



# Baseline Study Report

Livelihood Planning and Guidance for Youth Project in  
Amman, Mafraq, Irbid, and Zarqa Governorates in Jordan

Data Collection: 1 December 2019 - 15 January 2020  
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World Vision Jordan



**S**USTAINABLE **R**ESearch & **D**EVELOPMENT

Amman – Jordan

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## Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	3
Acknowledgements .....	4
Acronyms .....	5
Executive Summary.....	6
Introduction.....	8
Methodology.....	9
Limitations.....	11
Findings .....	12
Demographic Characteristics .....	12
Livelihood Project Indicators.....	15
Employment Status .....	19
Career Counselling.....	20
Career Goal Orientation.....	22
Awareness of Jobs and Training Opportunities .....	24
Employability Skills .....	25
Difficulties Screening .....	26
Legal Considerations .....	27
Conclusions and Recommendations .....	28

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## Acronyms

<b>BL</b>	Baseline Study
<b>BMZ</b>	German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (Das Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ))
<b>FGAC</b>	Family Guidance and Awareness Center
<b>FGDs</b>	Focus Group Discussions
<b>GoJ</b>	Government of Jordan
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communication Technologies
<b>IGAs</b>	Income Generating Activities
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>INGO</b>	International Non-Governmental Organization
<b>JD</b>	Jordanian Dinar
<b>KII</b>	Key Informant Interview
<b>LIO</b>	Labor Inception Officer
<b>LMA</b>	Labor Market Assessment
<b>MDEE</b>	Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship
<b>MEAL</b>	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning
<b>MoIT</b>	Ministry of Industry and Trade
<b>MSME</b>	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
<b>SMEs</b>	Small and Micro Enterprises
<b>SRD</b>	Sustainable Research and Development Center
<b>TVET</b>	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>VTC</b>	Vocation Training Center
<b>WVJ</b>	World Vision Jordan

## Executive Summary

Within the framework of the World Vision Jordan (WVJ) Programme and as per its newly started project "Livelihoods Planning and Guidance for Youth in Jordan" which aims to contribute to the enhancement of employability of Syrian and Jordanian youth, WVJ commissioned this baseline study at four geographical areas in Jordan to provide vital information for the planning and programming for future similar interventions. Therefore, the baseline study initiated to provide the present status of outcome level indicators of the project to fine tune the set targets at the project level, where appropriate, based on baseline study results and recommendations, as well as set appropriate targets in the existing geographical areas and monitor the progress of the assistance given to the target youth more precisely.

### Methodology

WVJ conducted the baseline study through the consultancy firm 'Sustainable Research and Development Center' (SRD). Data collection started on 1 December 2019 and ended on 15 January 2020.

A total of five indicators were measured by the baseline study through both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. In total, 231 youth were interviewed, and nine focus group discussions (FGD) and 13 key informant interviews (KIIs) with different stakeholders, including representatives from INGOs, governmental officials, and WV staff, were conducted. Four enumerator teams were trained to collect data appropriately to accomplish the baseline survey, and efforts were made to ensure data quality. Structured questionnaires were used for individual interview, FGDs, and KIIs.

### Key Findings

In order to measure the capacity in livelihood planning and decision-making amongst youth, the baseline study revealed that only 19.5% of the targeted youth have the necessary skills and knowledge needed to enter the labor market with 60% of them being Syrians. The study indicated that 91 (39%) of the respondents have clear goal orientation, with almost equal percentages for both Syrians (51.5%) and Jordanians (48.5%).

To determine the youth ability to make informed career decisions, the baseline study indicated that only 57 (24.7%) young people had access to career counselling services prior to the project (56% Syrians and 44% Jordanians), while only 17 (7%) were aware of available jobs and training opportunities in their area. As for the skill set needed to enter working life, 72 (31.1%) youth respondents reported that they possess the necessary skills to enter working life, with no significant differences between Syrian and Jordanian youth. In regards to the geographical areas, the findings showed that the highest levels for most of these indicators are in Amman followed by Irbid.

### Key Conclusions and Recommendations

It has been concluded that the lack of work experience is the most significant factor for youth unemployment. The main obstacle that prevented youth from getting a job is the lack of professional experience. Therefore, it is recommended that instead of focusing on creating permanent jobs for youth or livelihood opportunities, the best support that can be provided to the recently graduated youth is to link them to institutions relevant to their qualifications to get experience in their profession. This is because most youth recognize that employers are looking for young people who have experience as a top requirement regardless if they are hard-workers, have good qualifications, and possess a soft skill set. On the other hand, the lack of work experience has another negative effect on youth as they do not have the confidence to start their own businesses without this experience.

Based on the analysis of the data collected through the key informant interviews, mostly the labor offices in the governorates, and given the scarce job opportunities in the more traditional sectors, training service providers, especially vocational training centers, need to adapt and include new specializations to create new employment opportunities and business. Therefore, it is recommended

to establish a cooperation between the development organizations and the governmental bodies, such as the Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship and the Vocational Training Center to improve sustainable employment opportunities for both Syrian and Jordanian youth.

Finally, these conclusive findings support the project activities to create best fit livelihood opportunities as well as fine-tuning future interventions by shifting from the focus on providing business and soft skills such as work ethics, team work, leadership, communication, negotiation, decision making, and problem solving skills to incorporating tailored new technical skills such as hybrid car maintenance, mobile application development, and renewable energy related businesses and occupations. These emerging sectors have been identified as the skill gap between demand and supply in Jordan's labor market. Other recommendations as per the project components can be found in the last section of the report.

## Introduction

### Background and Context

Since the beginning of the Syrian crisis in 2011, refugees are escaping into neighboring countries, including Jordan. Over 1.3 million Syrian refugees sought shelter in Jordan, out of which 654,692 are registered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).<sup>1</sup> The influx of refugees has resulted in a tremendous strain on resources and infrastructure in the Kingdom, further exacerbating the economic environment in the country.

Besides the Syrian refugee crisis, a combination of other conditions has put increasing stress on all aspects of Jordan's political, economic, and social infrastructure. The Jordan Economic Social Council reported that the energy crisis, closure of exports to Iraq, a decline in remittances, security costs, and increasing food and oil prices have put a significant strain on the Jordanian economy.<sup>2</sup>

In the early stages of the Syrian crisis, indicators showed that Jordan's economy was suffering from high levels of unemployment, especially among youth and women and high levels of poverty. To this end, these stresses on Jordan's economy have proven that Jordan is in need of wide-ranging reforms to its current labor market if it wishes to invest in the large youth population whose energy and drive need to be harnessed to make Jordan more competitive in the globalized economy.

The government of Jordan, UN agencies, NGOs, and the private sector are focusing on poverty reduction, education, health, gender, labor market, and employment. The unemployment rate edged up in the second quarter of 2019, reaching 19.2%, compared to 18.7% in the same quarter in 2018.<sup>3</sup> Unemployment patterns consistently show high unemployment among females, youth, and university graduates. High unemployment rates and a challenging economic environment are preventing youth in Jordan from becoming sustainably employed. Furthermore, a lack of skills and career counseling within schools and universities presents additional barriers for youth to gaining access to employment opportunities.

### World Vision Programme in Jordan

World Vision is an international development, relief, and advocacy organization dedicated to helping bring fullness to the lives of children, their families, and communities. It has been responding to the serious humanitarian needs of Syrian refugees and host communities in Jordan since 2013.

The WVJ programme started operations in Syrian refugee camps, but the majority of its current interventions are in host communities in order to support those affected by the Syrian crisis, including vulnerable Jordanian and Syrian communities, with remedial and early childhood education classes, essential household items, psychosocial support, food, livelihoods, and assistance in water, sanitation, and hygiene. Within the framework of the Jordan Response Plan (JRP) for the Syria Crisis 2018-2020 and to provide the best fit assistance for individuals to transition from short-term to more sustainable employment and improved environment for micro and small businesses, WV and its partners identified an array of socio-economic problems dominated by poverty and marginalization, poor relationships within families or broken families, and unemployment due to poor work skills and limited opportunities. Therefore, to contribute to the enhancement of Syrian and Jordanian youth employability through skills development and career counselling, WVJ and its partners are implementing a Livelihood Planning and Guidance for Youth project in Amman, Mafraq, Irbid, and Zarqa, funded by BMZ and WV Germany.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria>, 5 January 2020 (Data retrieved on 4 February 2020).

<sup>2</sup> The Economic Social Council, 2016.

<sup>3</sup> World Bank, 2019. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/jordan/overview> (Data retrieved on 4 February 2020).



## **Livelihood Planning and Guidance for Youth Project in Amman, Mafraq, Irbid, and Zarqa Governorates in Jordan**

The project aims to contribute to the enhancement of employability of Syrian and Jordanian youth through skills development and career counselling to increase their employment opportunities. In addition, youth will have a better perspective of their career goals and options through the counselling and guidance sessions. The project is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and WV Germany. It is being implemented by World Vision Jordan (WVJ), as the leading agency, together with its two local partners, the Zaha Foundation and the Family Guidance and Awareness Center (FGAC).

In the design phase, the project activities were selected based on the results of the feasibility study<sup>4</sup> which determined the needs of Jordanian and Syrian youth in terms of lacking livelihood opportunities and access in host communities. The selection of respondents for training and career counseling was based on different criteria such as dependency ratio (ratio of non-working segment of the family to the working segment) along with age, educational level, disability, and duration of unemployment.

As part of the monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning of the project activities, this baseline study has been conducted against the project indicators. WVJ has commissioned the consultancy firm Sustainable Research and Development Center (SRD) to carry out the study in the project's four targeted governorates: Amman, Mafraq, Irbid, and Zarqa.

### **Baseline Study Purpose and Objectives**

SRD was contracted by WVJ to conduct a baseline study of the project, with facilitation by WVJ.<sup>5</sup>

The baseline study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- i. Establish the baseline status for the indicators of the project's logical framework and indicators for assumptions.
- ii. Enable the measurement of changes in the project's logical framework indicators over the implementation period.
- iii. Inform the project implementation team and identify potential gaps and area-specific opportunities/focus for project planning and improvement.
- iv. Strengthen the evidence base building within the different programs and interventions.
- v. Build an in-depth understanding and provide an evidence-based clarity of the gaps in the youth livelihood opportunities and areas.
- vi. Attain an overview of the expectations of youth job seekers for income and benefits and explore the job seekers' interests regarding the preferred sector of employment.
- vii. Support the project team by providing insights on the main barriers to wage employment for youth job seekers along with exploring the main challenges facing them to start SMEs/ HBBs.
- viii. Evaluate the level of some of the available general skills, life skills, and employability skills among youth job seekers.
- ix. Support the development of the output level data collection tools per the logical framework.

The baseline will serve as a learning resource providing substantiated information for the planning and programming of future similar interventions to the following stakeholders, including the project respondents, donors, WVJ, WV Germany, WV Syria Response, and other partners. The baseline study will inform the partners about the current status in terms of livelihood opportunities and related needs, so they can plan for their new partnerships and projects accordingly.

## **Methodology**

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<sup>4</sup> Feasibility Study: Promote Opportunities for Resilience, Education, and Social Cohesion to Strengthen Livelihoods and Reduce Violence in Jordan, World Vision, 2018.

<sup>5</sup> See Annex I: Baseline Study - Terms of Reference.

The baseline study included a mixed method approach, where qualitative and quantitative data collection methods were used to gain better understanding of the current status of indicators for key project outcomes and outputs as well as to identify factors that may influence these outcomes and key considerations for the design and implementation of the project activities in order to maximize the likelihood of success.

The methods used included desk review, individual interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and key informant interviews. Before the start of the field activities, an inception report was drafted to organize and present the study methodology and work plan, including how the study will proceed, its various phases, how various players will be implicated, approaches used, human resources mobilization, quantification of sample size, definition of methods, processes of data collection and analysis, and the study tools.

The desk review of the different relevant resources and documents is to understand the livelihood/employment opportunities in the target areas and how the components combine into a coherent whole. The desk review covered the project documents, available secondary information, and legal and policy framework.<sup>6</sup>

The study included three data collection tools:

*Data Collection Tool # 1: Youth Interview Questionnaire (Primary quantitative data collection through one-to-one surveys with youth) <sup>7</sup>*

*Data Collection Tool # 2: Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with Youth (Primary qualitative data collection through focus group discussions with youth both female and male) <sup>8</sup>*

*Data Collection Tool # 3: KII Interview Questionnaire (Face to face interviews with key informants) <sup>9</sup>*

### **Sample Size**

The respondents of the baseline study are those of the project who were selected by the WV project partners based on vulnerability criteria which include literacy level, dependency ratio (ratio of non-working segment of the family to the working segment), family size, nationality, and duration of unemployment.

The study covered four governorates: Amman, Irbid, Zarqa, and Mafraq where the project is being implemented. From the four governorates, WV partners selected 249 respondents for the first-year activities of the project. The SRD Consultancy team collected data from 231 respondents out of the 249. More specifically, the target population was the list of the WV project respondents who were already selected by WV partners, at a total number of 249 young people (129 female and 120 male), which represent the population for the individual interviews.

As for the FGDs, it was agreed with the WV project team to select one male and one female group in each governorate. However, due to the fact that the sample size in both Amman and Irbid was less than the other two governorates, one mixed FGD was organized in Amman and Irbid.

### **Individual Interviews with Youth**

The data collected through the individual interviews from 231 respondents, distributed per governorates are shown in Table I.

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<sup>6</sup> See Annex 2: List of Desk Review Documents.

<sup>7</sup> See Annex 3: Youth Interview Questionnaire.

<sup>8</sup> See Annex 4: Focus Group Discussions Data Collection Tool.

<sup>9</sup> See Annex 5: KII Interview Questionnaire.

**Table 1: The Distribution of the Individual Interviews per Governorates**

Location	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Amman	38	16%
Irbid	36	16%
Mafraq	54	23%
Zarqa	103	45%
<b>Total</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with selected respondents from the youth who were interviewed individually, as mentioned in the previous section. Six FGDs were organized in four governorates: Mafraq, Irbid, Zarqa, and Amman. There were 64 respondents in nine FGDs, divided by governorate as shown in Table 2. The size of the FGDs varied by group, with the minimum requirement of 8 individuals and the desired maximum of 12 to ensure that every participant had the opportunity to speak their thoughts and take into consideration other responses during the discussion. It is worth mentioning here that four FGDs (in Amman and Irbid) were repeated once because the number of individuals who showed up in the first trial was less than 8 individuals.

The participants in the FGDs were selected from the respondents who participated in the individual interviews and were available at the time and willing to take part in the study. In other words, the sample of the FGD was based on convenience, by asking the respondents if they would take part in the FGD. Therefore, it was somewhat difficult to assemble and agree with the respondents who participated in the individual interviews to attend another data collection activity. The selected respondents in each governorate were divided into groups (female group and male group), each group included approximately 12 participants. Each FGD event took around 60 minutes. Table 2 shows the distribution of the FGDs.

**Table 2: Distribution of the FGDs**

Governorate	Number of FGD	# of Respondents	Gender of FGD
Amman	1	12	Mixed
Irbid	1	12	Mixed
Mafraq	2	16	One male and one female
Zarqa	2	24	One male and one female
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>64</b>	

### Key Informant Interview Questionnaire

A total of 13 interviews were conducted with key informants from labor offices in the governorates and representatives from international non-governmental organizations (INGOs).<sup>10</sup> The sample of Key informants were selected in consultation with the WV Technical Advisor and the project team. The availability of youth and livelihood related initiatives at the institution of the key informant was the main criteria for selecting them.

### Limitations

1. It was challenging and time consuming to get approval from the government authority for collecting data.
2. Due to the running training sessions for youth during the period of data collection, enumerators were able to work only a few hours during the day, usually during their breaks,

<sup>10</sup> See Annex 6: List of Key Informant Interviews

- which means there was a short period of time during the field workdays to accomplish the planned activities of the Baseline Study survey.
3. For data entry, one database was used for the four target populations, which made it difficult to follow up each team and check data quickly.
  4. Lack of interest from the youth in the Baseline Study led to difficulties in scheduling and re-scheduling the interview agenda and eventually caused several delays in the data collection process, that could be improved by a more attractive and well-considered approach.

Respondents require certain incentives and effort to motivate their participation in study activities. Financial compensations could be offered to them as the most advantageous choice because youth will then recognize the value of the activities immediately when they are being invited to the interview or the FGD. Beside financial compensation, incentives can be gifts such as a full meal in a hotel, staying inside on a one-day workshop, or traveling to a beautiful area for one recreation day. However, any type of incentive should be adequately planned and described in advance with WV and partners to avoid raising expectation and disappointment.

## Findings

### Demographic Characteristics

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents, e.g., age, gender, nationality, marital status, education, and occupational status.

#### Nationality

About half of the study target population are Syrians (47.6%) with equal portions in all governorates except Irbid where most of them are Jordanians (63.9%) as seen in Table 3.

**Table 3: Nationality of Respondents per Governorate**

Governorate	Jordanian		Syrian	
	#	%	#	%
Amman	18	47.4%	20	52.6%
Irbid	23	63.9%	13	36.1%
Mafraq	29	53.7%	25	46.3%
Zarqa	51	49.5%	52	50.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>52.4%</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>47.6%</b>

#### Gender Composition

Table 4 shows that half of the respondents were females (53.25%) and the other half were males (46.75%). Thus, their proportion indicates a close gender ratio of 123 females to 108 males. Also, the percent distribution of respondents according to gender and ratio of female youth to male youth by governorate indicates that the ratio of females is slightly higher in Irbid (58.33%) and Mafraq (55.56%) governorates than the overall average of females in all four areas (53.25%).

**Table 4: Gender and Gender Ratio of Respondents**

Governorate	Female		Male		Total	Gender Ration (Female: Male)
	#	%	#	%		
Amman	20	52.63%	18	47.37%	38	1.11 : 1.00
Irbid	21	58.33%	15	41.67%	36	1.40 : 1.00
Mafraq	30	55.56%	24	44.44%	54	1.25 : 1.00
Zarqa	52	50.49%	51	49.51%	103	1.02 : 1.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>53.25%</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>46.75%</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>1.14 : 1.00</b>

Table 5 shows the gender ration of respondents versus nationality, which indicates almost equal percentages of Jordanian and Syrian females and males.

**Table 5: Gender and Nationality Ratio of Respondents**

Gender	Jordanian		Syrian	
	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
<b>Female</b>	67	55.37%	56	50.91%
<b>Male</b>	54	44.63%	54	49.09%
<b>Total</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Age Composition

The first Jordan Youth Strategy (2005 - 2009) defines youth as males or females who are aged 12 to 30 years old.<sup>11</sup> However, the most recent national strategies relating to youth employment<sup>12</sup> and poverty reduction<sup>13</sup> focused on youth aged 15 to 24 years old and these strategies highlighted creating opportunities for young females especially in remote areas. In this study, nearly half of the total respondents (45%) belong to the age group of 19-22 years, about 37 % are aged 23-25 years, and only 2% of the youth are above 25 years. The average age of the respondents (from age 15 to 25 years) is 21.1 years (see Table 6).

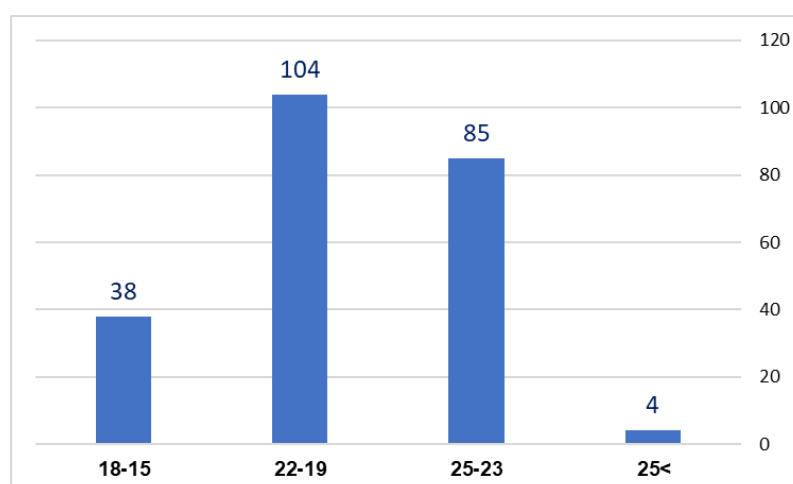
**Table 6: Respondents by Selected Age Groups versus Nationality**

Age	Jordanian		Syrian		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
>25	2	1.65%	2	1.82%	4	1.73%
15-18	19	15.70%	19	17.27%	38	16.45%
19-22	51	42.15%	53	48.18%	104	45.02%
23-25	49	40.50%	36	32.73%	85	36.80%
<b>Total</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

<sup>11</sup> [Youth Strategy \(2005 - 2009\)](#)

<sup>12</sup> [Jordan National Employment Strategy, 2011-2020](#)

<sup>13</sup> [Poverty Reduction Strategy 2013-2020](#)



**Figure 1: Respondents by selected age groups**

### Marital Status

The majority (87.5%) of the respondents are currently not married. Almost equal percentages of females (53.3%) and males (46.8%) are not married (see Table 7 and 8).

**Table 7: Marital Status of Respondents Aged 15 Years and above**

Age	Married		Not Married		Divorced	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
15-18	3	7.9%	35	92.1%	0	0.0%
19-22	10	9.6%	94	90.4%	0	0.0%
23-25	14	16.5%	70	82.4%	1	1.2%
>25	1	25.0%	3	75.0%	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>12.1%</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>87.5%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.4%</b>

**Table 8: Marital Status of Respondents per Gender**

Marital Status	Female		Male		Total
	#	%	#	%	
Married	19	67.9%	9	32.1%	28
Not Married	103	51.0%	99	49.1%	202
Divorced	1	100.0%	0	0.0%	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>53.3%</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>46.8%</b>	<b>231</b>

Table 9 illustrates that the percentage of Syrian married respondents (12%) is double the percentage of Jordanians (6%).

**Table 9: Marital Status of Respondents per Nationality**

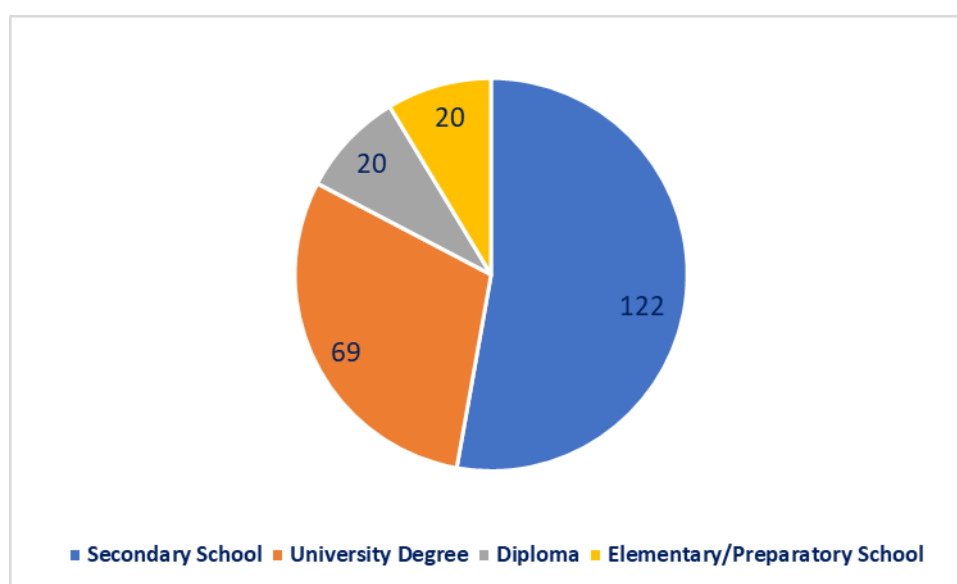
Marital Status	Jordanian		Syrian		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Married	7	6%	21	19%	28	12%
Single	114	94%	88	80%	202	87%
Divorced	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Educational Attainment

The highest education attainment level of respondents aged 15 years or above is presented in Table 11. Overall, more than half of them have attained a secondary level of education or less (61.5%) and about one third have attained a university degree (30%). Small proportions of them (8.7%) have a diploma (2 years of education). The distribution among governorates shows that the percentage of holders of university degrees in Mafraq is less than in other governorates.

**Table 11: The Highest Education Attainment Level of Respondents per Governorate**

Governorate	Elementary/ Preparatory School		Secondary School		Diploma		University Degree	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Amman	1	2.6%	19	50.0%	6	15.8%	12	32%
Irbid	1	2.8%	17	47.2%	5	13.9%	13	36%
Mafraq	6	11.1%	32	59.3%	3	5.6%	13	24%
Zarqa	12	11.7%	54	52.4%	6	5.8%	31	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>8.7%</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>52.8%</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>8.7%</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>30%</b>



**Figure 3: Respondents by education level**

**Table 12: Educational Status of Respondents per Nationality**

Educational Status	Jordanian		Syrian		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Diploma	5	4%	15	14%	20	9%
Elementary/Preparatory School	2	2%	18	16%	20	9%
Secondary School	65	54%	57	52%	122	53%
University Degree	49	40%	20	18%	69	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Livelihood Project Indicators

The objective of the baseline survey is to study and identify the situation in project areas with the expectation of changes and enhancements. It has been agreed that the current baseline study should

assess five selected indicators of the project. Table 13 summarizes the key findings against the selected indicators of the WV's livelihood technical project.<sup>14</sup>

**Table 13: Livelihood Project Indicators**

Summary of Objectives	Indicator	Score <sup>1</sup>		Score Per Nationality	
		%	#	Syrians	Jordanians
<b>Outcome 1: The capacity of livelihood planning and decision-making amongst youth and communities is increased.</b>	<b>Indicator 1:</b> % of targeted female and male youth who have necessary skills and knowledge needed to enter the labor market.	19.5%	45	60% (n = 27)	40% (n = 18)
	<b>Indicator 2:</b> # of female and male youth who have a clear goal orientation.	39%	91	53% (n = 48)	47% (n = 43)
<b>Output 1.2: Youth and their parents are able to make informed career decisions.</b>	<b>Indicator 3:</b> # of youth who have access to career counselling services.	25%	57	56% (n = 32)	44% (n = 25)
	<b>Indicator 4:</b> # of youth who are aware of available jobs and training opportunities in their area.	15%	34	47% (n = 16)	53% (n = 18)
<b>Output 1.3: Youth have improved skills enabling them to enter working life.</b>	<b>Indicator 5:</b> # of youth who have the necessary skills to enter working life.	16%	36	50% (n = 18)	50% (n = 18)

<sup>1</sup> Sample Size = 231

## OUTCOME I

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to the enhancement of Syrian and Jordanian youth employability through skills development and career counselling. Two indicators have been used to monitor the project Outcome 1: *The capacity of livelihood planning and decision-making amongst youth and communities is increased.*

### Indicator 1: Necessary skills and knowledge needed to enter the labor market

This indicator measures the percentage of targeted male and female youth from the governorates Amman, Irbid, Zarqa, and Mafraq who have the necessary skills and knowledge needed to enter the labor market in at least three categories out of five (employability skills, vocational/technical skills acquired from accredited certified training, business/entrepreneurship skills, English language, and informed career decisions following career counselling sessions).<sup>15</sup> Therefore, to calculate the score of this indicator, the following selected items from the data collection tools were chosen as a proxy for the indicator value<sup>16</sup>:

1. Informed career decisions following career counselling sessions, if any;
2. Training received (i.e., employability skills, vocational/technical skills acquired from accredited certified training, and business/entrepreneurship skills); and
3. Competence in English language (speaking, writing, reading, and understanding).

<sup>14</sup> "Livelihoods Planning and Guidance for Youth Project in Amman, Mafraq, Irbid, and Zarqa Governorates in Jordan."

<sup>15</sup> MEAL Plan – BMZ Project – WVJ.

<sup>16</sup> See Annex 7: Inception Report - Baseline Study - BMS and WV.



## Indicator 2: Goal orientation

For the purpose of this study, career goal orientation is defined as youth knowing what their vision and goals are and how these goals determine their behavior and influence career choices. The scale of this indicator is the number of female and male youth from the targeted governorates who report understanding their career goals. Therefore, it has been measured using the following selected items from the data collection tools which were chosen as a proxy to calculate the indicator results:

1. To what extent the respondent can explain her/his career goals or business vision; and
2. To what extent the respondent can explain the following concepts to another person: his/her business/employment skills, the needs of the labor market, knowledge and information on how to search for suitable jobs, and how to represent him/her-self to employers.

According to the study results, the baseline figures of indicator 1 and 2 have been separated by gender, nationality, and education level as follows.

Indicator 1				Indicator 2			
% of youth who have necessary skills and knowledge needed to enter the labor market				# of youth who have a clear goal orientation			
19.5%				91 (39%)			
(Sample Size, n = 231)				(Sample Size, n = 231)			
<b>Female</b>		<b>Male</b>		<b>Female</b>		<b>Male</b>	
60%		40%		53%		47%	
(n = 27)		(n = 18)		(n = 48)		(n = 43)	
<b>Syrians</b>		<b>Jordanian</b>		<b>Syrians</b>		<b>Jordanian</b>	
60%		40%		53%		47%	
(n = 27)		(n = 18)		(n = 48)		(n = 43)	
<b>Elementary/ Preparatory School</b>	<b>Secondary School</b>	<b>Diploma</b>	<b>University Degree</b>	<b>Elementary/ Preparatory School</b>	<b>Secondary School</b>	<b>Diploma</b>	<b>University Degree</b>
6.6%	16.7%	48.9%	17.8%	8%	52.5%	9.5%	30%
(n = 3)	(n = 12)	(n = 22)	(n = 8)	(n = 16)	(n = 105)	(n = 19)	(n = 60)

The above baseline figures show that the percentage of female youth who have the necessary skills and knowledge needed to enter the labor market (66.7%) is higher than male youth (33.3%). However, the results showed that gender or nationality are not factors influencing the improvement in goal orientation of respondents. In terms of education attainment level, the result showed that the diploma degree holders are the majority (48.9%) among the respondents who have necessary skills and knowledge needed to enter the labor market while the holders of a secondary school certificate are the majority (52.5%) who have clear goal orientation.

## OUTPUT 1.2

According to the study results, the baseline figures of the two indicators that have been selected as a proxy for Output 1.2 *Youth and their parents are able to make informed career decisions* have been separated by gender, nationality, and location as follows.

### Indicator 3: Access to career counselling services

The career counseling component aims to provide support for youth to understand their needs and put them on track for sustainable employment. Specifically, the counselling will help respondents to understand the market capacity, their own capacities, and how to identify their hidden skills that can be used for employment purposes.

This indicator measures the number of male and female youth who had access to counselling services prior to the start of the WV project. Therefore, to calculate the score of this indicator, the question related to the *informed career decisions following career counselling sessions* in the data collection tools was used as a proxy for the indicator value.

#### Indicator 4: Aware about available jobs and training opportunities in their area

This indicator illuminated the number of targeted male and female youth who have awareness about available jobs and training opportunities in their area. According to the study results, the baseline figures of indicator 3 and 4 have been separated by gender, nationality, and location as follows.

Indicator 3				Indicator 4			
# of youth who have access to career counselling services				# of youth who are aware about available jobs and training opportunities in their area			
<b>57</b> (n = 231)				<b>34</b> (n = 231)			
<b>Female</b>		<b>Male</b>		<b>Female</b>		<b>Male</b>	
63% (n = 36)		37% (n = 21)		65% (n = 22)		35% (n = 12)	
<b>Syrians</b>		<b>Jordanian</b>		<b>Syrians</b>		<b>Jordanian</b>	
56% (n = 32)		44% (n = 25)		47% (n = 16)		53% (n = 18)	
<b>Amman</b>	<b>Irbid</b>	<b>Mafraq</b>	<b>Zarqa</b>	<b>Amman</b>	<b>Irbid</b>	<b>Mafraq</b>	<b>Zarqa</b>
28% (n = 16)	11% (n = 6)	30% (n = 17)	32% (n = 18)	9% (n = 3)	24% (n = 8)	32% (n = 11)	35% (n = 12)

Prior to youth participation in the project, these baseline figures for the above two indicators show that the percentage of female youth is higher than male youth who have the opportunity to access career counselling services (63% and 37% respectively) and those who are aware about available jobs and training opportunities in their area (65% and 35% respectively).

#### OUTPUT 1.3

The study results revealed that the baseline figures of the indicator that has been selected as a proxy for Output 1.3 *Youth have improved skills enabling them to enter working life* have been separated by gender, nationality, and location as follows.

#### Indicator 5: Improved skills to enter working life

This indicator showed the number of male and female youth who reported having obtained the necessary skills to enter working life as a result of WV and its implementing partners intervention in at least two categories out of four (employability skills, vocational/technical skills acquired from accredited certified training, English language, and business/entrepreneurship skills). Therefore, this indicator has been calculated using the same items except the item related to *informed career decisions following career counselling sessions*.

Indicator 5	
# of youth report necessary skills to enter working life	
<b>36</b>	
<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>
44% (n = 16)	56% (n = 20)
<b>Syrians</b>	<b>Jordanian</b>

50% (n = 18)

50% (n = 18)

Amman	Irbid	Mafraq	Zarqa
30.6%	16.7%	11.1%	41.7%
(n = 11)	(n = 6)	(n = 4)	(n = 15)

### Employment Status

As expected, none of the respondents are currently employed since this was a selection criteria for the youth to be part of the project. The study showed that 53.7% of respondents have been previously employed (see Table 14). A follow up question showed that more than half of respondents (56.5%) have been employed as full-time employees.

**Table 14: Employment in the Past**

Employment in the Past	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Never employed	107	46.3%
Employed in the past	124	53.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

When the respondents who had been employed were asked what support they received to get a job, only 2% reported that they received skill training from an NGO while the majority of them received no support (55%), followed by 33% of the respondents who received support from their families and friends (see Table 15).

**Table 15: Support Received by Respondents Who Got a Job Previously**

Support received to get a job	Jordanian		Syrian		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
No support received	33	52%	35	57%	68	55%
Support from my family, friends, or relatives	22	35%	19	31%	41	33%
Provided with training/support from an NGO	6	10%	7	12%	13	11%
Received skills-training from an NGO	2	3%	0	0%	2	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>100%</b>

As for the respondents who had never been employed since they left school, graduated from the university, or arrived in Jordan (for Syrians), when they were asked how long the duration of their unemployment was, the results showed that almost 79.5% of them have not been employed for the last two years (see Table 16).

**Table 16: Unemployment Duration**

Row Labels	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Less than 1 year	42	39.3%
1 - 2 years	43	40.2%
2 - 3 years	8	7.5%
More than 3 years	14	13.2%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

There are quite a lot of factors and circumstances affecting the unemployment rate among female and male youth in the project target areas, but it is mainly the economic factors and crisis in Jordan that

affect employment. Most focus group participants said they had applied for work and the main obstacle that prevented them from getting a job is the lack of professional experience.

The young people who completed secondary education or less comprise a high percentage among the target youth (61.5%). Job opportunities are usually very rare for this group since they have not completed university education, so they do not have academic qualifications.

In the focus groups, most respondents gave the same feedback. They said that the lack of opportunity to gain work experience prevented them from succeeding in getting a permanent job. In fact, this problem is related to the education system in Jordan which does not provide opportunities for internships or any kind of job experience. Most of the key informants interviewed in this baseline study indicated that employers are interested in technical skills and in communication and interpersonal skills more than in the academic qualifications. Jordan's education system and training are technically oriented, so youth are well prepared in that area, but they lack the necessary practical skills and employability<sup>17</sup> along with soft skills.<sup>18</sup> In other words, there is a mismatch between the training received in education and the current skills demanded by the labor market.

Almost two thirds of the FGD participants reported that employers usually paid them much less than what they had signed for in the work contract. In some cases, youth were being paid only 80 JD per month, while they signed a contract with an amount equal to 220 JD per month (the minimum allowed by law) or more because there is an unwritten agreement between them in which youth are mostly looking for work experience but not for the salary and employers usually attempt to cut the cost as much as they can. In Jordan, with an income of 80 JD per month, it is hardly enough to cover the cost of transportation or food and clothes.

A negative attitude towards market opportunities and employers has been formed among the youth. Even though there is a lack of existing market opportunities, this does not mean that youth will not engage in it. In most of the FGDs, the majority of youth mentioned that they are willing to accept low wages, even if it is 80 JD per month, if they will work for a leading company to obtain a particular experience in their professional specialization. Youth regard the lack of certified experience as the key obstacle that prevents them from getting a job, whether in Jordan or in the Arab Gulf states.

Almost all participants in the FGDs agreed that the low wage rates (220 JD minimum per month legally) is inadequate to cover the cost encountered with daily work such as transportation, food, and clothes. One female participant in a focus group, who holds a Bachelor degree in Engineering, summed up this notion:

*“When a youth completed Tawjihi (The General Secondary Examination), there is no proper guidance to enable him/her to establish his goal if he is not aware of what is there in the real world. They usually end up choosing a specialization to realize later that this was not needed in the market. Then, he will be taken back when he finds that he has to learn new skills to be able to get a salary that is often not enough to cover his living cost.” (Female, aged 24 years, focus group in Zarqa) – This is a translation of what she said in Arabic.*

In every focus group, participants said they did not have a job because they believe that factors such as favoritism/nepotism (*wasta*) or lack of objectivity in selecting employees had significantly contributed to their unemployment.

### Career Counselling

Only 24.7% of the respondents have previously received career counseling from an NGO, i.e., King Abdullah II Fund for Development, Save the Children, and Jordan University (Table 17).

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<sup>17</sup> The **employability skills** would include, but are not limited to business plan development, basic bookkeeping and accounting, marketing, business management principles and practices, SWOT analysis and risk management, pertinent legislation for MSMEs (registration, tax compliance, and highlights of relevant sections of the labour law), and customer service.

<sup>18</sup> The **soft skills** would include, but are not limited to work ethics, team work, leadership skills, communication skills, negotiation skills, decision making, and problem solving.

**Table 17: Respondents Who Received Career Counseling**

Career Counseling	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Never received career counseling	174	75.3%
Received career counseling	57	24.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Most of the youth who had received career counseling (75.5%) indicated that the received counseling was useful or very useful for their career (Table 18).

**Table 18: Usefulness of Previous Career Counseling to Respondents' Career**

Responses	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Not at all useful	5	8.8%
Not very useful	9	15.8%
Useful	14	24.6%
Very Useful	29	50.9%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

When youth were asked to explain how the received career counseling was useful to their career, some of the key answers indicated that they learnt how to seek a job and realized the market needs and opportunities (Table 19).

**Table 19: How the Previous Career Counseling was Useful to Respondents' Career**

Responses	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
How to seek a job	6	13.95%
It is useful, but I cannot find a job	7	16.28%
Knowing the market needs	6	13.95%
Knowing the market opportunities	7	16.28%
No comment – couldn't explain	17	39.53%
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

When youth who indicated that the received career counseling was not useful for their career were asked to explain why, most answers revolved around the quality and relevance of the content of the counseling they received. For example, they didn't receive new knowledge or skills, and it was irrelevant to market needs.

Youth who had already received career counseling explained that it was useful to their life (98.2%). When asked to explain how it was useful to their life, they indicated that it had improved their attitude towards the community and improved their communication skills and personality (Table 20).

**Table 20: Usefulness of Previous Career Counseling to Respondents' Life**

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Very Useful	6	10.5%
Useful	50	87.7%
Not very useful	1	1.8%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table 21 shows that most youth (90%), whether they received or did not receive career counseling previously, are still interested in accessing such career counseling activities. Also, when they were asked why they were interested, they explained that career counseling would assist them to choose

the best career path, receive new skills and experiences, understand the requirements of the work environment, and help their family cover the basic life needs. When asked what skills they would be interested in developing, most of them mentioned that the English language and computer skills were the key skills that they were interested in.

**Table 21: Interest in Joining Career Counseling Activities**

Interest in joining career counseling activities	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Not interested	23	10%
Interested	208	90%
<b>Total</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>100%</b>

The 10% of the youth who are not interested in joining career counseling activities explained that they already possessed good knowledge about career skills and paths, or they saw career counseling as useless activities as they had no hope to find a job.

### Career Goal Orientation

Youth were asked to what extent they are confident when explaining their career's goals or business vision. The results showed that 39% of respondents had a quite clear career goal prior to joining the current project. Table 22 and 23 show the distribution of respondents who have clear career goals per governorate.

**Table 22: Distribution of Respondents Who Have Clear Career Goals per Governorate**

Governorate	# of Respondents per Governorate	# of Respondents Having Clear Career Goal	Percentage (%)
Amman	38	16	42%
Irbid	36	8	22%
Mafraq	54	22	41%
Zarqa	103	45	44%
<b>Total</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>39%</b>

Table 22 shows that the lowest understanding of career goals is in Irbid (22%).

**Table 23: Distribution of Respondents Who Have Clear Career Goals per Gender**

Gender	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Female	48	53%
Male	43	47%
<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>100%</b>

When youth were asked to select a sector they choose or plan for their job/business, the results showed that working in stores and the marketing sector were selected as priority number one, such as sales clerks in clothing stores or malls, cashiers, sales representatives, or customer service. The next sectors selected were the information and communication technologies (ICT) sector (i.e., computer and cellphone maintenance, graphic design, data entry, programming, and online sales) and the education sector, mainly school teachers (see Table 24).

**Table 24: Distribution of Respondents per Preferred Work Sector**

Sector	Jordanian		Syrian		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Automotive	2	2%	1	1%	3	1%
Construction and Maintenance	11	10%	16	16%	27	13%
Education	15	13%	14	14%	29	14%
ICT	21	19%	19	19%	40	19%
Other	32	28%	23	23%	55	26%
Restaurant	4	4%	3	3%	7	3%
Stores and Marketing	28	25%	23	23%	51	24%
<b>Total</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Figure 4: Preferred working sector per governorate**

When asked why they chose this career path, most of the answers revolved around the market needs. Also, the youth possess good experience in this career path, or at least they have a passion towards this career path.

On the other hand, norms in Jordan make seeking for work a habit and self-definition and not always a means for covering the cost of life or generating an income. This is true mostly for youth who are fresh graduated from the university. This was expected, but the study results showed a change in each governorate where most of the FGD participants (86%) indicated that their desire to have work is driven by several factors, but the main factor is to cover the cost of living among other factors with less interest in generating an income and saving to cover the cost of other needs such as marriage, an apartment, or a car. One Syrian male participant in a FGD in Amman said:

*“What is very strange here in Amman is the low salaries and very high living cost. So, I plan to move to Turkey, where I can live comfortably regardless what is my qualifications or my career goal.” (Male, focus group in Amman).*

Another participant in a FGD, Jordanian female, age 23 years, from Irbid stated:

*“Wages are usually not enough even to cover the cost of living for one week not for a month. I myself borrow money from other friends and due to high stress knowing that I must pay the money back. So, I forget my career goals and looking for any career to gain the cost of living.”* (Female, aged 23 years, focus group in Irbid)

It was an unexpected observation that many young female and male participants in the focus groups expressed willingness to take part in any work regardless of the wages or relevance to their qualifications. They are willing to do any work to cover the cost of living and help their families.

According to the results of the interviews with key informants, approximately half of them indicated that there is a lack of proper professional knowledge and experience that corresponds with market needs in some emerging sectors such as hybrid vehicle maintenance (technicians, testing, and repair), mobile application (designers and developers), and renewable energy related businesses and occupations. Therefore, despite the high unemployment rate in Jordan, there is a skill mismatch between demand and supply in Jordan’s labour market. One male key informant, age 38 years, from an international organization operating in Jordan noted:

*“Most youths in Jordan go to university to study for four years, and then when they graduate, they find that the market life has nothing to do with what they learnt in the university. The current vital skills for the job market are revolving around hybrid car maintenance, energy efficiency jobs, mobile applications design and development, and technical skills such as home repairs (plumbers, electricians, etc.)”* (Male, aged 38 years, Key Informant from DRC, Amman Office).

In the focus groups, most female and male participants, except those that have high qualifications such as in engineering, did not object to working in low skilled positions. There is traditionally a perception in the community that low skilled positions are for illiterate people, but youth think that this stereotype has been changed since they have remained unemployed for several years and seem to have no other options. Therefore, youth do not feel embarrassed doing low skilled jobs.

Feedback from the key stakeholders indicated that from an educational and training perspective, the current education and training system in Jordan is insufficient to prepare youth for the labor market, leaving them with very few opportunities to become active citizens of change and progress. Secondary education provides, in theory, the basics in different fields to most young people, but this does not prepare them for the labor market. Instead, it reinforces the attitudes and trends towards academic professions rather than technical and vocational ones.

### *Awareness of Jobs and Training Opportunities*

The majority of female and male youth (95%) are not aware if there are vacant wage-employment opportunities within their area.

Almost 93% of female and male youth are not aware of the training opportunities in the area where they live

In relation to what extent youth were contributing economically to their household in the past, almost 60% of the respondents have contributed since they left school, graduated from the university, or arrived in Jordan (for Syrians). When those youth were asked what their source of income was, the majority indicated that it was from a permanent job/working full time (70%) or per-day work (temporary jobs; 18%) (See Table 25).



**Table 25: Source of Income for Participants Who Contributed Economically to Their Household**

Source of Income	#	%
Freelancer work	16	12%
Per-Day work (temporary job)	25	18%
Permanent job/working full time	97	70%
Working with family member	1	1%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>100%</b>

Almost 53% of youth reported that it is not possible to find wage-employment opportunities without 'wasta' or a system of nepotism for employment (See Table 26).

**Table 26: Knowledge about Challenges to Access Employment**

Item	Nun resp
It is not possible to find a job without 'wasta' or a system of nepotism for employment.	
There are some job opportunities, but the high unemployment rate makes it difficult to find decent work.	
There are some job opportunities, but my skill set is inappropriate.	
There are no problems finding decent work in my area.	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>

\* The total number of reasons is greater than the number of respondents because the respondents were allowed to choose more than one reason.

Almost all youth (95%) reported that they learnt about jobs opportunities from the NGOs through social media channels or from friends and families, while few of the youth visited companies and stores in person to check if they were hiring. About two thirds of youth (68%) indicated that they learnt about job opportunities every week.

### Employability Skills

Table 27 below shows that most youth have not yet received training on employability related topics.

**Table 27: Skill Set Training Received**

Training Topic	No		Yes		Total
	#	%	#	%	
<b>UCMAS (Universal Concepts of Mental Arithmetic Systems)</b>	219	97%	7	3%	226
<b>Robotics</b>	211	93%	17	7%	228
<b>Mosaic production</b>	191	86%	32	14%	223
<b>Vocational/technical</b>	159	70%	67	30%	226
<b>Business/entrepreneurship skills/creative training ideas</b>	156	68%	72	32%	228
<b>English language</b>	148	65%	80	35%	228
<b>Employability and soft skills</b>	141	62%	87	38%	228
<b>Computer Skills (ICT)</b>	129	57%	98	43%	227

Speaking English language is the most needed skill as 95 respondents out of 231 (41%) indicated that they cannot speak English (See Table 28).

**Table 28: English Language Skills**

Language Skills	Excellent		Good		Basic		None	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Speaking</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>41%</b>
<b>Writing</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Reading</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>Understanding</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>25%</b>

Participants in the FGDs indicated that to cope with the lack of employment opportunities, youth found themselves needing to diversify their skill set to be able to take advantage of emerging livelihood opportunities. Therefore, additional skills were learned, but unfortunately, the new skills mostly revolved around general soft and business skills which were neither tailored to a specific profession or specialization nor included advanced skills or creativity. Also, youth in the FGDs gave an impression that they are aware of the lack of public and private sector jobs and have no ideal selection process but feel unable to overcome these problems.

This mismatch has been discussed with the representatives of the labor offices, and mostly they expressed concern over the lack of job opportunities in the market more than the unsuitability of the youth educational preparation for the vacant positions. While they noted that the problem was that Jordanian youth consider many of the jobs that are available (e.g., in construction, home services, and manufacturing such as garments) to be undesirable as they are low paying jobs, they lack the experience needed by the employers for the jobs they prefer. In various ways, policies can address these problems and more efforts can be made to encourage such careers and legitimize private sector careers in addition to entrepreneurship. Also, youth attitudes need to be reshaped toward certain careers, but this change may come slowly.

A negative perception of work was described by some female youth in the FGDs in Amman even though they have increased motivation and passion to become economically empowered and involved. Gender appears as a key differentiator in employment. While female youth attend university and vocational training programs at similar rates to men, they are far less likely to be formally employed despite policies to encourage this. Some cases of female youth face discrimination in the workplace, as they described that they are usually facing several obstacles in work that are not directly related to the job requirements. Instead, they are related to non-written criteria. The most substantial of these obstacles is wearing *hijab* (head covering). Also, some female youth complained that there are many fake invitations for interviews. In some cases, they discovered that the employers had no intention to seriously do the interview, but they were just looking at the general appearance of the female youth. Some female youth are accompanied by her father, brother, or husband when she goes to a job interview to avoid misconduct. In general, female participants in the FGDs explained that career choices for them are limited in both the private and public sectors. There are a lot of barriers in the private sector while opportunities in the public sector are very limited, usually to professions such as teaching.

### Identifying Difficulties

This part of the report aims to identify the youth difficulties, problems, and disabilities, such as impairment, activity limitation, or participation restrictions that indicate problems in functioning. The measurement of disability and other functional difficulties are associated with a variety of purposes which relate to equalization of opportunities.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> [Washington Group Short Set of Disability Questions.](#)

The findings showed that about 29% of the respondents have at least one type of functional difficulty. Among them, 31 cases have seeing difficulties, 10 cases have difficulty in using usual customary language, and 11 cases have difficulties in remembering and concentration (See Table 29).

**Table 29: Difficulties Screening**

Difficulty	Seeing	Self-care	Walking or climbing steps?	Hearing	Using your usual (customary) language	Remembering or concentrating
<b>No - no difficulty</b>	197	226	222	223	219	218
<b>Yes – a lot of difficulty</b>	1	0	0	0	1	2
<b>Yes – some difficulty</b>	30	1	5	4	9	8
<b>Cannot do at all</b>	0	0	0	0	0	1

### Legal Considerations

Despite the fact that Jordan has the highest ratio of refugees to citizens, where one in every three people is a refugee under the responsibility of UNHCR and UNRWA,<sup>20</sup> Jordan is not a signatory to the 1951 refugee convention or the 1967 protocol. However, the government of Jordan has been striving to develop the legal conditions for Syrian refugees by exempting Syrian workers from work permit fees and trying to open new fields for the Syrian refugees but restricting them to specific occupations that are permitted for foreign workers. The Labor Law does not mention ‘refugee’ or ‘asylum seeker’ anywhere in the law. In 2018, the Jordan Ministry of Labor (MoL) issued new instructions called *Comprehensive Instructions* related to the conditions and procedures for employing Syrians in Jordan.<sup>21</sup>

According to these instructions, the MoL has become the body responsible - legally - for all workers in Jordan, including Syrians, who are authorized to work in the labor market with a legal work permit issued under the cooperative societies and the General Federation of Jordan Trade Unions. Specifically, the work permit enables Syrians to work in the agriculture and construction sectors without the need for an employer or a sponsor.

Interviews with key informants from the Labor Offices in the governorates revealed that each labor office recommends to the MoL the proportions of Syrians authorized to work in various labor sectors based on the needs of the local labor market. These recommendations usually include the name of the region, numbers of Jordanian workers working in the sector, professions, numbers of Syrians in the sector, and profession level. In these interviews in the Labor Offices, it has been highlighted that the Comprehensive Instructions are flexible to the extent that the MoL can open new professions that have not been allowed before to Syrians, based on the needs of the labor market and based on the recommendations of the local labor office in each governorate, taking into consideration not to affect the job opportunities for Jordanians. Then, each application for a new profession is considered separately by the MoL.

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/5b27be547.pdf>, retrieved on 28 February 2020.

<sup>21</sup> The Comprehensive Instructions (3 of December 2018), in accordance with Paragraph (A) of Article 12 of the Jordanian Labor Law No. 8 of 1996.

Even though youth are mostly looking for work experience and not the salary, it is still illegal to pay them below the minimum amount of wages in Jordan (220 JD) and against youth work rights. Again, when employers can find someone who accepts below the minimum wage to get work experience, then others who are seeking a job to cover their cost of living will be forced to accept the same. This matter has been discussed with the key informants from the Governmental Labor Offices. They indicated that they are aware of this conduct. The Labor Inception Officer (LIO) can achieve only limited progress to overcome these practices due to the fact that employed youth are not willing to report this conduct to the LIO because they are usually afraid that they will be immediately fired by the employer. The LIO realizes this situation and when they visit such suspected entities they review and analyze the financial documents in order to discover these practices.

On the other hand, according to the notes taken in an interview with key informants in the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MIT), Syrian investments are dispersed in several sectors, most importantly, the industrial and commercial sectors. These investments have contributed significantly to the provision of job opportunities, mainly for Syrians, while it has contributed to increasing the national exports. The GoJ had agreed to grant Syrian investors facilities, where mechanisms were put in place to facilitate the entry of Syrian investors and obtain Jordan nationality.

In conclusion, there is no absence of legislative rights to work or invest for Syrian refugees in Jordan. However, it has been noted in the FGDs that nationals and Syrians are not treated equally in practice in terms of work conditions and wages, as well as bureaucratic barriers, such as complex paperwork and fees.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

### Employment Status

Employers are not ready to hire youth because the general high unemployment rate allows them to hire experienced and well-qualified employees with low wages. Therefore, employers prefer to recruit a person with practical experience for a skilled vacancy rather than an academically qualified one, as the latter is not well prepared to transfer theory to practice.

### Recommendations

- Internship opportunities for youth need to be promoted. An internship program helps youth to enhance their professional skills and offers them work experience they need. At the same time, employers can see the impact that a young person can make on their companies' success. Well-designed internship programs should promote beneficial propositions for both youth and employers. To ensure that qualitative internship is provided, proper instructions on effective internship process should be produced for both the youth and employers.
- Firms should be offered incentives to employ youth. Wage discrimination towards youth needs to be reduced by providing incentives (financial support) to firms for hiring young workers to cover a portion of their salaries. Initiatives are needed to target youth that have no job experience. The incentive is to encourage employers to hire young people and give them an opportunity for first work practice. This would overcome the belief that employers see youth as inexperienced. Legal measurements should be taken into consideration to protect the rights of youth in relation to the duration of the internships and the monthly payment.
- The government of Jordan needs to introduce a dual training system which combines work experience and learning opportunities with the aim to obtain vocational qualifications within the education system or training providers, such as the VTCs for employed and unemployed youth. Trainings need to take place both at a vocational centers and a company. The private sector should be encouraged to participate more actively in the learning process and VTCs should adapt more to the demands of businesses and industry and the specific needs of companies. The dual

system should close ties between employers and VET providers. Jordan should adopt such a dual system for training and education based on the best fit practices from countries like Germany and Austria.

- Due to the fact that youth regard certified experience as the key obstacle that prevents them from getting a job, it is recommended that the youth who will work in one of the temporary job opportunities created by the project or continue working for Zaha/FGAC need to receive work certificates at the end of the contract.
- The lack of employment opportunities combined with the lack of skill set needed for the merging job opportunities and the high cost of living may lead to psychosocial stress, social exclusion, and reduce the trust in public institutions. This result should be taken into consideration while designing project activities, strategic planning, and public policy formation.

The GoJ and INGOs need to ensure that livelihood interventions contribute to improving the employment opportunities for youth and the institutional capacities of the local institutions. Local institutions can contribute to decreasing youth's self-destructive behavior such as violence, terrorism, and drug use and increasing their trust in the existing local institutions.

### **Career Counselling**

Most youth regard career counselling as a mere training course. Career counseling should not be limited to training and orientation sessions. There are few opportunities for youth voluntary work, and the voluntary work is often not acknowledged as working experience by the private sector. On the other hand, career counseling activities have to take into consideration the current wage level that results in youth not being motivated to work in certain job positions.

### **Recommendations**

- Career counselling activities should include engagement in social activities that can increase their employability, networking opportunities, available skill training, information on jobs, and grant opportunities.
- Unemployment among female and male youth can only be effectively addressed if the young people undergo some attitude change from a job finding orientation to a career building orientation. It is important that career counseling activities develop a culture of youth's patience to retain them in jobs as they continue seeking for better jobs and higher wages, even if the low level jobs that they work at do not match their expectations.

It was interesting to know that the diploma degree holders have more of the necessary skills and knowledge needed to enter the labor market than university degree holders and that the holders of the secondary school certificate are the majority who have clear goal orientation. This leads to the possible conclusion that the youth who hold university degrees are less motivated to participate in employability skill development and career counselling. Perhaps this trend is due to the fact that because they have studied four years in the university and might feel they are well qualified to enter working life, they don't need further learning or training. These beliefs should be treated with proper attention, particularly in career counselling sessions.

- When asked what skills they would be interested in developing, most of them mentioned that English language and computer skills training are the key skills needed to enter working life. Therefore, it is highly recommended to provide English language courses and computer skills training to the project beneficiaries to develop their professional and personal aspirations. This could be done in conjunction with employability skills workshops to train youth in the work environment for success in the workplace.

### **Career Goal Orientation**

As there is no refusal to work in vocational positions or even in low level positions, and while the GoJ and international organizations are currently moving forward to expand the quantity of vocational employment opportunities, there is still demand for further interventions, offering better adapted courses from both a technical and subject based perspective (e.g., ensuring courses offered are in line with the labor market's needs). In this case, vocation employment could potentially present an opportunity for youth in Jordan, both Jordanians and Syrians.

### **Recommendations**

- The Labor Offices and Vocational Training Centers (VTC) in the governorates should have shared service units that serve Syrian and Jordanian youth and should work with the international organizations in order to introduce new special programs to meet the new needs in the labor market.

### **Awareness of Jobs and Training Opportunities**

There is a lack of a central source of information regarding career choices, job opportunities, and available training courses that has led to confusion for the youth. They usually receive this information from friends or social media channels such as Facebook and WhatsApp groups. They are failing to grasp and become timely informed of the opportunities available to them, particularly for volunteering opportunities and/or internships that could potentially lead to a job.

### **Recommendations**

- A comprehensive real-time labor market information system to help youth and market makers meet each other and balance the supply and demand for skills needs to be created. Information regarding career choices, job opportunities, and available training courses must be conveyed to youth job seekers in a timely manner. Also, information about youth needs to be conveyed to potential employers through job matching criteria in each governorate in Jordan. One of the key proposed activities to achieve this is to develop a mobile application for employment. The proposed mobile application should be the key tool to cover job matching services, guidance, counseling services, labor market trends and updates, and training programmes available. It is expected that this tool will support youth especially if such information is received as soon as posted.

### **Employability Skills**

Current voluntary work or temporary work is not traditionally seen as work experience by the private sector when hiring youth. Moreover, the provision of additional employment skills, practices, and follow up activities is needed to improve youth employability.

### **Recommendations**

- One of the most interesting findings in this study is that the percentage of female youth who have necessary skills and knowledge needed to enter the labor market are higher than male. This result contrasts with the statistics that reveal low female employment in Jordan.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, possessing the necessary skills and knowledge needed to enter the labor market by female youth more than their male counterparts reflects the female intentions and willingness to work but this does not mean that their career choices are unlimited. This leads to a conclusion that low young female participation in the labor market in Jordan is not necessarily related to social or cultural traits or the family discouraging their economic participation in the household. Instead it comes from other barriers, whether these are employers, transportation, work environment, or low-wages.

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<sup>22</sup> The unemployment rate in Jordan for youth aged 15 to 24, males equals 34.8 and females equals 58.6 (Jordan in Figures, Department of Statistics, 2018).

- Further exploration of these barriers is needed to increase employment opportunities for females and reduce gender specific barriers to entering into and remaining in the labor market. To address these barriers, it is recommended working with private sector partners to improve working conditions for female youth (internal policies, HR strategies, procedures, etc.), exploring options for the safe transportation of women with employers within the target communities, and fostering a more gender-sensitive work environment.
- Self-employment and entrepreneurship are still not a realistic choice of increasing employment for most of the participants in the FGDs. Even the GoJ has an independent ministry for this purpose named the Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship (MDEE). It is highly recommended that INGOs cooperate with the MDEE to overcome the challenges faced by entrepreneurs including access to markets, access to funding, regulatory challenges, and access to talent. However, to foster entrepreneurship such cooperation with the MDEE should improve the business enabling environment, promotion of entrepreneurship programs, and entrepreneurship learning.
- It is expected that carrying out entrepreneurship promotion programs through the MDEE and other government bodies and INGOs as well as networking with the VTC and youth centers will carefully determine business sectors in which support is made available, support sectors are based on local area specifications, the start-up and needed investment is better designed, and follow-up activities are provided to ensure the sustainability of new businesses.
- CBOs and youth centers should promote voluntary work and also be able to document work experience rather than just providing youth with certificates of participation. Documenting voluntary experience should include skills gained, training completed, and key accomplishments. The next phase could be to advocate for a law to empower youth as it recognizes voluntary work as work experience.
- CBOs and youth centers should be empowered to provide additional employment skills. Youth organizations through the provision of non-formal educational programmes, such as community service, voluntary work, or formal training programs, can address a lack of experience and skills, and thereby boost youth employability. Furthermore, CBOs and youth centers can provide additional employability skills and practices, and follow up activities, such as job interview skills, work environment orientation, organizational culture, teamwork, creative thinking, and communications skills.
- CBOs and youth centers can also play a vital role in helping youth to be better prepared for the labor market through the provision of job matching and mediation services. These services can be provided in partnership with the public, the government labor offices, VTCs, CBOs, projects, and INGOs, in order to maximize the impact and sharing of resources.

### **Difficulties Screening**

It is clear that the project design and the selection of youth respondents have taken into consideration a significant number of youth who have certain type of difficulties.

### **Recommendations**

- Youth with certain types of difficulties should be supported by the private sector in terms of incentives given by the government or other NGOs to the private sector to employee people with difficulties. The private sector also needs to look for ways on how youth with difficulties, such as with hearing or seeing, can be more productive and engaged in workplaces.