

MIGRANT SUPPORT MEASURES FROM AN EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS PERSPECTIVE (MISMES)

JORDAN

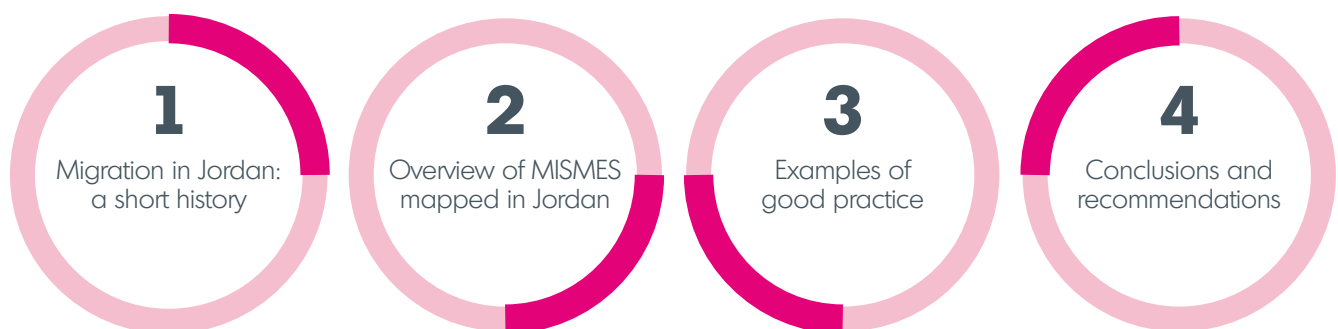
MIGRANT SUPPORT MEASURES FROM AN EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS PERSPECTIVE (MISMES)

In previous years, the ETF has conducted studies on migration and skills focusing on specific countries neighbouring the EU. This earlier research provided evidence about the skills of migrants and the extent to which they are underutilised abroad and upon return. It also showed the need to develop policy measures to support migrants in order to improve job and skills matching for the benefit of the receiving countries, the countries of origin and the migrants themselves. This is the so-called win-win-win effect.

MISMES aim at improving the labour market integration of migrants by facilitating decent work, labour mobility, job matching, livelihood and employment skills, as well as access to labour market information and protection of labour rights. They also aim at reducing the underutilisation of migrants' skills and improving skills matching more generally through skills development, work-based learning, career guidance and counselling, and the recognition and validation of skills. Measures are considered to be 'good practice' when they not only cover skills and employment training and job matching, but also seek to strengthen social cohesion.

MISMES are defined as specific policy interventions in all phases of the migration cycle. In Jordan, MISMES are in place covering Jordanian emigrants, foreign labour immigrants and refugees. By refugees, we mean people displaced by conflict and unable to return safely to their homeland, regardless of their legal status. To qualify as MISMES, policy interventions should mobilise specific budget resources (regardless of who funds or implements the action) to achieve labour market integration or skills utilisation or enhancement goals, generally over a decade (between 2006 and 2016).

A SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH



INTRODUCTION

Jordan is a constitutional monarchy with a stable political system, a growing young population and a lack of natural resources. According to the last census in 2015, its population is 9.5 million, which reflects the impact of immigration as well as high population growth. Over 60% of the population is under 30 years old. This necessitates significant public investment in education, health, employment, housing and infrastructure.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Over 30% of the population – nearly 3 million people – are foreign nationals. These include some 1,265,000 Syrians, 636,000 Egyptians, 634,000 Palestinians, 131,000 Iraqis, 31,000 Yemenis, 23,000 Libyans; and 197,000 other nationalities according to the 2015 census. These figures exclude the many foreigners, especially Palestinians, who have been granted Jordanian citizenship over the decades. The foreign population comprises huge numbers of refugees displaced by conflict in neighbouring countries, in particular Syria and Iraq. Jordan has one of the largest numbers of migrants and the second-largest number of refugees relative to its population in the world. This unprecedented situation understandably places enormous strains on the social and economic fabric of the nation

ECONOMY

GDP growth was 2.4% in 2015 and 2.3% in 2016, despite regional conflicts that have negatively impacted tourism, construction, investment and trade. Jordan is predominantly a service economy, accounting for 66% of GDP in 2015. Manufacturing accounted for 30% and agriculture for just 4%. The vast majority of jobs are in services (81%), followed by manufacturing (18%) and agriculture (2%). The private sector is dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which make up 94% of businesses and account for over 60% of economic output and 31% of jobs.

LABOUR MARKET

Out of a working age population of over 4 million, only 40.5% were economically active in 2017, up from 36.3% in 2016. Jordan has one of the lowest female participation rates in the world, with only 13.4% of women active in the labour force, compared to 58.8% of men in 2016. Besides low participation, Jordan has growing unemployment, rising from 13% in 2015 to 15.8% in 2016 and 18.2% in 2017. Unemployment disproportionately affects women, with 33% of women unemployed compared to 13.9% of men. Unemployment is particularly high among young female graduates, standing at 54% in 2017.

The public sector is a major employer in Jordan, accounting for over 39% of the workforce in 2016. Public employment is popular among young people because of job security, shorter working hours and non-wage benefits. Two challenges for the Jordanian labour market are the large informal sector, which accounted for 44% of total employment in 2015, and geographical mismatches, with most jobs created in the capital and the big cities, while the majority of the unemployed live elsewhere. Poor quality public transport exacerbates the low mobility of the workforce.

EDUCATION

Jordan's education system performs better than its neighbours. It has the highest adult literacy rate in the region (93% in 2013) and high enrolment rates, with 95% enrolled in basic education (6–15 years), 84.3% in secondary education (16–18 years) and 35% in tertiary education. However, the 2015 PISA results point to problems with the quality and relevance of education in the country.

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Migration in Jordan: a short history

MIGRATION IN JORDAN

Jordan's history has been deeply marked by migration, which has played an essential role in the country's political, economic and social development. Jordan is simultaneously a country of emigration, immigration and transit. Jordanians have left the country in large numbers to work abroad, particularly in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf, since the 1960s, while there has been widespread immigration of foreign workers, especially from Egypt and South Asia, since the 1970s. This has happened against a background of successive waves of refugees fleeing conflict in the region, notably the Palestinians in 1948 and 1967, Iraqis from 2003 and Syrians from 2011.



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SPECIFIC MIGRANT GROUPS

The three principal migrant groups – Jordanian expatriates and returnees, foreign labour immigrants and refugees – play an important role in Jordan's society and economy. Most Jordanian emigrants are highly skilled professionals, whose remittances have been an important source of national income since the early 1970s. Emigration is primarily motivated by the lack of local opportunities for highly skilled labour market entrants. Most jobs created in Jordan are low-skilled and low-paid, and motivation to migrate remains high, with 37% of young Jordanians aged 15–29 expressing a desire to emigrate.

The impact of globalisation in the form of easier access to information through the internet and cheaper travel costs has contributed to further accelerating emigration flows. The Gulf countries have become virtual extensions of the local labour market for skilled and experienced professionals. Circular migration is the norm, with a recent survey suggesting around 46% of migrants intended to stay in their host countries, while 31% intended to return to Jordan.

Foreign labour immigrants mainly work in low-skilled and low-paid jobs in agriculture, construction, tourism, wholesale trade, domestic work and manufacturing in the Qualifying Industrial Zones (QIZs).

Foreign workers started to arrive in Jordan in the early 1970s. Jordanians are generally reluctant to engage in low-status manual jobs, especially in sectors with difficult working conditions (agriculture, domestic service and construction). The recruitment of foreign labour has therefore become a pillar of the Jordanian labour market. Over half the jobs created in the private sector – predominantly low-skilled and low-paid – go to migrant workers.

In 2017, foreign migrant workers registered with the Ministry of Labour totalled some 403,000 or 9% of the country's workforce. These figures do not provide an accurate picture as informal work is very common among immigrant workers, especially Egyptians. The Ministry of Labour estimates that there are nearly as many non-registered immigrants as there are registered ones.

As a relatively stable country in a strife-torn region, Jordan hosts large numbers of refugees. The Palestinian refugees of 1948 and 1967 and their descendants registered with the UNRWA numbered 2,117,000 in 2015. Most of them have Jordanian citizenship and only a small proportion – some 160,000 people displaced from Gaza in 1967 – can be considered as refugees in the full sense of the word.

In 2017, 729,000 other refugees were registered with the UNHCR, the vast majority of them from Syria (656,000) and Iraq (61,000). However, the 2015 census indicates there were double these numbers of Syrians and Iraqis in the country, suggesting many refugees remain unregistered. Some 85% of Syrian refugees live outside refugee camps, mostly in Irbid near the Syrian border and Amman, mainly in poor neighbourhoods. The rest live in the two major refugee camps (Zaatari and Azraq) and in three smaller camps. Until 2016, they faced restrictions on their access to the labour market. Most are low skilled and earn a living in the informal sector.

Even excluding naturalised Palestinians and discounting non-registered Syrians and Iraqis, Jordan has the second-highest number of refugees relative to its population in the world, totalling some 889,000.



CURRENT POLICIES AND FUTURE SOLUTIONS

The government provides some support to Jordanian emigration. It has signed labour agreements with the Gulf countries and taken action to facilitate emigration through job information and placement services. In 2015, 55% of Jordanian emigrants relied on informal contacts and diaspora networks to find work abroad, and 27% used state bodies or private recruitment agencies.

The government is responsible for registering immigrant workers and granting work permits for sectors that are open to foreigners. Priority is given to Arab nationals except in domestic work, which is dominated by Asian women. Jordan has signed bilateral labour agreements with the main countries of origin, and sponsorship by a Jordanian employer is customary. However, the large informal economy makes it impossible to fully supervise immigration, and there are as many unregistered as there are registered immigrants.

Jordan hosts two UN refugee agencies: UNRWA and UNHCR. Given the huge pressures following the arrival of Syrian refugees, the Jordanian government, with the support of the international community, launched the 'Jordan Response Plan for the Syria Crisis' (JRP). This combines short-term refugee policies and long-term development strategies to support 'vulnerable Jordanian host communities' as well as the Syrian refugees, in an effort to decrease social tensions.



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Overview of MISMES mapped in Jordan

MISMES

Migrant support measures from an employment and skills perspective (MISMES) in Jordan include measures designed to develop, promote and make efficient use of migrants' skills, as well as measures designed to facilitate job matching and employment rights of migrants and/or to improve their labour market conditions. Other programmes that contribute to the social inclusion of migrants include social cohesion schemes, protection programmes, life skills courses, programmes to promote expatriates' investments in Jordan and bilateral labour agreements including social protection provisions.



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MISMES IN JORDAN BETWEEN 2006 AND 2016

Of the many MISMES implemented in Jordan in this period, 33 were mapped in the study. Many others had to be left out through lack of information. Three targeted potential emigrants, including employment information and placement, verification of qualifications, and regulation of private employment agencies. Two focused on expatriates, strengthening engagement with expatriate communities, and encouraging investment

and mentoring. Seven targeted foreign labour immigrants. Besides monitoring and improving working conditions of foreign labour immigrants in Jordan, these measures also aimed at protecting human and labour rights, providing social services for migrants, promoting better work and fair recruitment, preventing 'social dumping' and combating human trafficking. Such actions are considered a means not only of protecting migrant workers, but also attracting Jordanian job-seekers to neglected employment sectors by raising standards.

The majority of measures – 21 in total – target refugees and asylum-seekers, aimed at enhancing their employability, or facilitating their employment. All such programmes include vulnerable members of local host communities in addition to refugees. It is a feature of government policy to facilitate the acceptance of refugees in local communities and underpins the Jordan Response Plan. Of these, 12 focused on professional training, including basic and life skills, mentoring and guidance, and nine on employment, sometime preceded by training.

MISMES interventions involved a variety of stakeholders, such as Jordanian state and civil society organisations as well as international governmental and non-governmental organisations. The latter have carried the bulk of international efforts in funding, planning and implementation. Jordanian civil society organisations (CSOs or NGOs) have sometimes played a key role in the field of migrant

workers' rights or refugees' social inclusion through life skills training. The Jordanian authorities have welcomed these efforts and generally endeavoured to orient them in line with the country's needs.

Most of the MISMES identified are internationally funded projects or programmes with strictly defined timeframes. Locally funded MISMES are few and consist of specific activities accomplished regularly by private or state institutions within their general mandate. They are usually measures which support Jordanian emigrants going abroad, rather than offering assistance to immigrants or refugees.



POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

There are many good examples of MISMES in Jordan, especially for refugees, who are the main target. However, the number of beneficiaries is extremely low, and costs are high. MISMES for refugees are fragmented and carried out by a variety of organisations with little overarching strategy. One exception is the services provided by the UNRWA to the Palestinian refugees.

Jordan would benefit from a common approach towards the emigration of its nationals abroad, covering pre-departure, diaspora and post-return, in which all actors work together to implement a shared vision. The country could also adopt a concerted approach towards foreign labour immigration, where the state and economic actors agree together on requirements, conditions, protection policies and institutional structures for managing it. Improving working conditions in sectors employing immigrant labour will protect immigrant workers and attract unemployed Jordanians into these jobs reducing the national unemployment rate.

Jordanian vocational education and training institutions and employment offices could be involved in a more structured way in providing training and/or employment services to migrants and refugees, in particular the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC), the National Employment and Training Company (NET), and community colleges. MISMES could devote more attention to entrepreneurship to compensate for weak job creation.

Skills development programmes could be part of a comprehensive services package with four pillars: (i) early needs assessment of migrants followed by guidance and counselling; (ii) assessment of migrants' education and work experience, including recognition and validation of skills; (iii) skills development measures for labour market integration; (iv) employment services, and job intermediation and matching.

MISMES could be better embedded in the national system, with greater involvement of local authorities, as well as implemented through exchanges between migrants/refugees and host communities in order to reinforce social cohesion.

It is crucial to have an efficient system for monitoring and evaluating MISMES to understand their results and impact. Collecting information on all MISMES and activities should be centralised to ensure coherence and alignment.



3

Examples of
good practice

GOOD PRACTICE

Of the 33 MISMES identified in Jordan, three were selected as case studies. They were chosen as well-established multi-dimensional programmes with potential to be implemented on a larger scale.

3

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

ILO BETTER WORK JORDAN PROGRAMME FOR IMMIGRANT WORKERS

The Better Work Jordan (BWJ) programme was designed to improve working conditions and livelihoods of foreign immigrant workers in the garment industry. Starting as a small donor-funded project by the ILO, it has become part of Jordan's national policy agenda. The programme covers 73 factories and 65,000 workers. It has a tripartite structure, involving the government, employers and workers.

Besides ensuring fair contract terms, the project's monitoring and advisory services ensure compliance with local and international labour standards, helping to tackle issues such as forced labour, child labour, discrimination, legal working hours, fair remuneration and occupational safety and health.

The mid-term future of BWJ is to hand over its activities to the government and focus on other sectors of the economy affected by rampant informality and limited productivity, such as agriculture and construction.





UNRWA TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES

The UNRWA's TVET programmes achieve excellent results measured by student performance in national exams, with 90% pass rates compared to 60% nationally. This is thanks to extra courses and more weekly teaching hours (35 instead of 28). Other features include: partnerships with private companies, better career guidance, life skills training and a competency-based approach. As a result, the vast majority of graduates are in work or further study within a year of graduation.

In the face of the youth bulge and large-scale influx of refugees and migrants, the UNRWA faces pressure to increase student numbers, while maintaining its outstanding graduate employment rates. The UNRWA's strategy is to focus on the building blocks of access; guidance; labour market relevance; curriculum development; professional development; sustainability; quality assurance; and governance. UNRWA will seek more diversity and flexibility in the courses offered, with an emphasis on labour market relevance and access. However, the main challenges for reform are financial.

WATER-WISE PLUMBERS – GIZ

This initiative aimed firstly to help preserve the country's limited water reserves through better household management. Water loss in households is estimated at 10–40%, largely due to a lack of awareness and faulty household plumbing.

The low social status of manual occupations has led to a shortage of qualified plumbers. The project focused on training qualified plumbers, especially women, primarily in the north of the country where the influx of Syrian refugees has led to extra pressure on water resources. It also focused on integrating Syrian refugees through employment and encouraging female participation in the labour market.

The project was judged to be relevant and effective, in terms of number of working plumbers, reduced water losses and positive effects on gender equality. It was also found to be efficient in terms of the results achieved in relation to the financial outlay.

However, there are doubts about its sustainability as the government has not shown any real interest in the environmental and social impact. However, the graduates of the programme have created autonomous plumbing cooperatives, which will ensure lasting results.



HOW THINGS ARE NOW

Many good examples of MISMES in Jordan, mainly for refugees, but overall still low numbers of MISMES beneficiaries and high operational costs



Outward migration

Very limited MISMES for Jordanian emigrants
Most emigrants are highly skilled and educated

785,000
(2013–2015) 12%



of the total population



LOOKING FORWARD

- Monitoring and evaluation of evidence on MISMES
- More comprehensive, flexible and high-quality MISMES
- MISMES better integrated into the overall Jordanian development strategy

WHAT NEXT?



Outward migration

- A national policy dialogue on emigration to provide support to emigrants throughout the migration cycle

Inward migration

- A clear strategy/policy framework on immigrant labour
- Improved working conditions for all workers
- More programmes on entrepreneurship support
- Greater emphasis on social cohesion

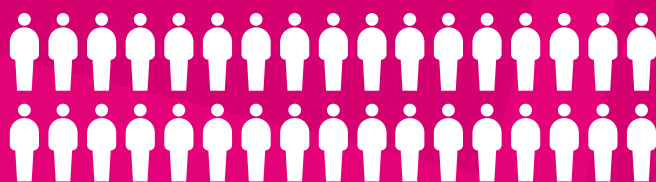
Inward migration

Limited MISMEs for foreign immigrant labour

The majority of MISMEs are developed for the Syrian refugees

Most immigrant workers are low-skilled

803,000 foreign workers



Countries of origin

Bangladesh, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Pakistan, Palestine*, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Syria, Yemen

Work sectors

Agriculture, Manufacturing, Construction, Domestic services, Wholesale trade, Tourism

889,000
UN registered refugees
(2015–2017)



MISMEs

by MISME packages

Jordanian system

