>C</sup>	Total	M.D.	M.D.	51.3 <sup>(6)</sup> (2017)
		Male	M.D.	M.D.	56.5 <sup>(6)</sup> (2017)
		Female	M.D.	M.D.	45.7 <sup>(6)</sup> (2017)
10	Gross enrolment rates in upper secondary education (ISCED level 3) (%)	67.4	M.D.	50.3	M.D.
11	Share of VET students in upper secondary education (ISCED level 3) (%)	12.4	M.D.	11.5	M.D.
12	Tertiary education attainment (aged 30–34) (%) <sup>C</sup>	M.D.	M.D.	22.3 (2017)	M.D.
13	Participation in training/lifelong learning (aged 25–64) (%) <sup>C</sup>	Total	M.D.	M.D.	1.0 <sup>(6)</sup> (2017)
		Male	M.D.	M.D.	1.2 <sup>(6)</sup> (2017)
		Female	M.D.	M.D.	0.7 <sup>(6)</sup> (2017)
14	Reading	48.0 (2009)	46.3	41.2	N.A.

	Indicator	2010	2015	2018	2019
	Low achievement in reading, mathematics and science – PISA (%)	Mathematics	65.3 (2009)	67.5	59.3
		Science	45.6 (2009)	49.8	40.4
15	Activity rate (aged 15+) (%) <sup>(3)(5)</sup>	Total	39.5	36.7	36.2
		Male	63.5	60.0	56.4
		Female	14.7	13.3	15.4
16	Inactivity rate (aged 15+) (%) <sup>(5)(3)</sup>	Total	60.5	63.3	63.8
		Male	36.5	40.0	43.6
		Female	85.3	86.7	84.6
17	Employment rate (aged 15+) (%) <sup>(3)(5)</sup>	Total	34.5	31.9	29.5
		Male	56.9	53.4	47.1
		Female	11.5	10.3	11.3
18	Employment rate by educational attainment (% aged 15+) <sup>(4)(5)(3)</sup>	Low	28.9	27.4	25.3
		Medium	32.7	28.2	23.7
		High	62.1	55.8	49.8
19	Employment by sector (%) <sup>(5)(3)</sup>	Agriculture	2.0	1.7	1.8
		Industry	18.7	17.8	16.4
		Services	79.2	80.6	81.9
20	Incidence of self-employment (%) <sup>(5)(3)</sup>	16.3	12.4	14.8	15.2
21	Incidence of vulnerable employment (%) <sup>(5)(3)</sup>	9.8	8.3	10.2	11.0
22	Unemployment rate (aged 15+) (%) <sup>(5)(3)</sup>	Total	12.5	13.0	18.6
		Male	10.4	11.0	16.5
		Female	21.7	22.5	26.8
23	Unemployment rate by educational attainment (aged 15+) (%) <sup>(3)(4)(5)</sup>	Low	11.4	11.1	16.9
		Medium	10.6	10.3	14.1
		High	16.1	18.6	23.5
24	Long-term unemployment rate (aged 15+) (%) <sup>(5)(3)</sup>	M.D.	M.D.	12.0	M.D.
25	Youth unemployment rate (aged 15–24) (%) <sup>(5)(3)</sup>	Total	28.1	30.8	39.2
		Male	23.8	26.7	34.8
		Female	46.8	53.3	58.6

	<b>Indicator</b>		<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
26	Proportion of people aged 15–24 not in employment, education or training (NEETs) (%)	Total	M.D.	24.6 (2012)	38.1 <sup>(6) C</sup> (2017)	M.D.
		Male	M.D.	15.2 (2012)	28.8 <sup>(6) C</sup> (2017)	M.D.
		Female	M.D.	34.8 (2012)	48.2 <sup>(6) C</sup> (2017)	M.D.

Last update: end of August 2020

**Sources:**

Indicators: 8, 9, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26 (Year 2017) – Department of Statistics (DoS), Jordan.

Indicator 26 (Year 2012) – 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) 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 apprenticeship, for which a Secondary Education Certificate is not awarded, is included in 'LOW'.
- (5) ETF calculation based on DoS data
- (6) Definition differs. There is no specific question about enrolling in the last four weeks with 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

N.A. = Not Applicable

M.D. = Missing Data

## ANNEX: INDICATORS' DEFINITIONS

	Description	Definition
<b>1</b>	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.
<b>2</b>	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+.
<b>3</b>	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.
<b>4</b>	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 for depletion and degradation of natural resources. The origin of value added is determined by the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC), revision 3 or 4.
<b>5</b>	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.
<b>6</b>	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.
<b>7</b>	Adult literacy (%)	Adult literacy is the percentage of the population aged 15 years and over who can both read and write a short simple statement on his/her everyday life, and understand it. Generally, 'literacy' also encompasses 'numeracy' – the ability to make simple arithmetic calculations.

Description	Definition
<b>8</b> Educational attainment of adult population (25-64 or aged 15+) (%)	<p>Educational attainment refers to the highest educational level achieved by individuals expressed as a percentage of all persons in that age group.</p> <p>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.</p>
<b>9</b> Early leavers from education and training (age group 18-24) (%)	<p>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 (LFS) 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.</p>
<b>10</b> Gross enrolment rates in upper secondary education (ISCED level 3) (%)	<p>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.</p>
<b>11</b> Share of VET students in upper secondary education (ISCED level 3) (%)	<p>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.</p>
<b>12</b> Tertiary education attainment (aged 30-34) (%)	<p>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.</p>
<b>13</b> Participation in training/lifelong learning (age group 25-64) by sex (%)	<p>Participants in lifelong learning refers to persons aged 25–64 who stated that they received education or training in the four weeks preceding the (LFS) 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.</p>
<b>14</b> Low achievement in reading, maths and science – PISA (%)	<p>Low achievers are the 15-year-olds who are failing to reach level 2 on the PISA scale for reading, mathematics and science.</p>
<b>15</b> Activity rate (aged 15+) (%)	<p>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.</p>
<b>16</b> Inactivity rate (aged 15+) (%)	<p>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.</p>
<b>17</b> Employment rate (aged 15+) (%)	<p>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</p>

Description	Definition
	temporarily absent from such work. If a different age group is used, this should be indicated.
<b>18</b> Employment rate by educational attainment (% aged 15+)	<p>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.</p> <p>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).</p>
<b>19</b> Employment by sector (%)	<p>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.</p>
<b>20</b> Incidence of self-employment (%)	<p>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.</p>
<b>21</b> Incidence of vulnerable employment (%)	<p>The incidence of vulnerable employment is expressed by the own-account workers and contributing family workers as a proportion of the total employed.</p>
<b>22</b> Unemployment rate (aged 15+) (%)	<p>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).</p>
<b>23</b> Unemployment rate by educational attainment (aged 15+) (%)	<p>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 consider: Low (ISCED level 0-2), Medium (ISCED level 3-4) and High (ISCED 1997 level 5-6, and ISCED 2011 level 5-8)</p>
<b>24</b> Long-term unemployment rate (aged 15+) (%)	<p>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).</p>

	<b>Description</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>25</b>	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.
<b>26</b>	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.

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ALMP	Active labour-market programmes
CAQA	Centre for Accreditation and Quality Assurance
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
GDP	Gross domestic product
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
ISIC	International Standard Industrial Classification
JOD	Jordanian dinar (currency)
KAFD	King Abdullah Financial District
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
NEET	Not in education, employment or training
NES	National Employment Strategy 2011–2020
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NSHRD	National Strategy for Human Resource Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
TVSDC	Technical and Vocational Skills Development Commission
VET	Vocational education and training
VTC	Vocational Training Corporation

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