



# WOMEN WORKING: JORDANIAN AND SYRIAN REFUGEE WOMEN'S LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS EMPLOYMENT



**REACH** An initiative of  
IMPACT Initiatives  
ACTED and UNOSAT

 **UN  
WOMEN** 



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>KEY FINDINGS</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Overview: Women’s Employment</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Women in Employment</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Women Not in Employment</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Obstacles to Employment</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>SUMMARY &amp; CONCLUSION</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Key Conclusions</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>ANNEXES</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Perception Survey Questionnaire</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Focus Group Discussion Guiding Questions</b>	<b>45</b>



# INTRODUCTION

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan hosts 1.4m Syrians, of which 656,198 are registered with UNHCR as refugees as of August 2016<sup>1</sup>, the majority of whom have found refuge in host communities across Jordan, rather than official refugee camps<sup>2</sup>. In host communities, the consequences of such a protracted displacement situation are considerable and have posed challenges for both Syrian refugees and Jordanian hosts. Coping with fluctuating levels of humanitarian assistance, exhausted savings and limited access to legal livelihood opportunities Syrian refugees have been struggling to provide for themselves and their families. Meanwhile, Jordanian host communities have been coping with the consequences of a population increase and resulting intensification of competition over scarce resources and livelihoods opportunities, which have made it increasingly difficult for vulnerable Jordanians to make ends meet. With limited and distant prospects for a resolution of the crisis, allowing Syrian refugees to return to their country in safety and dignity, a more sustainable approach to the management of the displacement crisis needs to be adopted, focusing on supporting the resilience and welfare of both Syrian refugees and Jordanian hosts.

The prospects for such an approach have been raised during the “Supporting Syria and the Region” donor conference held in London in February 2016. At the conference, a number of donor governments, multilateral donors and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan concluded the “Jordan Compact”<sup>3</sup>. The compact offers a new approach to the refugee situation in the Middle Eastern country: in exchange for greater access of Jordanian goods to European markets, Jordan aims to facilitate job opportunities through the allocation of work permits to 200,000 refugees in specified sectors, while simultaneously seeking to improve employment opportunities for Jordanians. In enabling the Government of Jordan to reach this target, both male and female employment must be promoted to access the labour market – Jordanian and refugees. This is derived from both a normative and rights argument, but also from an effectiveness and efficiency perspective. Data from the ILO shows that if employment occupations were reshuffled between women and men to have a more equal distribution and women were to be fairly paid; accordingly, the economy of Jordan could increase

its GDP of 5%, the equivalent of almost USD 2 billion. In other words, economic efficiency could increase because of better utilization of women’s economic power and this in turn would create more wealth that can be shared equally between women and men.<sup>4</sup> More pragmatically, the number of refugee men of working age in Jordan is approximately 160,000 – meaning that even if 100% of these were to be engaged in employment opportunities, at least 40,000 women would also need to be supported to access work permits to reach the 200,000 target.

Governments and multilateral donors have made large-scale pledges to support the compact and a range of initiatives have since sought to ease and promote the economic inclusion of Syrian refugees – both women and men – while easing the burden on the host community through the creation of job opportunities for Jordanians as well. Moreover, in its Vision 2015 planning framework, the Government of Jordan has committed to increase the rate of Jordanian women’s engagement in the economy to 27% by 2025.<sup>5</sup> To support the actualisation of this, a nuanced understanding of the challenges, opportunities and pathways for women’s engagement is needed. While information on this

1 UNHCR, Syria refugee response data-sharing portal, as of 16 August 2016 [last accessed 25 August 2016]  
2 Jordan Response Plan for the Syria Crisis 2016-2018 (JRP 2016-2018), January 2016, p. 8.  
3 The Jordan Compact: A New Holistic Approach between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the International Community to deal with the Syrian Refugee Crisis

4 ILO, The Effects of Gender Inequality in Employment and Pay in Jordan. Presented at the Symposium, Striving for Pay Equity in Jordan. 6 October 2015. Amman, Jordan  
5 <http://inform.gov.jo/en-us/By-Date/Report-Details/ArticleId/247/Jordan-2025>

for Jordanian women is available, very little exists on the economic status and labour force participation of Syrian refugee women residing in Jordan.

In April 2016, UN Women contracted REACH to conduct an assessment aimed at promoting understanding of Syrian and Jordanian women's labour force participation, factors that might hinder their participation and the conditions under which women would work either inside or outside the home. Carried out between 23 May and 22 June 2016, the assessment combined a quantitative component, consisting of a nationwide, representative telephone survey of 609 Syrian and Jordanian women, with a qualitative element consisting of 12 focus group discussions (FGDs). The survey was designed to measure the prevalence of employment indicators, including women's current employment status, employment sectors, reasons for economic inactivity or unemployment, perceptions of availability of and obstacles to women's employment, as well as preferences for employment inside or outside the home. Meanwhile, the FGDs aimed at contextualising and verifying findings from the perception survey. A particular focus was placed on better understanding obstacles to women's employment and identifying opportunities for mitigating the factors hindering women's participation in the labour force.

Through this assessment, UN Women, in collaboration with REACH, seeks to ensure that the realities and needs of Syrian and Jordanian women are better understood and adequately taken into account in the growing livelihoods sector in Jordan. The ultimate aim is to contribute to a gender-sensitive evidence-base to guide large-scale livelihood initiatives which are currently under development and will be rolled out in the coming years.

## Report Outline

The present briefing paper outlines the key findings of the assessment. First, it describes the methodology adopted in this assessment, followed by an overview of women's employment in Jordan including a

comparative analysis of the key characteristics of women who are currently employed, and those who

are not. The paper goes on to discuss the profiles of women in employment, including education level, parental status, employment sectors, place of work and the prevalence of full- and part-time employment. This is followed by a profile of women not currently in employment, which discusses the reasons why women are not engaged in paid work, their aspirations and the degree to which these translate into women actively seeking employment. The final sections present a discussion of identified obstacles to women's employment, and potential ways to mitigate such obstacles, in the view of Jordanian and Syrian refugee women themselves, as well as levels of satisfaction with employment opportunities for women. These chapters also provide a more detailed analysis of women's attitudes towards home-based work, as well as Syrian refugee women's perceptions of work permits and related processes. The paper is concluded by a set of recommendations.



# METHODOLOGY

The research team adopted a mixed methods approach to provide an overview of Jordanian and Syrian refugee women's labour force participation and explore obstacles to and attitudes towards employment.

A quantitative component, consisting of a perception survey carried out over the telephone, sought to establish the prevalence of key employment indicators, such as employment status, type of work, aspirations and preferences. Analysis of these findings informed the design of a qualitative component consisting of 12 FGDs, six with Jordanian women and six with Syrian refugee women. The qualitative component specifically aimed at contextualising and better understanding the obstacles women in Jordan face in accessing employment and women's perceptions on how such challenges could be mitigated or overcome.

The following sections provide a more detailed overview of these two components. The data collection tools for both the perception survey and FGDs can be found in the annex to this report.

## Telephone Perception Survey

In line with feasibility parameters of the assessment, conducting telephone rather than face-to-face interviews was deemed most appropriate to meet the following preconditions. On the one hand, roughly 600 interviews were to be conducted nationwide, representing a small sample over a large geographical area. On the other hand, a full telephone number list of the population of interest was available, given all registered Syrian refugees are detailed within UNHCR's Refugee Assistance Information System (RAIS), including phone numbers, and Jordanians phone numbers can be randomly generated.

## Sampling

In total, 609 interviews were conducted, 306 with Jordanian<sup>6</sup> and 303 with Syrian refugee women, all over the age of 18 (see Table 1), between 23 May and 12 June 2016. The sample was designed to provide statistically generalizable findings for female residents of Jordan with a 95% confidence level and a 4% margin of error. Following this sampling framework, findings can be disaggregated by nationality, with a 92% confidence level and 5% margin of error.

A two stage sampling process was adopted to ensure that the women selected to participate were chosen at random. First, phone numbers were randomly selected. During this stage, different sampling strategies were followed for the Syrian refugee and the Jordanian component. For Syrian refugee women an anonymised, random sample of refugee case phone numbers was drawn from the UNHCR RAIS database, in collaboration with UNHCR. For the Jordanian component, mobile phone numbers were randomly generated for each of Jordan's three largest mobile carriers – Zain, Orange and Umniah. Specifically, lists of random telephone numbers were generated by pairing the first three digits unique to each carrier – 079, 077 and 078 – with a randomly generated series of numbers. In order to arrive at a representative sample, it was stratified according to the reported market share of the carriers: 36.3% Zain, 32.3% Orange and 31.3% Umniah.

**TABLE 1**  
**Sample overview**

	JORDANIAN WOMEN	SYRIAN WOMEN
CONFIDENCE LEVEL	92%	92%
MARGIN OF ERROR	5%	5%
TOTAL POPULATION	4,182,757	332,195
SAMPLE SIZE	306	303
TOTAL SAMPLE	609	

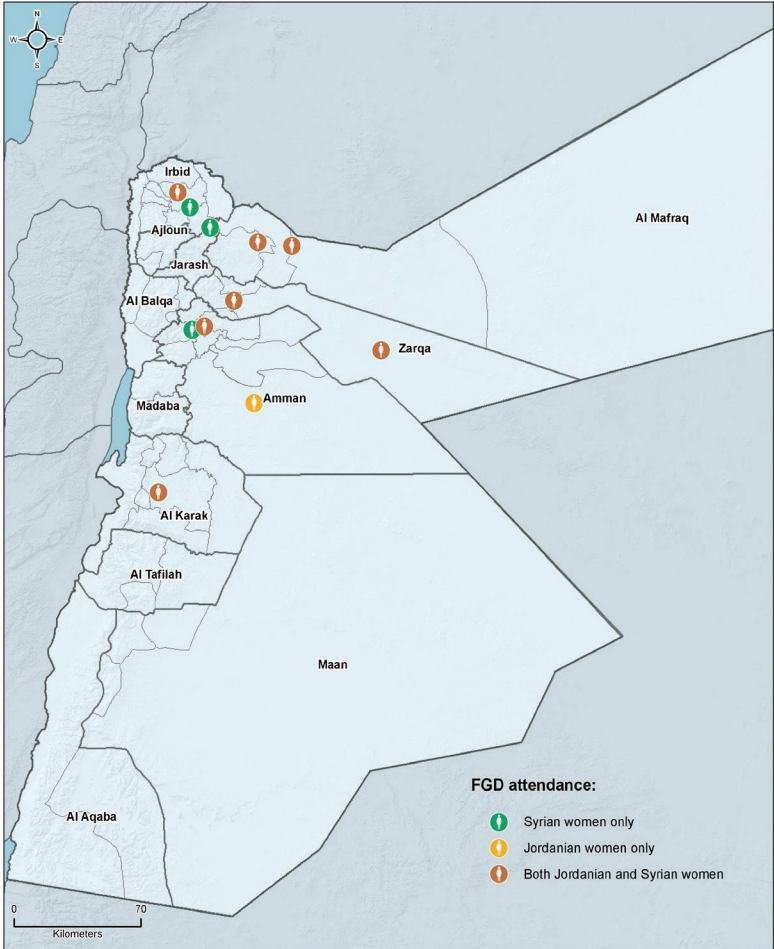
<sup>6</sup> For this assessment, Jordanian women shall refer to all women who are not Syrian refugees.

As randomly selected<sup>7</sup> or generated numbers could either belong to a man or a woman, another layer of random participant selection had to be added: random selection of female participants. When a phone was answered by either a man or a woman, and the person answering gave consent to be asked a few questions, the person was asked how many women over 18 were currently close by, e.g. in the same room. The enumerators then asked for the ages of these women, which were input in the Open Data Kit (ODK) form programmed to randomly select one of these numbers. The person on the phone was then asked to hand the phone to the woman of the age selected, and if after an introduction she gave consent to be interviewed, enumerators proceeded with the survey.

### Focus Group Discussions

Through preliminary analysis of perception survey data, and in close collaboration with UN Women, a number of themes and trends were identified which were to be verified, contextualised or explored further through FGDs. Specifically, FGDs sought to gain insights into women’s perceptions and opinions regarding women’s employment in Jordan broadly, including their aspirations, as well as barriers and ways to overcome these. Furthermore, FGDs explored women’s attitudes towards working inside or outside the home.

**MAP 1: LOCATIONS OF FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS**



<sup>7</sup> Based on the number of UNHCR registered female refugees and the results of the Jordanian national census in November 2015.

The 12 FGDs were conducted between 14 and 22 June 2016. Map 1 provides an overview of FGD locations per nationality. The geographical distribution of FGDs in terms of governorates was determined based on perception survey data, which through the random sampling approach reflects population proportions. In other words, FGDs were conducted in those governorates in which the largest proportion of women had been previously interviewed.

## Challenges & Limitations

Below is an outline of the challenges experienced during the planning and implementation of the assessment and the respective mitigation strategies adopted.

As this was the first time REACH conducted a call centre with Jordanian respondents, a number of initial challenges emerged. The random generation of lists of mobile phone numbers meant that a considerable number of these were either not in use or disconnected. This resulted in a smaller number of successful interviews conducted per enumerator on a daily basis than initially expected, leading to a delay in data collection.

With data collection occurring during common working hours, an initial concern was that the sample might be biased toward women who are not working. Based on the finding that the economic

participation rate of women in the sample is similar to World Bank statistics<sup>8</sup>, it can be assumed that the telephone survey approach adopted, and the fact that mobile phone numbers rather than landlines were used, mitigated this issue.

It should be noted that due to the small sample of women reporting to be working (79 in total), related findings can be generalised with a 92% level of confidence and a 10% margin of error, while nationality disaggregation can no longer produce statistically significant findings. Where findings are thus indicative, rather than representative, this is stated clearly in the report and needs to be taken into account when interpreting and using findings.

Overall, it is important to understand the findings of the present paper in the context of the scope of the assessment. The present study provides a snapshot of Jordanian and Syrian refugee women's labour force participation, related perceptions, and challenges. It served to uncover and explore trends and identify areas for future inquiry. Further in-depth research is required to properly unpack and better understand the various challenges women – both Jordanian and Syrian refugees – are facing in accessing employment in Jordan, as well as any

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<sup>8</sup> World Bank, Country Gender Assessment: Economic participation, agency and access to justice in Jordan, 2014, p. 28.

# KEY FINDINGS

The following sections present the key findings of the assessment carried out between 23 May and 22 June 2016. The first section provides an overview of women’s employment status, as well as a number of key demographic indicators of women who are and are not employed. This is followed by a more detailed profile of women who are currently economically active on the labour market, before turning to those who are not employed at the moment. Then follows a discussion of identified obstacles to women’s employment, and potential ways to mitigate them according to Jordanian and Syrian refugee women. The paper is concluded by a set of recommendations.

All findings reported over the total sample, i.e. all women, have been weighted to account for the different proportions of Syrian refugee and Jordanian women present in the total female population of Jordan<sup>9</sup>. This ensures that such overall findings accurately represent all women in Jordan. For questions answered by the entire sample and reported for all women, statistically significant findings can be produced at a 95% confidence level and 4% margin of error. For nationality disaggregated findings for questions answered by the entire sample, the level of confidence is 92% while the margin of error is 5%.

## OVERVIEW: WOMEN’S EMPLOYMENT

### Employment Status

The majority of women residing in Jordan are not employed<sup>10</sup>. Overall, only 19% of all women residing in Jordan are currently employed (see Figure 1). This finding is in line with 2014 World Bank figures on women’s labour force participation in Jordan, which was estimated at 22%, only a quarter of that for men (estimated at 87%)<sup>11</sup>.

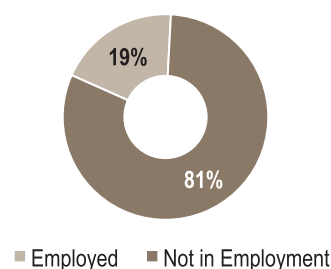
9 Nationality weights have been calculated by dividing the proportion of Syrian/Jordanian women of the total Jordanian female population by the proportion of Syrian/Jordanian women of the sample.

10 Conversely, women not in employment generally include all women who are currently not undertaking regular paid work, comprising both women who are looking for employment and those who do not.

11 World Bank, Country Gender Assessment: Economic participation, agency and access to justice in Jordan, 2014, p. 28.

At the same time, a majority of women (57%) who are not currently in employment want to work if they had the opportunity. This suggests that external obstacles are contributing to the gender gap on the Jordanian labour market, rather than first and foremost women’s individual attitudes towards employment.

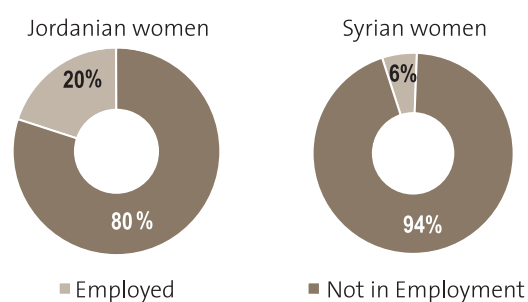
**FIGURE 1:**  
Current employment status of women residing in Jordan



When disaggregated by nationality, the rate of employment can be seen to differ significantly between Jordanian and Syrian refugee women. A considerably larger proportion of Syrian refugee women (94%) than of Jordanian women (80%) are not currently working (see Figure 2). Looking at the proportion of Syrian refugee women who used to work in Syria prior to the conflict suggests that this

is most likely a product of context rather than of differing attitudes towards work.

**FIGURE 2:**  
Jordanian and Syrian refugee women’s current employment status



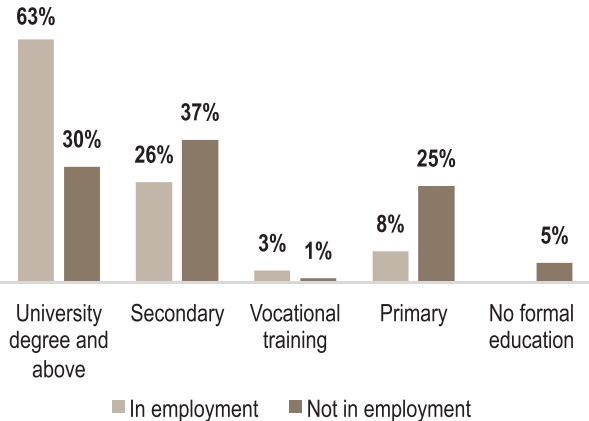
Roughly the same proportion of Syrian refugee women reported they had worked in Syria prior to the conflict (17%) than of Jordanian women reporting to be working currently (20%). This is again largely in line with World Bank data on Syrian women’s labour force participation prior to the conflict, estimated at 13% in 2010<sup>12</sup>. These findings reflect the consequences of the prohibitive regulatory framework in place until very recently, as well as the broader, gendered negative impact of displacement on Syrian women’s employment. While women’s participation in the labour force has dropped as a result of displacement male participation rates have remained stable – in Syria pre-conflict and after displacement, with slight elevations in youth male employment among Syrian refugees<sup>13</sup>. It should be noted that while restrictions on employment have recently been eased, it is likely that economic activity among Syrian refugees is still underreported, for fear of prosecution for labour law infringements.

**Education Level**

Women who are employed are more likely to have a university degree or higher, compared to those who do not work: 60% of employed women reported a university or postgraduate degree as their highest completed level of education, compared to 28% of those not working. Meanwhile, women who are not working are more likely to have completed no higher than primary education at 31%, compared to 8% of women who currently work (see Figure 3). Nevertheless, a majority of women who do not work is highly educated: more than two thirds (67%) have completed secondary education or higher. This indicates that a lack of education is unlikely to be the primary driver for limited female labour force participation or employment. Education level is thus an imperfect proxy indicator for women’s employment. This is congruent with findings of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the World Bank, indicating that women’s limited labour force participation and higher unemployment rate could stem from challenges in women’s labour market transitions, i.e. difficulties entering the

labour market after completing education, which likely relate to a mismatch between the skills women acquire through their education or training, and labour market demand<sup>14</sup>.

**FIGURE 3:**  
**Women’s level of education, by employment status**



**Sex of Head of Household**

Women who are working are more likely to be member of a female headed household, than women who do not work. While only 28% of women who do not currently work reported their head of household was female, 42% of women who currently do work reported they were themselves the head of the household, while another 2% reported to live in a household headed by another woman. . As for households headed by women it is generally assumed that either there are no male household members, or that none of the male members is old enough or able to provide for the household, it can be assumed that female heads of household fulfil this role. These results support the notion of the pervasiveness of gender norms and stereotypes, by which men are expected to serve as the household providers. It appears that there remains a broad compliance with socially accepted cultural norms within the household. In the absence of a male breadwinner, women may have to work to provide, but may also have greater autonomy and less

12 World Bank data, Female Labour Force Participation Rate, Syria, 2010.  
13 FAO/ILO, 2015, Impact of Syrian Refugees on the Jordanian Labour Market

14 ILO, Labour market transitions of young women and men in Jordan, 2014; World Bank, Jordan Country Gender Assessment: Economic Participation, Agency and Access to Justice in Jordan, 2014, p. 30, 46.

interference in personal decision-making over their access to the labour market.

## Marital Status

A larger proportion of women who work are divorced or single, than of women who do not work. Of all women who work, 11% reported to be divorced or separated, and 29% stated they were single, compared to 2% and 18% respectively of women who are not working, and 4% and 14% respectively of all women interviewed. At least for women who are separated or divorced, this is interrelated with being the head of the household, as a majority of divorced/separated women who work also stated they were the head of the household. This links to the previous point regarding the need to work as head of the household, and greater freedoms to work when serving as head of household.

## Children

Women with children are less likely to be in employment than women who do not have children. There is a statistically significant, if weak, negative correlation between having children and being in employment<sup>15</sup>. Of women who have children 17% are in employment,

while 83% are not employed. This compares to 23% of women without children being in employment, and 77% not being employed. Specifically, child care responsibilities were the most frequently cited reason for not being in employment, at 28%

of women not currently employed. Meanwhile, indicative findings suggest that women who do work either have children who are in school (37%), old enough to look after themselves (18%), or are able to rely on relatives (26%), day care facilities (18%) or baby sitters (17%) for child care support. This suggests that, generally speaking, having children does not by itself explain limited labour force participation, but underlines the importance of suitable child care options to facilitate women's access to the labour market.

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15 A one-tailed Pearson correlation test resulted in a negative correlation coefficient of -0.076, significant at the 0.05 level.

When specifically looking at female heads of household, having children makes it more likely for women to be in employment. Unlike for women in general, when only looking at female heads of household, there is a statistically positive correlation between having children and being in employment, suggesting a reversed dynamic for this subgroup<sup>16</sup>.

Only 7% of women with children living in a male-headed household are employed, whereas nearly 19% of female heads of household with children indicated they worked.

## Household Income

Households with women who work have a considerably higher income than households with no women working. This is true both for female and male headed households. Yet, when disaggregating across nationalities, such differences remain visible only for Jordanian households (see Figure 4). The average total Jordanian household income of women who do work stands at 854 JOD (1,208 USD)<sup>17</sup> over the 30 days preceding the survey, while the average Jordanian household income of women who do not work was reported at 493 JOD (698 USD). Regarding Syrian households, no discernible difference exists between incomes of households with women who work and households with no women working (see Figure 4). This, together with the fact that average incomes for Syrian households are generally much lower than incomes of Jordanian households, suggests that those Syrian women who do work have to work to make ends meet. In the Jordanian case,

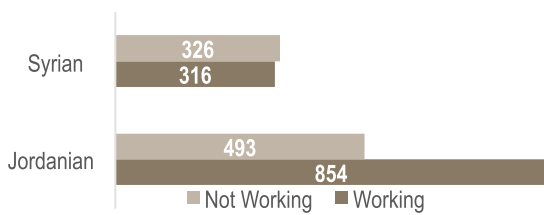
further exploration would be required to determine whether higher household incomes suggest that women living in higher income households are more likely to work, or that women's employment leads to higher household income.

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16 A one-tailed Pearson correlation test resulted in a positive correlation coefficient of 0.152, significant at the 0.05 level.

17 Based on the exchange rate (1 JOD = 1,415 USD) on 23 August, 2016. All conversions from Jordanian Dinar to US Dollars in this document are based on this exchange rate.

**FIGURE 4:**  
**Reported Household Income Levels (in JOD)**



## Women in Employment

As shown in the previous section, the majority (81%) of women residing in Jordan are currently not working. Yet, it is important to gain a better understanding of the profile of those women who are currently employed, as this could shed light both on factors conducive to women’s participation in the labour force, as well as factors that might hinder large proportions of other women joining the work force. This section considers in more detail the demographics of women who are working, and examines the sectors women are working in. It also considers where women are working, and how they travel to their place of work.

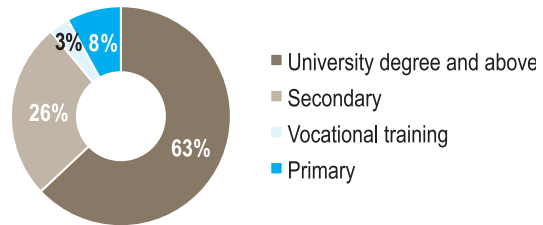
As noted earlier, there is an important caveat for the findings presented in this section. As women employed were found to represent merely 19% of the sample, the sample size is reduced to 79 respondents. This has implications for the accuracy of findings, as the level of confidence of findings is reduced to 92% and the margin of error is increased to 10%. Meanwhile, findings disaggregated by nationality are indicative, rather than representative. The focus of this section is thus placed on findings for working women overall, with nationality specific findings added as indicative of trends which require further exploration.

## Who are the women in employment?

Women working are highly educated. A large majority of women who are working (89%) have completed secondary education or higher, most of them reporting to either hold a 2-year university

diploma, a university degree, or post graduate degree (see Error! Reference source not found.).

**FIGURE 5:**  
**Level of education completed by women who are working**



Despite this finding, women’s education is not necessarily a proxy for employment. According to the World Bank women’s labour market outcomes in terms of employment sectors closely “mirror the fields of study women specialize in<sup>18</sup>, namely education and business and administration. Yet, these skills do not necessarily match the demand in the labour market, “and the qualification required to join the most dynamic and productive sectors in the economy.<sup>19</sup>

The findings from this assessment largely corroborate this analysis, with (a) women working in a relatively narrow set of sectors, (b) a majority of women not working having completed at least secondary education and (c) a large proportion of unemployed women, i.e. those women actively searching for employment, being highly educated.

Efforts seeking to increase women’s employment, should focus on understanding labour market demand and the relevance of the type and quality of skills women acquired through education, rather than the level of education perse.

Women who work are frequently the head of the household. Among women who work, 42% reported they were the head of the household, while another

<sup>18</sup> World Bank, Jordan Country Gender Assessment: Economic Participation, Agency and Access to Justice in Jordan, 2014, p. 46, 92. The 2010 Jordan Labour Market Panel Survey (JLMPS) found that women are most commonly completing courses in teaching and education science (24.1), humanities (16.6) and business and administration (16.1) p. 92, which mirrors the most common employment sectors among women: education (38.6), human health

<sup>19</sup> World Bank, Jordan Country Gender Assessment: Economic Participation, Agency and Access to Justice in Jordan, 2014, p. 46.

2% reported they lived in a household headed by another woman. As such, women could at least partially be employed out of necessity, as there is a greater chance that in female headed households there are no male household members that can provide for the household.

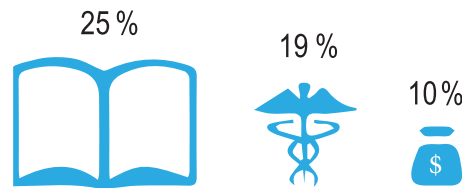
Over half of all women in employment have children. Fifty-five per cent (55%) of those women who are currently working have children, on average three. This compares to 62% of all women over 18 residing in Jordan. Looking at how women manage child care while at work, a majority of them (56%) reported that their children were either at school (37%) or simply perceived old enough to take care of themselves (18%). Roughly a quarter of working women with children further reported that family members were assisting with child care (26%), while 18% reported to use a day care facility and 17% stated a nanny or babysitter was assisting them.<sup>20</sup> This suggests, on the one hand, that women might be more likely to join or re-join the labour force once their children are older, or that children might be at school or are looking after themselves while their mother is at work. On the other hand, this highlights the importance of familial and external support with child care while children are younger, to allow women to go to work it they want or need to. This topic will be revisited in the two subsequent chapters, when considering factors that might impede women's employment.

### In which sectors do women work?

In line with their high levels of education, women are likely to work in skill-intensive employment sectors. The three most commonly cited employment sectors were education (25%), health care and social work (19%), followed by finance, insurance and business services (10%) (see Figure 6). According to the World Bank, education and health can be considered “female employment intensive”<sup>21</sup> sectors, as slightly over half of all employees in these sectors were women in 2010<sup>22</sup>. The three most commonly reported sectors were followed by hairdressing and beauty services (6%), public

administration, telecommunication, and wholesale and retail trade (5% respectively). Overall, these findings confirm that women are generally working in a relatively narrow set of employment sectors in Jordan, which either indicates pronounced preferences or limited access to employment in other sectors.

**FIGURE 6:**  
Top three most frequently cited employment sectors



Indicative findings for Syrian refugee women show stark differences in terms of the skill-intensity of employment. The most frequently cited employment sectors for Syrian refugee women were accommodation and food services, followed by agriculture and humanitarian work in NGOs or international organisations, most likely on a cash for work basis<sup>23</sup>.

Contrary to common employment sectors among Jordanian women, which are largely reflective of their education level, Syrian refugee women working in these sectors is likely a reflection of opportunities currently open to Syrian refugees in Jordan, rather than necessarily in line with their training, education level or previous work experience. This can be supported by indicative findings showing that roughly three quarters of Syrian refugee women working in Jordan did not work prior to the conflict. A consideration of the most commonly reported employment sectors among Syrian refugee women who were working in Syria prior to the

20 Please note that respondents were asked to select all applicable answers, rather than just one.

21 World Bank, Jordan Country Gender Assessment: Economic Participation, Agency and Access to Justice in Jordan, 2014, p. 11.

22 Ibid.

23 Cash for work programs are usually temporary interventions in the course of a humanitarian response to an emergency, offering short-term employment in public projects to vulnerable population groups in order to secure livelihoods. Particularly in the Jordanian context, cash for work programs present a viable means to provide Syrian refugees who generally lack paid work opportunities with secure livelihoods. Such programs generally comprise a variety of types of work, while in Jordan there is a focus on linking humanitarian programming and service provision with remunerated job opportunities for Syrian refugees.



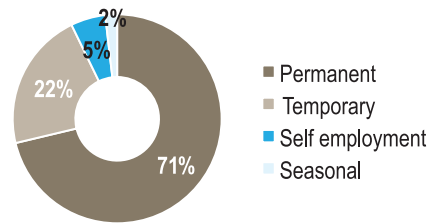
conflict provides further basis for this analysis. While findings remain indicative, among the 17% of Syrian refugee women who reported they had worked prior to the conflict, the most common employment sectors were agriculture and education, with between a fifth and a quarter of women reporting to have worked in these sectors. On a national level, World Bank figures state that in 2010 roughly 12% of employed Syrian women worked in agriculture and 78% where employed in services.<sup>24</sup>

A comparatively strong focus amongst Syrian refugee women on agriculture prior to the conflict can be understood seeing how a large proportion of Syrian refugees in Jordan are from the southern Syrian governorates of Dar'a, Homs and Rural Damascus – roughly 71% of refugees in Jordan at the end of June 2016<sup>25</sup> – which are predominantly rural areas where agricultural livelihood practices were common prior to the conflict. These were followed by manufacturing, health care, sewing and textiles and wholesale and retail trade, reported by less than a tenth of previously working Syrian refugee women respectively.

### Is women's employment permanent or temporary, full- or part-time?

Women in the Jordanian labour market are most commonly employed on a permanent contract, while a minority are self-employed. A majority of working women have permanent employment (71%), while roughly a fifth have temporary employment (22%), and 5% are self-employed (see Figure 7). Indicative findings suggest, that permanent employment arrangements are much rarer amongst Syrian women. Yet, due to small numbers of Syrian women working, no statistically reliable claims can be made on the type of their employment.

**FIGURE 7:**  
Type of employment



A majority of women are working full-time (62%), while 31% of women are working part-time<sup>26</sup>. Interestingly, women with children appear to be equally likely to work full-time as women who do not have children, with a majority in both groups working full-time. Yet, indicative findings suggest that women with full-time employment have children who are older than those who work part-time, with a majority of full-time employees reporting their children are either “at school” or “old enough to look after themselves”, compared to a minority of part-time employees.

Furthermore, women who work part-time appear to rely more heavily on child care support from their relatives than women who work full-time. While further exploration is required in this regard, these findings could suggest, on the one hand, that working part-time reduces the need for external child care support provided through day care centres or baby sitters, as other family members are able to cover the hours women are at work. On the other hand, this could suggest that being either unable or unwilling to rely more heavily on external child care support means that women cannot take up full-time employment.

### Where do women work?

The majority of women appear to work in relative proximity to their home, with 89% of working women spending a maximum of 30 minutes to reach their place of work. Looking at where women work can explain these travel times, as a majority of women are working in the same village, town or city they live in (51%), while 36% work in another village,

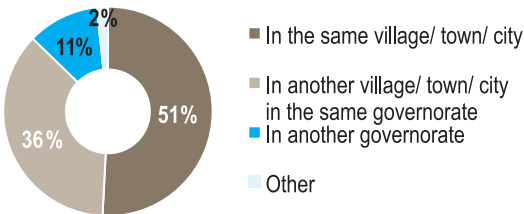
<sup>24</sup> World Bank, online data base, female employment in Syria 2010.

<sup>25</sup> UNHCR, Syrian Refugees in Jordan by Origin (Governorate Level), as of 30 June 2016.

<sup>26</sup> For the remaining 7 who reported either to be self-employed or to be working seasonally, the employment status was not assessed.

town or city, but in the same governorate (see Figure 8). A minority of women are working in a governorate other than the one they reside in (11%). The 2% reporting 'other' stated that there was no consistent location for their work, presumably because their work requires mobility. Overall, these findings show that distance to work opportunities could play a role in whether women are able and willing to take up work or not. Focus group discussion (FGD) findings confirm this analysis, with women in rural areas of Karak, Mafrq and Amman referring to the challenge of distance to employment opportunities hindering their ability to find and go to work. This challenge links to transportation, which is discussed in the final chapter of this report.

**FIGURE 8:**  
**Women's work location**



Syrian refugee women are less likely to travel beyond the village, town or city they live in to work. An overwhelming majority of working Syrian refugee women reportedly works in the same locality they live in, while none reported to be working outside the governorate they reside in. This is likely explained by the effects of a restrictive regulatory environment, giving rise to fears of being apprehended for labour law infringements, as well as limited resources available to refugee women to afford the cost of transportation. These two factors could also provide an explanation as to why the most frequently cited place of work among Syrian refugee women was "at home". While this could be indicative of a preference for home-based work, it might simply be an adaptation to the circumstances, a pragmatic solution in a restrictive environment, as will be discussed in the final chapter of this report.

## Women not in Employment

The overwhelming majority of women residing in Jordan are not currently working (81%). This section aims to understand the reasons for women's economic inactivity on the labour market, by drawing a profile of the women who are not employed, identifying barriers to employment as experienced by women themselves and considering women's employment aspirations. It is worth noting that when the expression "women not working" is used in this report and specifically this section, this refers to women who are not pursuing paid work in the labour market. While UN Women and REACH fully recognise that all women in Jordan are carrying out different types of unpaid work, including child care and housework, which provide an important economic contribution, the focus of this section is on remunerated economic activity – without going into the importance of enumerating domestic work.

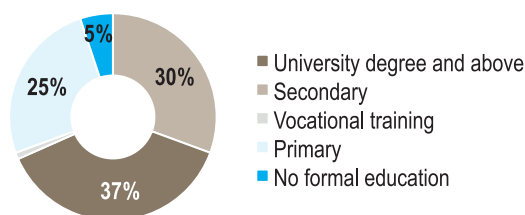
In this section, findings for women overall are generalizable with a 97% level of confidence and a 5% margin of error, while nationality disaggregated findings are generalizable for Jordanian women with a 93% level of confidence and a 6% margin of error, and for Syrian refugee women with a 90% confidence level and a 5% margin of error.

## Who are the women not working?

Women who do not work are well educated, yet on average less so than women who work. While women who do not work are less likely to hold a university or post graduate degree and more likely to only hold a primary school degree than women who do work, 67% of them still have completed secondary school or higher (see Figure 9). Only 5% of women who do not work reported to have no formal education at all. This figure is considerably lower than the national figure for the total female population in Jordan with no formal education, estimated to be around 15% in 2010.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics, online database, population by completed level of education.

**FIGURE 9:**  
**Level of education of women not in employment**



In light of strengthened and largely successful efforts by the Government of Jordan (GoJ) to eliminate the gender gap in education enrolment at all levels, this is not surprising. For both girls and boys near universal enrolment rates have been reached at primary school level, and female students comprise the higher proportion of students pursuing secondary and higher education<sup>28</sup>. As such, limited labour force participation and unemployment among educated women are likely to stem from challenges in women’s transition from education into the labour market, as found by the International Labour Organisation (ILO)<sup>29</sup>. Such challenges in women’s labour market transition could be related, on the one hand, to societal norms: even if families strive for their daughters to be well educated, they may not necessarily hope for them to find employment afterwards given that the notion of male breadwinner and female homemaker is still the societal norm. On the other hand, there is also evidence for the existence of more structural issues preventing women from entering the labour market. There seems to be a mismatch between the skills women acquire in higher education and those sought after in the labour market. If challenges in women’s transition from education into employment are equally relevant for Syrian refugee women is however unclear and appears unlikely given their exceptional situation on the Jordanian labour market. It would seem that for Syrian refugee women there are other challenges more pressing than a mismatch of their education and the jobs accessible to them on the Jordanian labour market. Such dynamics that pose obstacles to women – both Jordanian and Syrian refugee women – in entering the labour market are discussed in more detail later

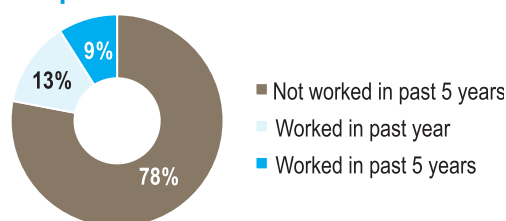
28 USAID, Jordan: Gender Analysis and Assessment, 2012, p. 1.  
 29 ILO, Labour market transitions of young women and men in Jordan, 2014.

on. Overall, these findings suggest that other factors play a more determining role in whether women work or not, than education.

Women who do not work are more likely to live in a male headed household than women who are employed. There is a statistically significant correlation between women’s employment status and living in a male headed household.<sup>30</sup> Nearly three quarters (72%) of those women who do not work live in a household headed by a man, compared to 56% of women currently in employment. Women living in a male headed household might be less likely to work because they may have been discouraged from working as traditional gender roles might be more strongly enforced by male heads of household, in other cases other male household members are already providing for the household financially<sup>31</sup>.

Roughly a fifth of women who are not currently working were part of the labour force at some point over the past five years. While a majority of women not currently working reported they had not worked over the past five years (78%), 22% reported they had, with 13% stating they had had a job at some point in the past year (see Figure 10). When asked why they had stopped working, the most frequently cited reasons were salaries being too low (28%), child care (26%), having got married (11%) and medical reasons (11%).

**FIGURE 10:**  
**% of all women reporting to have worked in the past**



30 A two-tailed Pearson correlation test resulted in a correlation coefficient of -0.144, significant at the 0.01 level.

31 World Bank, Jordan Country Gender Assessment: Economic Participation, Agency and Access to Justice in Jordan, 2014, p. 54.

## Why are women not working?

Childcare and household responsibilities are cited as the primary individual reasons for women not working. Nearly half of women who do not currently work cited familial responsibilities, with 28% reporting child care and 20% stating household responsibilities more broadly as reasons for not working (see Table 2). Another 2% reported they were not working because they were pregnant. Possibly related to these factors and common societal gender roles, 16% of women reported their family objecting to them working as a reason preventing them from working.

However, Table 2 shows that familial responsibilities are by no means the only reasons why a majority of women residing in Jordan are not working. Instead, a wide range of factors influence whether women are willing or able to join the labour force and, once they have, are able to find employment.

Some of these reasons are not necessarily negative, nor should be perceived as barriers to women's employment. Women reporting to still be in education (stated by 8%) or to have left the labour market due to old age (10%) are obvious examples of this. Meanwhile, others appear to be of a more structural nature and largely related to the labour market, such as a perceived general lack of employment opportunities in the area (15%), a perceived lack of opportunities for women specifically (6%), or perceptions of mismatch between available job opportunities and women's education or training (11%). Taken together, structural reasons appear to be of almost equal importance to familial responsibilities, at 42%<sup>32</sup>. Overall, there do not seem to be any discernible differences between Jordanian and Syrian refugee women in terms of why they do not work. Both groups report the same reasons to largely the same extend.

A consideration of these factors in isolation does not yet allow us to draw conclusions on whether women perceive these factors as obstacles to their employment. As such, it is important to consider women's aspirations and the degree to which

women are able or willing to translate these into active steps to join or re-join the labour force. These indicators are considered in the two subsequent sections, serving as a transition into a more in-depth discussion of women's perceptions of obstacles to female employment in Jordan presented in the succeeding chapter.

**TABLE 2:**  
**Reported reasons for not being in employment<sup>33</sup>**

REASON FOR NOT BEING IN EMPLOYMENT	
Childcare	28%
Housework	20%
My family objects	16%
There are no job opportunities in the area	15%
I do not want to work	15%
Available job opportunities in the area are not compatible with my education/training/skills	11%
I am retired/old age	10%
I do not need to work (independent means, other family members work)	9%
I am still in school/university/training	8%
There are no job opportunities for women in particular	6%
Pay is not acceptable	5%
Medical reasons	4%
I am waiting/hoping to get a job in the public sector or military	4%
Work conditions are not acceptable	3%
There is no reliable and safe transportation to the work place	2%
I am pregnant	2%
I cannot afford transportation to the work place	2%
I do not have a work permit	2%
All other reasons	3%

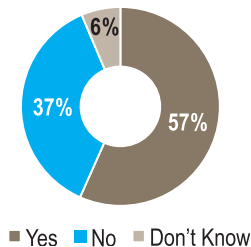
<sup>32</sup> Reasons considered structural are "There are no job opportunities in the area", "Available job opportunities in the area are not compatible with my education/training/skills", "There are no job opportunities for women in particular", "Pay is not acceptable", "Work conditions are not acceptable", "I do not have a work permit".

<sup>33</sup> Enumerators engaged respondents in a conversation about the reasons they are not working, and selected as many answers as applicable

## Do women want to work?

A majority of women (57%) who are not currently in employment want to work if they had the opportunity. This suggests that external obstacles are contributing to the gender gap on the Jordanian labour market, rather than that women's individual attitudes and wishes alone are keeping them from participating in the labour force. On the other hand, 37% of women reported they would not want to be employed even if given the opportunity (see Figure 11). Findings from FGDs suggest that reasons for aspiring to work are both economic, namely relating to a desire or need for additional income, and personal, with employment being seen as a means to gain more independence and self-confidence. Meanwhile, the primary reason provided for not wanting to work was disinterest in working (33%), followed by a preference to stay at home (22%), and childcare or household responsibilities (both 17%), while some respondents also stated there was no need for them to work, for their husband or another family member works (13%).

**FIGURE 11:**  
**% of women not working wanting to work**



When women who stated they would like to work were asked about their preferences, opinions remained relatively evenly divided, although part-time work (reported by 42%) was more popular than full-time employment (33%)<sup>34</sup>.

With regards to the preferred employment sector, education stands out as being the most favoured, with 22% of women stating they would like to work expressing a preference for this sector. The only other sector with a somewhat marked preference was wholesale and retail trade, at 10%, while 18% stated they had “no preference” and 12% “don’t know”. These

<sup>34</sup> Meanwhile, 14 stated either a preference for self-employment or season work, for which it was not specified whether this would be full- or part-time, and 8 reported “no preference” and 4 “don’t know”.

findings reinforce information about the preferences of women already in employment, where there is a strong preference to work in education and the public sector, including in healthcare. This could indeed be solely based on interest, or based on social perceptions that these are areas of ‘acceptable’ work for women.

## Are women looking for work?

Thus far, this report has considered women who are not in employment broadly, without differentiating whether these women are looking for employment or not. As per definition by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) those who are “(a) without work [...]”; (b) “currently available for work” [...]; and (c) “seeking work”<sup>35</sup> are considered unemployed. This section considers women who are unemployed in comparison with women who are not in employment and are not looking to be.

The majority of women who have not worked in the past one to five years have not actively sought work in the year preceding the survey (76%). This is the case for both Jordanian and Syrian refugee women, with 77% and 86% respectively not having actively searched for employment in the 12 months prior to the survey<sup>36</sup>. More broadly speaking, a general aspiration to work does not seem to translate directly into women actively looking for work. Among the women who have not worked in the past year and who stated they would currently like to work, a majority (56%) have not actively searched for work. As per the definition outlined above, the 24% of women who were actively looking for employment over the past year are considered unemployed. This highlights a potential gap between aspiration, access and ability, for reasons that will be discussed further in the obstacles section of the report.

<sup>35</sup> As defined in the “Resolution concerning statistics of the economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment”, adopted by the Thirteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians (Geneva, 1982), “[t]he “unemployed” comprise all persons [...] who during the reference period were: (a) “without work” [...]; (b) “currently available for work” [...]; and (c) “seeking work” [...].”

<sup>36</sup> As this difference lies within the margin of error, it cannot be said with statistical certainty that Syrian refugee women are less likely to have searched for employment. Therefore, no conclusions should be drawn based on this findings.

There is a strong and statistically significant correlation between women’s level of education and whether they actively seek employment. The higher women’s education the more likely they have actively looked for employment.<sup>37</sup> Of the 24% of women who are actively looking for work, (i.e. who are considered unemployed), the majority are highly educated, with 58% of them holding a two-year university diploma or a university degree. In a 2014 report, the World Bank notes that for women, “vulnerability to unemployment rises with the level of education”<sup>38</sup>, while men with higher levels of education are “less likely to be unemployed”<sup>39</sup>. This signals a mismatch between the specialisations and skills women acquire at university, and those needed in the labour market. The next chapter will discuss this challenge in further detail.

Unemployment further appears to be a youth phenomenon, with the majority (53%) of those who have actively sought work being between 18 and 30 years old (see Figure 12). When compared to the overall sample, women aged 18-30 appear to be over-represented (see Figure 12), while older women who are not working appear less likely to be actively looking for work. According to the World Bank, this does not necessarily mean that women eventually find employment, but could also mean that women simply exit the labour market if they have not found a suitable job after a certain age<sup>40</sup>. Indicative findings support this assumption: while age is not related to whether or not women generally would want to work, 36% of the 25 to 30-year-old women and 42% of the 31 to 35-year-old-women have actively looked for employment within the last 12 months, compared to only 9% of the 46 to 50-year-old women and 12% of the 51 to 55-year-old women who have done so.

**FIGURE 12:**  
**Economic inactivity and unemployment, by age group**

	AGE GROUP				
	18-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	> 60
UNEMPLOYED	53%	25%	19%	4%	0%
ECONOMICALLY INACTIVE	35%	19%	27%	15%	4%
AGE GROUP PROPORTION IN TOTAL SAMPLE	39%	26%	23%	10%	2%

Female youth unemployment could have considerable consequences for women, as findings from a pilot for the Jordan New Work Opportunities for Women (Jordan NOW) programme suggest that women who do not find employment within a few years of graduation are likely to never join the labour force at all.<sup>41</sup>

Meanwhile, while child care and household responsibilities were reported as some of the primary reasons for women currently not working, neither having children, nor marital status, or being the head of the household, appear to have an influence on whether women are actively looking for work or not. No significant differences between women looking for work and not were found for these factors. This confirms previous findings from the World Bank, stating that unemployment does “not appear to be affected by the marital or parental status of the women”<sup>42</sup>, while age and education status have more explanatory power<sup>43</sup>.

The findings in this section point to a large proportion of women who aspire to join or remain part of the labour force, yet appear to be unable to do so. That this aspiration does not appear to translate into women actively looking for work or successfully finding employment suggests the existence of obstacles to women’s employment which might be structural, rather than only related to individual

37 A two-tailed Pearson correlation test resulted in a positive correlation coefficient of 0.318, significant at the 0.01 level.  
 38 World Bank, Jordan Country Gender Assessment: Economic Participation, Agency and Access to Justice in Jordan, 2014, p. 33.  
 39 Ibid.  
 40 Ibid.

41 Ibid.  
 42 Ibid., p. 10.  
 43 Ibid.

circumstances. This hypothesis is explored in the following chapter, through a consideration of women’s own perspectives on the matter.

## Obstacles to Employment

The preceding sections have considered a number of factors which might be influencing whether women in Jordan are personally willing or able to join, remain in or re-join the labour force. These range from competing childcare and household responsibilities, to economic necessity, and the regulatory framework for Syrian refugee women. It was also revealed that women’s employment aspirations do not seem to translate into women either actively looking for work, or being able to find employment if they are seeking it. This suggests the existence of factors beyond individual circumstances that are hindering women’s labour force participation more broadly. Thus, the present assessment sought to identify, contextualise and better understand obstacles to women’s employment as perceived by women themselves.

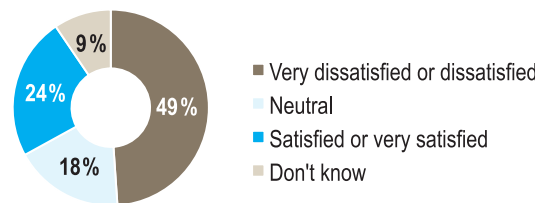
This chapter presents women’s satisfaction with available employment opportunities and identifies perceived obstacles to female employment. It then examines women’s perceptions of the existence or prevalence of obstacles, and identifies which are perceived by women to be hindering their access to employment. In conjunction with this, the chapter presents women’s propositions for ways in which obstacles could be mitigated or overcome. Additionally, two topics of particular interest in on-going livelihoods programming discussions are considered in more detail: perceptions of work permit processes on the one hand, and home-based work on the other. Perceptions of obstacles to women’s employment were assessed for all respondents, regardless of their current employment status.

Overall findings are generalizable for women residing in Jordan with a 95% confidence level and a 4% margin of error, while nationality disaggregated findings are generalizable for either Jordanian or Syrian refugee women with a 92% level of confidence at a 5% margin of error.

## How satisfied are women with job opportunities?

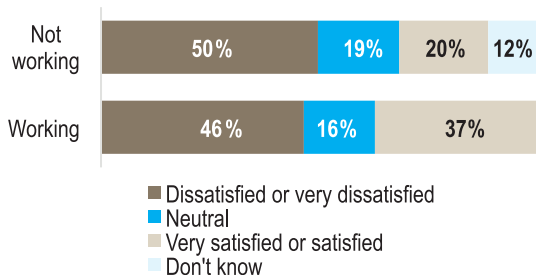
Women are commonly dissatisfied with their employment opportunities. Nearly half of our respondents stated that they are either “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied” with job opportunities for women (49%), while roughly a quarter are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with available job opportunities (24%) (see Figure 13).

**FIGURE 13:**  
Satisfaction with job opportunities for women



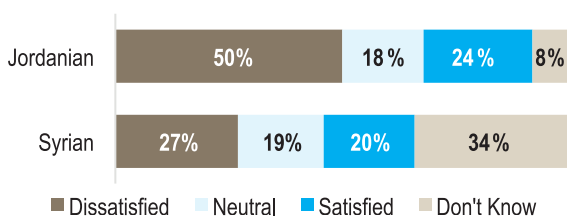
Women who are currently employed are more likely to be satisfied with employment opportunities than those who are not working. Of all employed women, 37% reported they were either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with available job opportunities for women, compared to 20% of those who are not working (see Figure 14). This difference is, however, not driven by greater dissatisfaction among those who are not working, but rather by more limited awareness, most likely due to more limited interaction with the labour market: a near equal proportion of employed women and those who are not currently working are either “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied” with job opportunities – 46% and 50% respectively –, as well as “neutral” – 16% and 19% respectively, while a larger proportion of women who do not work reported “Don’t know” – 12% compared to less than 1% of employed women.

**FIGURE 14:**  
Satisfaction with employment opportunities for women, by employment status



A similar trend regarding awareness is observed when comparing levels of satisfaction of Jordanian women with those of Syrian refugee women. While Jordanian women appear more dissatisfied with job opportunities for women in Jordan than Syrian refugee women, this difference seems due to limited awareness of job opportunities for women among Syrians. While 51% of Jordanian women reported to either be dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with women’s job opportunities, 27% of Syrian refugee women did (see Figure 15). Yet, a considerably larger proportion of Syrian refugee women stated “don’t know” (34%) than of Jordanian women (8%). These findings support the analysis presented at the beginning of this chapter in relation to Syrian refugee women’s perceptions of whether obstacles to women’s employment exist in Jordan.

**FIGURE 15:**  
Satisfaction with job opportunities for women, by nationality

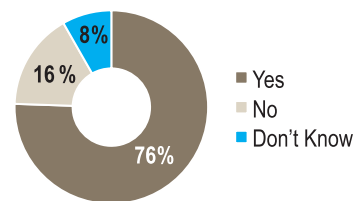


Given this general level of dissatisfaction with women’s employment opportunities, identifying perceived obstacles to female employment can shed a light on the roots of dissatisfaction and at the same time point towards ways to mitigate these obstacles.

## Are there obstacles to women’s employment?

Women’s general dissatisfaction with female employment opportunities is confirmed by the common perception of prevailing obstacles to female employment in Jordan. A large majority (76%) of women reported that there are obstacles preventing women from working in Jordan. Meanwhile, less than a fifth of women stated that no such obstacles existed (16%) (see Figure 16). Further analysis reveals that current employment status is related to such perceptions, with women who are currently employed being more likely to state that there are no obstacles to female employment (30% of women currently working), than those who are not working (13% of women currently not employed). Such a difference in perception could be explained with women who have found employment being more likely to either not have encountered such obstacles in the first place, or to have found ways to overcome them, which might have altered their perception in this regard. Women not currently in employment, on the other hand, might be more likely to experience obstacles to employment first hand.

**FIGURE 16:**  
Proportion of women reporting there are obstacles preventing women from working



A perception that obstacles to women’s employment exist is prevalent both among Jordanian and Syrian refugee women. While a majority of both groups reported obstacles to female employment existed, a larger proportion of Jordanian women voiced this perception (77%) than of Syrian refugee women (60%). This difference is driven primarily by a larger proportion of Syrian refugee women answering “Don’t know” to the question (17%) than of Jordanian women (7%). This is likely indicative of more limited interaction with or exposure to the Jordanian employment landscape among Syrian refugee



women in light of regulations limiting refugees' access to employment overall. At the same time, Syrian refugee respondents may shy away from commenting on obstacles to women's employment for persistent fear of repercussions for labour law infringements, as access to legal employment has only recently been formalised.

### What are the perceived obstacles to women's employment?

The primary obstacles to women's employment are perceived to be societal and structural. The most frequently cited barriers to women's employment in Jordan are cultural, societal, familial or religious pressures at 43% and a lack of job opportunities which match women's education, skills or training at 42%. These are followed relatively closely by unacceptable pay for women (36%), childcare and housework responsibilities, at 35% and 32% respectively (see Table 3). These perceived obstacles to women's employment go beyond individual reasons for not working, as they were reported in Table 2. While individual reasons depend on personal circumstances and constraints, perceived obstacles touch upon the bigger picture and shed light on what women believe to be barriers to women's employment at large. Before this background, it is not surprising that the top perceived obstacles do not match the top reported individual reasons for not being in employment. While societal and structural factors are perceived as main obstacles to women's employment on a larger scheme, it is above all childcare and housework responsibilities that women cite as individual reasons for not working.

**TABLE 3:**  
Reported obstacles to women's employment among women perceiving obstacles<sup>44</sup>

OBSTACLE	%
Cultural/societal/familial/religious pressures	43%
Lack of job opportunities fitting women's skills/ education/training	42%
Pay is not acceptable	36%

44 Respondents were asked to select all answers that apply.

Childcare	35%
Housework responsibilities	32%
Discrimination against women in the hiring process	21%
Lack of full-time job opportunities for women	18%
Lack of part-time job opportunities for women	18%
Lack of education/training	15%
Cost of transportation	9%
Lack of opportunities/funding for women to start business	9%
Unsafe work conditions	7%
Lack of reliable and safe transportation	6%
Fear of harassment on the way to work	5%
Lack of work permits	2%
Other	2%
Don't know	2%

While there are a number of dominant obstacles, Table 3 shows a multitude of barriers, which are likely interrelated. The following sections discuss these grouped together by type of obstacle. Alongside identified obstacles, women's propositions for overcoming or mitigating related challenges will be presented. An overview of these propositions is presented in Figure 21.

Cultural, societal, familial or religious pressures  
Obstacles to women's employment are commonly perceived as being rooted in cultural, societal, familial or religious concepts, and 43% of women consider related pressures to be hindering women's ability to join or remain in the labour force (see Table 3). During FGDs, both Jordanian and Syrian refugee women frequently stated that these pressures usually related to negative perceptions of women and men mixing at work. Participants explained these pressures had serious consequences for women, with (a) women being discouraged, if not prohibited from working by their families, (b) women looking for opportunities in home-based work or employment in women-only work spaces bowing to these pressures, or (c) women working in a narrow set of traditionally female employment sectors in which it is socially and culturally accepted for women to work in, i.e. education and health care. As such, cultural, societal, familial or religious pressures

can be considered as cross-cutting obstacles which are influencing and influenced by other obstacles.

### Mitigating or overcoming obstacles

12% of women proposed introducing incentives for women to start working, e.g. by the government, could help mitigate the obstacle (see Figure 21).

FGD participants suggested awareness raising campaigns in communities showcasing “success stories” of women who are working; the introduction of women-only work spaces, or at least more female staff in the work place; or the promotion of home-based work as mitigation strategies. In Amman and Irbid Jordanian FGD participants discussed how many of these pressures and rules imposed on women were rooted in misinterpretations of religion, especially among young men. They suggested such issues be addressed through involvement of Imams and mosques in awareness raising campaigns.

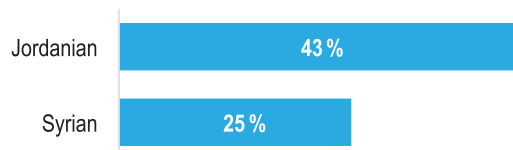
As a cross-cutting challenge, mitigation strategies for other obstacles were often described as likely to have an effect on obstacles presented by these pressures as well. Where relevant, such instances have been highlighted in subsequent section.

Mismatch between women’s skills and available opportunities Women themselves perceive a disconnection between their education, skills and training and demand in the labour market. Among the most frequently cited barriers, 43% of women stated there was a lack of job opportunities that match the skills women acquire during education (see Table 3). FGDs confirmed this finding and provided additional context. During a Jordanian FGD in Mafrqa, which brought together highly educated participants, women noted that they could not find jobs that fit their qualifications. A number of them had completed teacher training, but were now unable to find jobs in the education sector. Similar concerns were raised by Jordanian women in Zarqa, stating that opportunities that matched women’s skills were rare. This is in line with World Bank findings which suggest that despite robust economic growth within the last decade in Jordan, women have not benefitted from a growing job market. Most women still focus on “socially acceptable” employment opportunities which are predominantly perceived to be in the public sector, such as education and health related jobs. In contrast to the private sector,

however, the rate of job creation in the public sector is significantly lower and is outpaced by the growth of a well-trained labour force<sup>45</sup>. Women’s perceptions of a mismatch between their skills and job opportunities thus mirrors an imbalance of supply and demand for these skills on the Jordanian labour market.

Overall, Jordanian women more commonly perceive job opportunities being incompatible with women’s skills (43%) as an obstacle to women’s employment than Syrian refugee women (25%). (see Figure 17). In light of legal restrictions first denying Syrian refugees access to legal employment entirely, and now limiting it to a few primarily male employment intensive sectors, these considerations might be secondary to concerns over simply finding “a” job to support the family, whether that fully matches qualifications or not. In FGDs those Syrian refugee women who are willing to work often mentioned that they would be happy to take up any available job to make a better living, which explains the high clustering of Syrians in low skilled work. Highly educated Syrian refugee women might face additional challenges with regards to finding a job that builds on their qualifications, as they might either lack the documentation or hold certificates and diplomas from Syria not recognised in Jordan, as noted during an FGD in Amman.

**FIGURE 17:**  
Proportion of women reporting a “lack of job opportunities fitting women’s skills”, by nationality



Closely related to perceptions of skills mismatch, women perceive a lack of job opportunities for women, with 18% of women reporting a lack of full-time job opportunities and 18% a lack of part-time opportunities for women (see Table 3). FGD participants noted this challenge as well, but often highlighted that there was a general lack of

<sup>45</sup> World Bank, Jordan Country Gender Assessment: Economic Participation, Agency and Access to Justice in Jordan, 2014, p. 25ff.

job opportunities in Jordan, not just for women. This underlines broader structural issues with comparatively high levels of unemployment in Jordan in the context of a period characterised by the phenomenon of “jobless growth, where despite robust economic growth the number of available jobs on the labour market stagnates”<sup>46</sup>. While the lack of part-time opportunities specifically did not emerge as a marked concern in the perception survey, FGD participants frequently discussed a need for increased availability of part-time job opportunities as a solution to long working hours which are incompatible with women’s child care and household responsibilities and thus prevent them from working.

Recognising a mismatch between women’s current skills and available job opportunities, women perceive a need for additional, or the right kind of, training to strengthen their employability. Fifteen per cent (15%) of women stated that a lack of education was hindering women’s employment (see Table 3). This was highlighted in particular during FGDs with Jordanian women. In six Jordanian FGDs women perceived challenges related either to a general lack of education, stemming from limited interest in women’s education on the part of families, or a lack of education that would equip them with the qualifications sought after by employers. In Irbid for instance, Jordanian women discussing traditionally male or female occupations, expressed an interest in carrying out some of the typically male jobs, such as baker or bus driver, but recognised that women lack the right training to do so.

A lack of education more generally was discussed more frequently among Syrian refugee women, perceiving themselves as disadvantaged in terms of opportunities compared to Jordanian women who are perceived to have a higher level of education. This is in line with reported education levels: only 8% of Syrian refugee women hold a university degree, compared to 36% of Jordanian women, while 13% of Syrian refugee women have no formal education, which compares to 7% of Jordanian women. This educational gap is explained by the large proportion of Syrian refugees in Jordan who are from the southern and predominantly rural parts of Syria,

where educational attainment has generally been lower than in urban Jordanian settings.<sup>47</sup>

### Mitigating or overcoming obstacle

39% of women suggested creating more job opportunities which are adapted to women’s education, training or skills;

24% suggested the provision of more or better education or training for women;

21% requested the creation of more part-time work opportunities, while 17% suggested more full-time work opportunities (see Figure 21).

## Childcare and household responsibilities

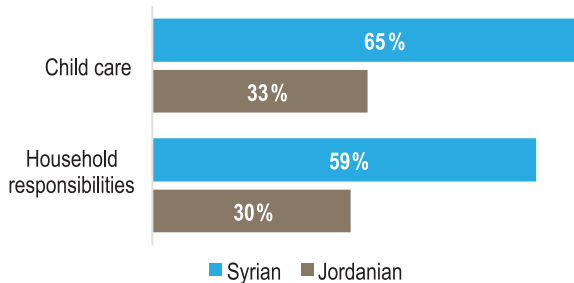
In line with the reasons reported for not currently working – and closely related to cultural, societal and familial pressures – childcare and household responsibilities are commonly perceived obstacles to women’s employment. Childcare was stated by 35% of women to provide a barrier to women’s employment, while 32% reported other household responsibilities. In the absence of family or external support with these responsibilities, as well as limited opportunities for part-time or home-based work, FGD participants reported being unable to reconcile their employment aspirations with their role within the family. As such, this obstacle is closely related to cultural, societal and familial pressures discussed above.

Syrian refugee women more commonly perceive child care and housework responsibilities as obstacles to employment than Jordanian women. A majority of Syrian refugee women perceive childcare (62%) and household responsibilities (59%) as obstacles to women’s employment, compared to a minority of Jordanian women – 33% and 30% respectively.

46 World Bank, Jordan Country Gender Assessment: Economic Participation, Agency and Access to Justice in Jordan, 2014, p. 29.

47 UNHCR, Syrian Refugees in Jordan by Origin (Governorate Level), as of 30 June 2016.

**FIGURE 18:**  
**Proportion of women reporting child care and household responsibilities as obstacles to women’s employment, by nationality**



As perceptions of obstacles are likely based on personal experiences, a possible explanation for this variation could be that Jordanian women have a wider range of possibilities to receive support for child care, including from relatives, neighbours, day care facilities or baby sitters, as shown earlier in this report. Syrian refugee women might either not have extensive family or neighbour networks to rely on in Jordan, or the resources to afford child care support by a day care centre or baby sitter. The latter assumption can be supported by the fact that Syrian refugee women have a significantly lower average household income (321 JOD equalling 454 USD) than Jordanian women (558 JOD equalling 789 USD). As such, child care and household responsibilities more broadly are likely to present a higher barrier to Syrian refugee, than Jordanian women.

#### Mitigating or overcoming obstacles

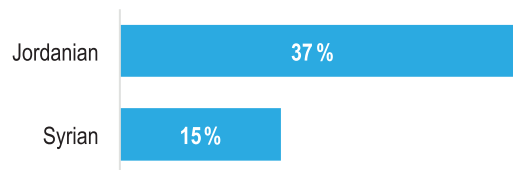
- 35% of women suggested assistance with child care;
- 23% suggested the promotion or support of home-based work;
- 21% called for increased availability of part-time work opportunities.

### Low pay, exploitation and inappropriate work conditions

Over a third of women consider low pay an obstacle to women’s employment. More than a third of women (36%) reported unacceptable pay as a barrier to women’s employment in Jordan, while

generally low salaries, or salaries being lower than men’s, were discussed as a considerable challenge in women’s employment during six out of 12 FGDs, among both Jordanian and Syrian refugee women. There, the issue of low salaries was often related to long or inconvenient working hours, especially for women with children or other household or family related responsibilities. As such, pay might be seen as inappropriate when considered in relation to working hours and the pressure these put on women’s ability to fulfil their other responsibilities. Meanwhile, during some FGDs, the concern over low salaries was related to the obstacle of family objections. Jordanian women in Mafraq and Amman and Syrian refugee women in Irbid, suggested that if women were offered higher salaries, this might counteract objections raised by their husbands, fathers or brothers.

**FIGURE 19:**  
**% reporting “inacceptable pay” as a challenge to women’s employment, by nationality**



Inacceptable pay as an obstacle to women’s employment is perceived more commonly among Jordanian women, with 37% of them perceiving this as a barrier to women’s employment in Jordan, compared to 15% of Syrian refugee women (see Figure 19). As for the consideration of mismatch between skills and available job opportunities, this should be understood in the context of the ongoing restrictive regulatory environment governing Syrian refugees’ employment and the strong need to generate income to support the household. While Syrian refugee women might not be satisfied with salaries they are offered, a low salary might not in itself prevent women from accepting employment, as it might do for Jordanian women. This is confirmed by FGD findings: whereas low salaries, which at time were even withheld entirely, were discussed as issues in Syrian refugee FGDs in Irbid, Karak and

Amman, the context of discussions was usually dissatisfaction with jobs they have held or currently work in, rather than access to employment per se.

### Mitigating or overcoming obstacles

39% of women suggested better pay for women;

21% suggested increasing the availability of part-time work opportunities;

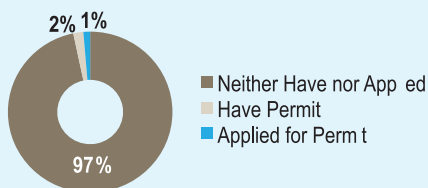
6% called for improved safety at the work place (see Figure 21).

During Jordanian and Syrian FGDs in Karak and Amman, women called for proper employment contracts, as well as courses or awareness raising about their labour rights.

21% suggested assistance with house work (see Figure 21).

FIGURE 20:

### % Syrian refugee women having applied for or possessing a work permit<sup>49</sup>



During a Jordanian FGD in Amman, and a Syrian one in Mafraq, women<sup>48</sup> suggested employers should make efforts to provide child care at or sponsored by the work place. Generally, FGD participants would like more child care or household support from their family, with external child care support often being an alternative solution. Home-based work was also frequently discussed as a possible solution for challenges related to child care. With only 2% of work permits held by Syrian refugees

currently held by Syrian refugee women<sup>2</sup>, it is important to identify why Syrian women have not applied or not successfully obtained a work permit yet. While the most frequently cited reason for not having applied for a work permit was not wanting to work, at 43%, cost and a lack of awareness appear to be common reasons as well, with 17% of Syrian refugee women stating the cost of obtaining a work permit was too high. Related to a lack of awareness, 14% of Syrian refugee women who have not applied for a permit reported they did not know they needed one and 10% stated they were not aware of the application process and related requirements. FGD participants in Mafraq stated that a lack of information concerning the availability of and application process for work permits was a challenge in particular for women.

Meanwhile, a fear of losing access to humanitarian assistance if applying for a work permit was not commonly reported during the perception survey (2%). However, such fears were discussed as a common concern in four out of six Syrian FGDs, namely in Amman, Irbid, Mafraq and Zarqa. This is despite communication on the part of UN agencies that until the end of 2016 work permit applications will have no influence on humanitarian assistance provided by e.g. WFP or UNHCR. This suggests that, despite a number of information campaigns about the application process and implications launched by humanitarian actors, including UNHCR and the International Labour Organisation (ILO), awareness might still be limited and misinformation could be prevalent. As such, this indicates the importance of understanding refugees' information consumption and of evaluating the effectiveness of information campaigns in accordance.

Whereas low interest in working overall, high cost and limited awareness are likely to be interacting with Syrian women's aspirations of obtaining a work permit, the ways in which access to work permits influences their economic activities overall is likely to be more intricate. For instance, the fact that the sectors open to Syrian refugees are largely dominated by typically male professions, is likely to also have an impact on whether women apply for a permit. Findings from an FGD with Syrian refugee women in Irbid support this assumption, with women reporting the challenge that work permits were not available for more traditionally female occupations or sectors. A FGD in Zarqa further revealed possible protection concerns related to the work permit system, with women expressing a fear of becoming vulnerable to harassment or exploitation, as a work permit ties employees to one single employer and seeing how such work permit sponsors are difficult to find. Furthermore, during FGDs in Amman, Irbid and Mafraq, Syrian refugee women voiced a perception that work permits were an issue affecting men's access to employment more heavily than women's. The reason for this perception was that women could simply work in their home, without a permit. Survey findings corroborate that work permits are not commonly perceived as an obstacle to women's employment among Syrian women, with just 17% of Syrian refugee women reporting the lack of a work permit as a barrier.

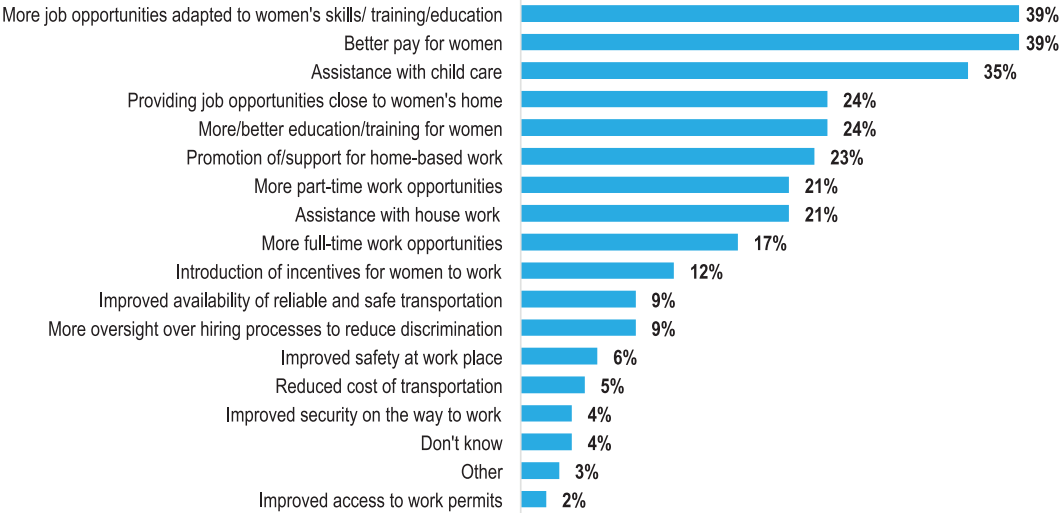
48 ILO, Support the Ministry of Labour in formalisation of Syrian workers in Jordan, July update.

49 August 2016.

These findings further emphasise the need to assess Syrian men’s perceptions of work permit processes and the specific challenges they face, through further research.

is not wearing the hijab. During Syrian FGDs in Irbid, Zarqa and Amman, perceptions of discrimination on the grounds of nationality were voiced frequently,

**FIGURE 21:**  
**Women’s propositions for overcoming or mitigating identified obstacles**



**Discrimination and harassment**

Roughly a fifth of women (21%) perceive some form of discrimination in hiring processes as a barrier to women’s employment. FGD findings suggest that discrimination could occur either against women generally, when men are being given preference for employment, or against certain women in favour of others. For instance, discrimination was described as being related to *wasta*, i.e. whether or not women and men have (the right) connections. In Amman and Zarqa, Jordanian FGD participants described the influence of *wasta* as posing obstacles for women’s employment. While the role of *wasta* in the Jordanian labour market was considered as a broader structural issue, affecting both men and women, FGD participants in Amman perceived it to work more directly against women than men, for men are often better connected than women. Syrian refugee women in Amman noted that they were less likely to find a job because unlike Jordanian women, they did not have *wasta* to work in their favour. In other instances, discrimination against certain women in favour of others might be based on appearances, as described by a Jordanian FGD participant in Amman, who was reportedly not hired by a bank because she

with employers perceived to prefer hiring Jordanians. While discrimination appears to hinder certain women from finding a job, experiences with or fear of harassment might discourage women from seeking employment outside the home, especially among Syrians. Jordanian women participating in FGDs in Amman and Zarqa recounted fears of or experiences with verbal and physical harassment by male colleagues or employers. FGD participants in Amman perceived this to be a particular issue in factories, with women stating they would neither want to work in a factory themselves, nor would they allow their daughters to do so. In Zarqa, Syrian refugee women described how Syrian women had to endure harassment in the workplace, while their husbands, brothers or sons suffered discrimination, as well as verbal abuse at work. Refugees are then unlikely to complain to their employers or seek assistance from competent authorities, either because of their irregular work status, or being threatened with losing their job or being sent back to Syria by their employers, as described by FGD participants in Zarqa and Amman. Meanwhile, Syrian refugee women in Amman explained how the exploitation, harassment

and humiliation they had experienced when seeking or carrying out work had started to discourage them from working, at least outside the home.

#### MITIGATING OR OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

9% of women called for more oversight over hiring processes to reduce discrimination (see Figure 21).

During an FGD in Zarqa, women suggested women-only work spaces as a measure to provide protection from harassment by male colleagues. In Amman, Jordanian participants further suggested the promotion of self-defence courses for women, as a means to gain self-confidence. Syrian FGD participants highlighted the need for regular work contracts affording protection from exploitation and harassment.

### Lack of reliable, safe and affordable transportation

While not one of the primary obstacles to employment reported during the perception survey limited access to reliable, safe and affordable transportation is interrelated with a number of other barriers to women's employment. The cost of transportation was stated by 9% of women to be an obstacle to women working, while 5% referred to a general lack of reliable and safe transportation as an impediment to employment. During a majority of FGDs limited access to transportation was confirmed as a possible barrier to employment, often in relation to family objections. In Amman, for instance, Jordanian women discussed the challenges they face as their husbands do not want them or their daughters to use public transportation. Another assessment carried out by UN Women and REACH, looking at women's access to basic services in two Jordanian governorates, suggests that these objections are likely to stem from concerns over harassment and a general perception of inappropriateness for women to use public transportation. Interestingly enough, men more frequently expressed such concerns than women did, while also being more concerned about women's safety when using public transportation<sup>50</sup>. In the absence of alternative means of transportation, this

means women could not go to work unless the place of work is close enough to walk or their husband can drive them. Jordanian women in an FGD in Karak suggested that their husbands would not allow them to work anywhere outside their town and that more reliable transportation would not suffice to change this attitude.

In Irbid, Jordanian women reported that their husbands' objections to them taking public transportation to work was related primarily to the cost. Some participants stated that if their place of work was too far from home, the daily cost of transportation offset the income generated by the job, so their husbands or they themselves sometimes perceived it was not worth going to work at all. The cost of transportation was also emphasised as a prohibitive factor by Syrian refugee women participating in FGDs in Irbid and Zarqa.

#### MITIGATING OR OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

24% of women suggested ensuring job opportunities are provided close to women's home;

9% called for improved availability of reliable and safe transportation;

5% suggested reduced cost of transportation;

4% suggested the consideration of steps to improve security on the way to work (see Figure 21).

During FGDs in Irbid and Amman, Jordanian women further suggested employers should consider providing transportation for their female employees, or women could consider car sharing arrangements or travelling to work sharing a taxi with other female colleagues to reduce cost and increase security.

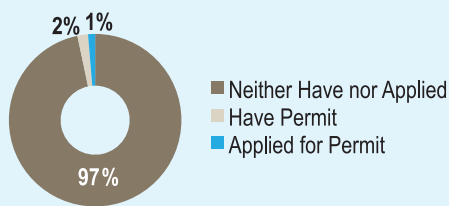
<sup>50</sup> UN Women-REACH, Women's Access to Basic Services in Irbid and Zarqa Governorates, September 2016.

## How Do Women Perceive Home-Based Work?

In the course of the on-going livelihoods debate related to the implementation of the Jordan Compact, a frequently discussed topic with regards to increasing women's employment is home-based work. Yet, little is currently known about women's preferences for either work inside or outside the home. Such an understanding is, however, crucial to ensure that women's needs are adequately taken into account in large-scale livelihoods programming currently being designed and implemented. Therefore, this assessment explored and analysed women's perceptions of home-based work.

Overall, no significant preference was observed for home-based work. A minority of women who want to work expressed either a preference for home-based work (30%) or work outside the home (25%) (see Figure 22). With the largest proportion of women (43%) voicing no preference for either work at or outside the home supports the assumption that rather than a cultural preference, home-based work might be a pragmatic solution in reaction to various factors impeding women's access to employment. As previously discussed, these may include challenges related to reconciling work with child care and household responsibilities, cultural, societal, familial or religious pressures, lack of transportation or fear of harassment. During a majority of FGDs, participants agreed that, in light of the barriers women face in accessing employment, home-based work opportunities would allow more women in Jordan to work.

**FIGURE 23:**  
**PREFERENCE FOR HOME-BASED WORK VS. WORK OUTSIDE THE HOME, BY NATIONALITY**



Jordanian and Syrian refugee women's perceptions of home-based work differ significantly. A majority of Syrian refugee women (58%) reported they would opt for home-based work were they given the choice, compared to a minority of Jordanian women (28%) (see Figure 23). FGD findings suggest that this preference among Syrian refugee women is likely an adaptation to a thus far restrictive livelihoods environment, as well as limited resource availability within Syrian refugee households, including for child care support or transportation. Syrian refugee women in Amman and Zarqa recounted negative previous experiences with work outside the home, stating that home-based work would mean they could avoid exploitation, discrimination, humiliation and harassment. Syrian FGD participants in Karak discussed their preference for home-based work in relation to perceptions that work carried out at home does not require a work permit. The fact that transportation costs could be avoided when working at home was given as a reason for this preference during Syrian FGDs in Irbid, Karak and Mafraq. A preference for home-based work could also relate to the previously discussed finding that a larger proportion of Syrian refugee women identified child care and household responsibilities as barriers to women employment, and the assumption that Syrian refugee women are less able to rely on family networks for support or afford external child care. In five out of six FGDs, Syrian refugee women participants expressed a preference for home-based work, as it allowed them to reconcile child care and household responsibilities with the need to generate income for their family, in the absence of child care or household support.

During Jordanian FGDs a rural-urban dimension with regards to home-based work vs. work outside the home emerged. Jordanian women participating in FGDs in rural areas, namely in Mafraq and Karak, discussed a general preference for home-based work, while in urban areas such as Amman, Zarqa, and Irbid a strong preference for work outside the home crystallised. A preference for work outside the home voiced in urban areas was generally founded on a desire to escape the confines of the home, gain more self-confidence, to interact with other community members and having fixed working hours. In both rural and urban Jordanian FGDs home-based work was primarily perceived as a way to avoid family objections or a reaction to community pressures, yet in rural areas this appeared to be a more pressing consideration than in urban centres. As among Syrian refugee women, benefits of home-based work were also seen in easier management of child care as well as being able to work despite limited availability of public transport.



Overall, these findings suggest that home-based work opportunities might be a viable short term strategy to increase women's employment in the current circumstances, especially among Syrian refugee women. Yet, the findings serve to highlight that promoting home-based work as a longer term approach would fail to address underlying obstacles to women's employment, and would fail to cater to the preferences and needs of women. On the contrary, such an approach is likely to contribute to further limiting women's presence and participation in the public sphere. Furthermore, as noted by Arab Renaissance for Democracy & Development – Legal Aid (ARDD-LA), in a report commissioned by key stakeholders in the on-going livelihoods debate in Jordan, "the legal hurdles associated with home-based work [...] are considerable"<sup>3</sup>, which most likely include obtaining a vocational licence and a work permit<sup>4</sup>. As such, the promotion of or advocacy for home-based employment should be approached cautiously.

## CONCLUSION

In protracted displacement, with fluctuating levels of assistance and limited access to legal livelihood opportunities, Syrian refugees in Jordan have been struggling to provide for themselves and their families. Meanwhile, Jordanian host communities have been coping with the consequences of a population increase and the resulting intensified competition over scarce resources and livelihoods opportunities, making it increasingly difficult for vulnerable Jordanians to make ends meet. Six years into the Syria crisis, with a resolution to the conflict a distant hope, refugees are unlikely to be able to return to Syria in safety and dignity in the coming years. This outlook underlines the need for a "new deal"<sup>51</sup> for Syrian refugees and their Jordanian hosts. By concluding the Jordan Compact in February 2016 the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, donor governments and a range of multilateral donors opened a door to a new approach, promising legal access to livelihoods to Syrian refugees, and an expansion of employment opportunities for Jordanian host communities. While a wide range of factors will influence whether these promises are kept, the prospect for more sustainable, longer term solutions for both Jordanian and Syrian women and men has been raised.

Ensuring that the programmatic solutions are inclusive and fully take into account Jordanian and Syrian refugee women's and men's needs and aspirations will be essential in delivering on promises made. This report details findings of an assessment that sought to address the lack of comprehensive information on women's attitudes and aspirations toward employment, current employment status and perceived barriers to paid work. It also provides evidence to inform decision-making about home-based employment for women, a topic which was where little was previously known.

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<sup>51</sup> CARE International, Danish Refugee Council, International Rescue Committee, Norwegian Refugee Council, OXFAM, Save the Children and World Vision, Right to a future: Empowering refugees from Syria and host governments to face a long-term crisis, 9 November 2015.

## Key Takeaways

**Most women are currently not employed.** Overall, 81% of women in Jordan are not currently employed, with a higher employment rate among Jordanian women (20%) than among Syrian refugee women (6%). Syrian refugee women's significantly lower employment rates seem to be related to negative impacts of displacement rather than differing attitudes towards employment.

**The majority of Jordanian women are both highly educated and not working for a range of reasons.** The majority of women who are not currently employed have completed at least secondary education or higher (67%). The most frequently cited reasons for not engaging in paid work are childcare (28%), a lack of (suitable) employment opportunities (26%), household responsibilities (20%), as well as family objection (16%). The majority of women not employed live in male-headed households.

**Women in employment are generally highly educated and working in traditionally female sectors.** The majority of women who are currently employed has completed post-secondary education (63%) and primarily work in traditionally female employment sectors such as education (25%), health care (19%) and finance or insurance (10%). In the context of a restrictive livelihoods environment, sectors employing Syrian refugee women are sharply different to these overall trends, with food and accommodation services, agriculture and manufacturing among the most commonly cited sectors. A large proportion of employed women (42%) are the head to their household.

**Households with women working have considerably higher average incomes than households without women working.** However, this is only true for Jordanian households and it remains unclear in which way the causality runs: whether higher household incomes are the result of women working and contributing to the household earnings or whether women from better situated families are more likely to join the labour force because they face less family constraints. Average incomes of Syrian households are generally much lower and do not seem to differ between households where women are working and households where women are not. This suggests that Syrian women engaged in paid work have to work to make ends meet.

**Women generally want to work, yet few are actively seeking employment.** A majority of women who are not currently employed (57%) would like to work if they had the opportunity, while 37% stated they do not want to work. Underlying reasons for wanting to work, specifically outside the home, include a desire for increased independence and self-confidence, contributing to their family's welfare, as well as gaining life experience and being an integrated part of the community. Reasons stated for not wanting to work were primarily a disinterest in working, a preference to stay at home or child care and household responsibilities. For those who do, working from home does not seem to be a preferred option. Yet, many Syrian refugee women do have a preference for home based work, however this seems to be a coping strategy to reconcile childcare and household responsibilities with their work and to circumvent the restrictive regulatory environment on the Jordanian labour market, rather than a genuine preference for home-based work. Furthermore, a general aspiration to engage in paid work does not directly translate into women either looking for or finding employment, as among women who have not worked during the past one to five years, a minority (24%) reported they had actively sought employment over the 12 months preceding the survey.

**Most women face a multitude of interrelated obstacles which inhibit their ability to seek or remain in employment.** A majority of women perceive the existence of obstacles to women's employment (76%), while only 16% stated there were no obstacles. Reported obstacles appear interrelated, ranging from: Structural factors hindering women's employment, such as a perceived lack of job opportunities that fit women's qualifications (43%), a lack of either full- or part-time opportunities (18% respectively) or of education (15%);

Cultural, societal, familial or religious factors, including pressures discouraging women from employment from the family or community (42%), child care or household responsibilities (35% and 32% respectively) and containing the types of employment that are deemed acceptable to them – further limiting their opportunities in an already challenged labour market; Challenges related to employment conditions and hiring processes, including unacceptable pay (36%), long working hours irreconcilable with women's other

family responsibilities, discrimination during the hiring process (21%), as well as a lack of reliable and affordable transportation (14%).

**Mitigation strategies and ways to overcome challenges proposed by women are as diverse as the obstacles identified.**

Those relating to structural barriers are largely beyond the scope of international actors engaged in livelihood programming, such as creating opportunities for full- and part-time work that match women's qualifications, increased oversight over hiring processes to reduce discrimination or improvements in women's pay and working hours. Others, such as information campaigns on women's employment opportunities or labour rights, the provision of support with child care and other household responsibilities, or of training to improve women's employability, could be taken up by either national or international non-governmental actors seeking to further women's employment and gender equality.

In summary, this snapshot research points to a population of women residing in Jordan that are, in one way or another, interested in carrying out paid work and are – with the exception of Syrian refugees – generally highly educated. Yet, women are either not necessarily seeking employment or encounter difficulties finding it due to obstacles in accessing employment, including the fact that available opportunities are often challenging to reconcile with what are perceived to be women's child care or household responsibilities, with which many women receive little family or external support. Furthermore, available jobs are either not suited to their qualifications or perceived inappropriate for women to do. While these obstacles to employment are also faced by Syrian refugee women, they additionally face a restrictive regulatory framework, which makes it even more challenging for them to find legal employment and decent work conditions. In that regard, the various interactions the work permit process introduced earlier in 2016 might have with Syrian refugee women's employment require further exploration. Additionally, a lack of education or training might be complicating Syrian refugee women's employment opportunities further.

Overall, this report highlights the importance of a comprehensive understanding of both men's and women's employment experiences, realities,

aspirations and preferences, so as to propose, design and implement livelihood programmes or policies that are inclusive in targeting and holistic in approach. Only then can such policies and programmes contribute to an effective humanitarian and development response, which addresses current needs and vulnerabilities while enabling the achievement of more durable solutions.

## Recommendations

In line with these conclusions and based on the findings of this assessment, the following set of recommendations was identified, directed towards relevant governmental, non-governmental, national and international actors seeking to support the creation of an employment landscape that is inclusive and enabling sustainable livelihoods for Jordanian and Syrian refugee women and men. Overall, findings suggest that an emphasis on building women's capacity and skills – which they already have – likely fails to address the most challenging obstacles women face in accessing employment if they need or want to. Rather, efforts to facilitate and strengthen women's labour force participation in Jordan should aim to focus on building a structural environment that is conducive to and supportive of women's employment.

## Policy and Advocacy

Government actors should undertake efforts to promote, expand or create more diverse employment opportunities for women. As shown in this report, the most commonly perceived obstacles to women's employment in Jordan is a lack of job opportunities which match women's qualifications, as well as cultural, societal, familial or religious pressures preventing women from working. These perceptions can be contextualised with the fact that a majority of Jordanian women – both employed and unemployed – are highly educated, and are often trained or work in a relatively narrow set of employment sectors, which are perceived as socially acceptable sectors for women to work in. This suggests the need to expand women's access to employment opportunities both in terms of numbers and type, as well as the need for efforts to reduce social and cultural barriers to women's

employment. Such efforts can be undertaken at the policy level, including through government efforts to improve skill matching, such as providing incentives for women to train in certain areas that witness sustained job growth (e.g. business, manufacturing and industry) and address the imbalance of supply and demand for women's professional skills on the labour market.

Government actors, relevant UN agencies and non-governmental actors should implement awareness raising campaigns and targeted government training schemes for women, to deconstruct cultural or familial barriers to women working in general, and in non-traditional sectors specifically. These measures should aim at attracting more women to productive and dynamic economic sectors and to reduce women's focus on the public sector. From a demand side, government actors should introduce economic incentives for employers to hire women, particularly in high-growth sectors that are traditionally male dominated.

From a policy perspective, legislation is needed to regulate and promote part time working arrangements throughout the Kingdom, as well as legislation that addresses sexual harassment in the workplace - to create safer working environments for women and men.

To address concerns around pay and decent work environment, efforts should be made to support Ministry of Labours monitoring and regulation of working environments and conditions, and promoting freedom of association in workplaces should be enhanced to facilitate stronger collective bargaining.

At the same time, government actors should incentivise employers, particularly in the private sector, to create a more conducive working environment that can attract a larger share of women. These measures should include – in line with above recommendations - encouraging the introduction or expansion of more flexible working hour arrangements for women, including part-time work opportunities. Child care and household responsibilities were the most frequently cited reasons for women not currently being employed, and among the most commonly cited obstacles to women's employment in Jordan generally. As such, these responsibilities often appear irreconcilable

with full-time employment. Therefore, more flexible working hour arrangements are likely to enable more women to better reconcile child care and household responsibilities with their employment aspirations or needs. In addition, government actors should encourage employers to provide for reliable and safe transportation to the workplace. Limited access to transportation or family objections toward using available public transportation was confirmed as a barrier to employment. Transport arrangements by the employer would allow women, who lack alternatives to safe, accepted and affordable forms of transportation, to work outside their home and at the same time increase employer's geographical catchment area for potential (female) employees.

Employers should be encouraged to put women representatives into place, who advocate for women's rights and interests in the workplace. In conjunction with well outlined, transparent internal complaint procedures this can be an effective means to counter harassment and discrimination in the workplace and during the hiring process. As this research has shown, discrimination does hinder certain women from finding a job and experiences with or fear of harassment can discourage women from seeking employment outside the home. Particularly in male-dominated working environments giving women a voice through representatives and complaint mechanisms can thus be an effective means to create a more conducive working environment and equal opportunity for women. Where appropriate this should be linked to existing trade union and association structures, and collective bargaining principles should be supported.

## Programming

Government, local and international non-governmental actors should explore a broader variety of options to encourage and facilitate women's employment. Specifically, the promotion of home-based work opportunities for women should be approached with caution. Overall, women do not prefer working at home to working outside home. Furthermore, while a majority of interviewed Syrian refugee women are inclined to opt for home-based work, both quantitative and qualitative findings suggest that home-based work provides a pragmatic solution in a challenging livelihoods environment, rather than being a default preference. Therefore, home-based work opportunities might be a viable short term strategy to increase women's employment in the current circumstances, especially among Syrian refugee women. However, the findings highlight that promoting home-based work as a longer term approach would fail to address underlying obstacles to women's employment, and to take into account women's preferences, aspirations and needs, possibly further limiting women's presence and participation in the public sphere. Furthermore, as noted previously, home-based work is associated with considerable legal barriers, which need to be understood and properly taken into account by programmes seeking to promote women working from home.

Government, local and international non-governmental actors should raise awareness of labour laws and rights, as well as available complaints mechanisms. Findings show that awareness of labour laws and regulations, and the rights and duties these entail, is limited among both Jordanian and Syrian refugee women. For Syrian women this includes work permit requirements and application processes, and the rights and protection that are awarded with obtaining such a permit. Therefore, relevant non-governmental and multilateral actors should collaborate with and support the Ministry of Labour, to raise awareness of labour law and rights among both Jordanian and Syrian refugee employees and employers, including through information campaigns or workshops. Finally, international non-governmental and multilateral actors should assess the effectiveness of current communication and information campaigns on the work permit process and its implications for refugees, to identify the

most appropriate and effective channels for such campaigns.

Governmental and non-governmental programming should seek to support women with childcare and household responsibilities. These responsibilities are often irreconcilable with women's employment, in particular employment outside the home, and were, as noted earlier, the most frequently cited reasons for women not currently employed, and among the most commonly cited obstacles to women's employment in Jordan generally. Thus, local and international actors seeking to facilitate or stimulate women's employment should aim to address the need for affordable, reliable and innovative child care solutions. This could, for instance, include supporting the establishment or expansion of day care centres, or providing incentives for child care support provided through employers, including child care facilities at the work place or providing a financial contribution to external child care costs. As analysis has shown, Syrian refugee women might be less able to rely on family support in the context of displacement or to afford existing child care solutions. Therefore, such support should be prioritised for Syrian refugee women. As child care falls within the realm of traditionally female and thus culturally sanctioned occupations, and as women frequently voiced an interest in finding employment in the child care sector, child care support programmes themselves could provide employment opportunities and increase women's labour force participation, while simultaneously allowing other women to find employment in other occupations or sectors.

## Research

Government actors, as well as international governmental, non-governmental and multilateral actors should promote and support further research to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of Jordanian and Syrian, male and female livelihoods. The present assessment provides a snapshot of Jordanian and Syrian refugee women's employment in Jordan. A number of areas for further research could be identified. First, to produce a comprehensive understanding of the current employment landscape in Jordan, Jordanian and Syrian refugee men's employment should be assessed, including their skill sets, current employment status, aspirations, as well as the challenges they face in accessing employment. Moreover, further analysis should be conducted on the implications of work permit processes on the employment of Syrian refugee women and men. While this assessment suggests that (limited) access to work permits is interacting with Syrian refugee women's employment aspirations and opportunities, this interaction is likely to occur through a number of channels. These might be related to the types of sectors women want to or have the skills to work in, relative to those that are open to Syrian refugees; the cost of work permits; or the accessibility of information on and subsequent awareness of requirements, processes and rights related to work permits. Additionally, analysis presented in this report suggests that work permit regulations are likely to affect Syrian refugee men more severely than women, not least in light of the sectors open to Syrian labour. While such analysis was beyond the scope of this assessment, further exploration should be considered in this regard.

Future research should seek to assess the implications of access to livelihoods for Syrian refugee welfare and their need for assistance, humanitarian or otherwise. While opportunities granted in the framework of the Jordan Compact might contribute to reducing refugee reliance on humanitarian assistance, a need to assist refugees will most certainly remain, given that (a) employment opportunities for Syrian refugees are limited to a small set of sectors, (b) application processes pose various challenges and (c) the number of work permits is limited to 200,000. As tracking related developments over time would be highly insightful, it would be relevant to establish a comprehensive baseline at this point in time.

# ANNEXES

## PERCEPTION SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

### GENERAL INFORMATION:

1.1 INTERVIEW DATE (DD/MM/YYYY) \_\_\_\_\_

1.2 INTERVIEWER NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

1.3 DIALLED PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

1.4 WAS THE PHONE YOU CALLED ANSWERED? (SELECT ONE)

Yes

No

1.4.1 IF NO, WHAT WAS THE REASON/WHICH MESSAGE DID YOU HEAR?

Phone is disconnected

Occupied with another call

Phone is out of the country

No signal

Phone rang but was not picked up

Phone was switched off

Other, did not specify

1.5 INTRODUCTION: HELLO, MY NAME IS \_\_\_\_\_.

I am working for REACH and am calling you on behalf of UN Women. We are conducting a survey of roughly 800 Jordanian and Syrian refugee women and would like to understand women's perceptions of employment, their employment status, whether they would like to work and what might prevent them from working. What you will say will be kept confidential and is being anonymised. This survey will take around 15 minutes to complete.

1.6 CAN I ASK YOU A COUPLE QUESTIONS TO SEE IF YOU MEET THE INTERVIEW CRITERIA?

Yes

No

1.6.1 IF NO, DO YOU MIND EXPLAINING WHY NOT?

Not interested

Don't have time

My husband/family would object

I have participated in too many interviews

I do not think this will benefit me

Other, please specify

1.7 WHAT IS THE PERSON WHO ANSWERED THE PHONE'S SEX?

Male

Female

1.8 WHAT IS YOUR NATIONALITY?

Syrian

Jordanian

Other, please specify

1.9.1A HOW MANY JORDANIAN OR OTHER NATIONALITY WOMEN OVER 18 (INCLUDING YOU) ARE CURRENTLY NEAR YOU? \_\_\_\_\_

1.9.1B HOW MANY SYRIAN REFUGEE WOMEN OVER 18 (INCLUDING YOU) ARE CURRENTLY NEAR YOU? \_\_\_\_\_

1.9.2 HOW MANY ARE WILLING TO BE INTERVIEWED? \_\_\_\_\_

1.9.3 HOW OLD ARE THEY? \_\_\_\_\_

1.9.4 RANDOM NUMBER GENERATED

1.1 NOTE: NOW I NEED TO SPEAK TO THE WOMEN WHO IS \_\_\_\_ YEARS OLD, COULD YOU PLEASE GET HER ON THE PHONE?

**1.12 ARE YOU WILLING TO PARTICIPATE IN THE INTERVIEW?**

Yes

No

**1.12.1 IF NO, WOULD YOU MIND EXPLAINING WHY NOT?**

Not interested

Don't have time

My husband/family would object

I have participated in too many interviews

I do not think this will benefit me

Other, please specify

**1.12.2 IF YES, HOW OLD ARE YOU? \_\_\_\_\_**

**1.12.3 IF YES, ARE YOU A SYRIAN REFUGEE?**

Yes

No

**1.12.4 IF YES, WHAT IS YOUR NATIONALITY?**

Yes

No

**DEMOGRAPHICS:**

**2.1 GOVERNORATE [LIST OF 12 GOVERNORATES]**

**2.2 RESPONDENT'S MARITAL STATUS (SELECT ONE)**

Married

Single

Engaged

Divorced or separated

Widowed

**2.3 WHAT IS THE HIGHEST EDUCATION LEVEL COMPLETED BY THE RESPONDENT? (SELECT ONE)**

No formal education

Primary

Secondary

Vocational training

University degree

Post graduate

Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**2.4 HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN THE COMMUNITY? (SELECT ONE)**

Less than 6 months

6 months to 1 year

1-2 years

3-5 years

6-10 years

More than 10 years

**2.5 ARE YOU HEAD OF THE HOUSEHOLD?**

Yes

No

**2.5.1 IF NO, WHAT IS THE SEX OF THE HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD?**

Male

Female

**2.5.2 IF NO, WHAT IS THE MARITAL STATUS OF THE HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD?**

Married

Single

Widowed

Separated/divorced

Engaged



**2.5.3 IF NO, WHAT IS THE HIGHEST EDUCATION LEVEL COMPLETED BY THE HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD?**

No formal education

Primary

Secondary

Vocational training

University degree

Post graduate

Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

Begging

Sale of assets

Gifts from family/relatives

Cash from humanitarian /development organisations

Sale of humanitarian/ development assistance

Pension

Seasonal work

Vouchers from humanitarian organisations

Income from renting out apartment/house

Other (explain in comments)

**2.6 HOW MANY CHILDREN DO YOU HAVE? \_\_\_\_\_**

**2.7 WHAT IS THE TOTAL NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS? \_\_\_\_\_**

**2.7.1 NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS BY AGE GROUP**

	MALE	FEMALE
5 Children under		
18-5		
25-19		
59-26		
+60		
Total		

**2.8.1 WHAT AMOUNT OF MONEY WAS GENERATED FROM EACH OF THESE 3 MAIN SOURCES OVER THE PAST 30 DAYS? (IN JOD)?**

Main Source      2<sup>nd</sup> Source      3<sup>rd</sup> Source

\_\_\_\_\_

**2.8.2 WHAT AMOUNT OF MONEY WAS GENERATED BY ALL OTHER SOURCES OF INCOME (NOT LISTED ABOVE) OVER THE PAST 30 DAYS? (IN JOD) \_\_\_\_\_**

**2.8 OVER THE PAST 30 DAYS, WHAT WERE THE 3 MAIN SOURCES OF CASH/INCOME TO SUSTAIN THE HOUSEHOLD?**

Main Source      Second Source      Third Source

\_\_\_\_\_

No source of money

Permanent employment

Temporary employment

Informal/small commerce

Savings

Remittances

Credits/borrowing money

**2.8.3 WHAT IS CURRENTLY YOUR HOUSEHOLD'S TOTAL AMOUNT OF DEBT (IN JOD)? \_\_\_\_\_**

**2.10 WHAT IS THE ESTIMATED AMOUNT SPENT BY THE HOUSEHOLD DURING THE LAST 30 DAYS FOR THE FOLLOWING ITEMS (IN JOD)?**

Food expenditures \_\_\_\_\_

Health \_\_\_\_\_

Transport \_\_\_\_\_

Water \_\_\_\_\_

Rent \_\_\_\_\_

Phone expenses \_\_\_\_\_

Debt repayment \_\_\_\_\_

Utilities \_\_\_\_\_

Hygiene \_\_\_\_  
Tobacco \_\_\_\_  
All other expenditures \_\_\_\_  
Specify other expenditures \_\_\_\_

**2.11 IS YOUR HOUSEHOLD RECEIVING ASSISTANCE FROM THE GOVERNMENT, LOCAL CHARITIES, OR HUMANITARIAN ORGANISATIONS?**

Yes  
No

**PERCEPTIONS ON WOMEN AND EMPLOYMENT:**

**3.1 How satisfied are you with job opportunities for women in your area? (select one)**

Very Satisfied  
Satisfied  
Neutral  
Dissatisfied  
Very dissatisfied

**3.1.1 IF DISSATISFIED OR VERY DISSATISFIED, WHY? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)**

Not enough private sector job opportunities for women  
Not enough public sector job opportunities for women  
Not enough opportunities for women to start their own business  
Available job opportunities for women do not match women's skills/training/education  
Few higher level job opportunities for women (i.e. senior, management etc.)  
Not enough full time jobs available for women  
Not enough part time jobs available for women  
Salaries for women are lower than for men  
Jobs available are in an unsafe working environment

Don't know  
Other, please specify

**3.2 IN GENERAL, DO YOU THINK THERE ARE OBSTACLES PREVENTING WOMEN FROM WORKING IN YOUR AREA AND IN JORDAN MORE BROADLY? (SELECT ONE)**

Yes  
No  
Don't Know

**3.2.1 IF YES, WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE PRIMARY OBSTACLES PREVENTING WOMEN FROM WORKING? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)**

Lack of education/training  
Lack of job opportunities fitting women's skills/education/training  
Lack of full time job opportunities for women  
Lack of part-time job opportunities for women  
Lack of opportunities/funding for women to start business  
House work responsibilities  
Childcare  
Discrimination against women in the hiring process  
Pay is not acceptable  
Cultural/societal/familial/religious pressures  
Unsafe work conditions  
Lack of reliable and safe transportation  
Cost of transportation  
Fear of harassment on the way to work  
Lack of work permits  
Don't know  
Other, please specify

**3.2.2 IF YES, IN YOUR OPINION, HOW COULD THESE OBSTACLES BE OVERCOME AND THEREBY WOMEN'S ACCESS TO WORK BE IMPROVED? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)**

More/better education/training for women

- More part-time work opportunities
- More full-time work opportunities
- More job opportunities adapted to women's skills/training/education
- Promotion of and support for home-based work
- Assistance with house work
- Assistance with child care (family, friends, nannies, day care)
- More oversight over hiring processes to reduce discrimination
- Improved security on the way to work
- Providing job opportunities close to women's home
- Introduction of incentives for women to work (e.g. by government, employers)
- Improved safety at work place
- Improved availability of reliable and safe transportation
- Reduced cost of transportation
- Improved access to work permits
- Better pay for women
- Don't know
- Other, please specify

## WOMEN'S ECONOMIC ACTIVITY:

### 3.3 WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES YOUR EMPLOYMENT STATUS? (SELECT ONE)

- I am employed/am working
- I am unemployed/do not work
- Other, please specify

## FOR SYRIAN RESPONDENTS ONLY:

### 3.4 BACK IN SYRIA, WHAT WAS YOUR EMPLOYMENT STATUS BEFORE THE ONSET OF THE CONFLICT IN 2011? (SELECT ONE)

- I am employed/am working
- I am unemployed/do not work

Other, please specify

### 3.4.1 IF YOU WERE EMPLOYED/WORKING, IN WHICH SECTOR WERE YOU WORKING? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)

- Agriculture, forestry, fishing
- Construction
- Manufacturing
- Wholesale and retail trade
- Transportation and storage
- Accommodation and food service
- Administrative and support service
- Public administration and defence
- Education
- Human health and social work
- International organizations/NGOs
- Local charity/NGO/CBO
- Law
- Trades (plumbing, electrical, etc.)
- Religious professions
- Other, please specify

### 3.4.2 IF UNEMPLOYED/NOT WORKING, WHAT WERE THE PRIMARY REASONS FOR YOU NOT WORKING? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)

- I did not need to work (independent means, my husband/father/brother worked)
- I was still in school/university/training
- I am retired/old age
- I was pregnant
- Illness, disability, injury (medical reason)
- House work
- Childcare
- My family objected (parents, husband)
- I was waiting/hoping to get a job in the public sector or military
- Available job opportunities in the area were not compatible with my education/training/skills

Pay was not acceptable

Work conditions were not acceptable There were no job opportunities in the area

There were no job opportunities for women in particular

There was no reliable and safe transportation to the work place

I had concerns about safety/harassment on the way to work

I had concerns about safety/harassment in the workplace

Employers seemed to prefer employing other nationality

Don't know

Other, please specify

**3.5 DO YOU CURRENTLY HAVE A WORK PERMIT FROM THE JORDANIAN GOVERNMENT?**

Yes

No

**3.5.1 IF NO, HAVE YOU APPLIED FOR A WORK PERMIT IN THE PAST YEAR?**

Yes

No

**3.5.1A IF NO, WHAT IS THE REASON YOU DO NOT HAVE A WORK PERMIT/HAVE NOT APPLIED FOR ONE IN THE PAST YEAR?**

I am not aware of the application process/ requirements

I did not know I needed one

I do not think it is necessary

The process is too long

The cost of getting a permit is too high

I don't want to interact with Jordanian authorities

I do not want to work

I am waiting to receive my work permit

I applied before with no success

My job requires frequently changing employers which is not feasible with current work permit rules

I don't have all the necessary documents

I am afraid to lose humanitarian assistance

The sector I worker is officially closed to migrant workers

My employer is unwilling to apply for a work permit for me

Don't know

Other, please specify

**EMPLOYMENT:**

**4.1 IF YOU ARE EMPLOYED/ARE WORKING, HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR EMPLOYMENT/WORK? (SELECT ONE)**

Permanent full-time employment

Permanent part-time employment

Seasonal work (i.e. agriculture)

Temporary full-time employment

Temporary part-time employment

I have my own business/am self-employed

Don't know

Other, please specify

**4.2 IF YOU ARE EMPLOYED/ARE WORKING, IN WHICH SECTOR DO YOU WORK? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)**

Agriculture, forestry, fishing

Construction

Manufacturing

Wholesale and retail trade

Transportation and storage

Accommodation and food service

Administrative and support service

Public administration and defence

Education

Human health and social work  
International organizations/NGOs  
Local charity/NGO/CBO  
Law  
Trades (plumbing, electrical, etc.)  
Religious professions  
Other, please specify

**4.3 IF YOU ARE EMPLOYED/ARE WORKING, WHERE IS YOUR PLACE OF WORK? (SELECT ONE)**

In the same village/town/city I live in  
In another village/town/city in the same governorate  
In another village/town/city in another governorate  
Other, please specify

**4.4 IF YOU ARE EMPLOYED/ARE WORKING, WHERE IS THE MAJORITY OF THIS WORK CARRIED OUT? (SELECT ONE)**

At home  
At clients place  
Formal office  
Factory  
Farm/garden  
Construction site  
Mines/quarry  
Shop, kiosk, super market, mall  
Coffee, house, restaurant  
School/government/university/kindergarten  
Hospital, clinic, doctors office, retirement home  
Taxi, bus, car, truck  
Different places/mobile  
Fixed street or market stall  
Mosque/Religious institution  
Other, please specify

**4.5 IF YOU ARE EMPLOYED/ARE WORKING, HOW DID YOU FIND OR START THIS EMPLOYMENT? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)**

Found employment through friends/relatives  
Responded to advertisement  
Found employment through labour office  
Recruited/head hunted by company/organisation  
Found employment through educational institution  
Started business with support from the government  
Started business with my own funds  
Started business with funds from friends/family  
Started business with support from an NGO/CBO/charity  
Other, please specify

**4.6 IF YOU ARE EMPLOYED/ARE WORKING, ARE YOU A MEMBER OF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING? (SELECT ONE)**

Trade Union  
Professional organization/association  
Organization arranged by an NGO  
I am not part of any organization or union  
Don't Know  
Other, please specify

**4.7 IF YOU ARE EMPLOYED/ARE WORKING AND IF YOU HAVE CHILDREN, HOW DO YOU MANAGE CHILDCARE WHILE YOU ARE AT WORK? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)**

A nanny/babysitter assists  
My husband assists  
Other family members assist  
Daycare  
Children are in school  
Children are old enough to care for themselves  
Friends/Neighbours assist  
Other, please specify

**4.8 IF YOU ARE EMPLOYED/ARE WORKING, WHAT IS YOUR MAIN FORM OF TRANSPORT TO AND FROM WORK? (SELECT ONE)**

Walking

With my own/family car

With a rented car (including car borrowed from neighbours, relatives, friends in exchange for money, or paying neighbours, relatives, friends to drive)

With a borrowed car (e.g. from neighbours, relatives, friends)

By bus

By taxi

Transport provided by employer

Other, please specify \_\_\_\_

**4.9 IF YOU ARE EMPLOYED/ARE WORKING, HOW LONG DOES IT NORMALLY TAKE YOU TO AND FROM WORK (IN MINS)? \_\_\_\_**

**4.10 IF YOU ARE EMPLOYED/ARE WORKING, HOW MUCH DOES IT COST YOU ON AVERAGE TO TRAVEL TO AND FROM WORK PER MONTH (IN JOD)? \_\_\_\_**

## UNEMPLOYMENT, ECONOMIC INACTIVITY:

**5.1 IF YOU ARE UNEMPLOYED/DO NOT WORK, WHAT IS THE REASON YOU ARE NOT WORKING? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)**

I do not want to work

I do not need to work (independent means, my husband/father/brother works)

I am still in school/university/training

I am retired/old age

I am pregnant

Illness, disability, injury (medical reason)

House work

Childcare

My family objects (parents, husband)

I work seasonally and am awaiting the season of work

I am waiting/hoping to get a job in the public sector or military

Available job opportunities in the area are not compatible with my education/training/skills

Pay is not acceptable

Work conditions are not acceptable

There are no job opportunities in the area

There are no job opportunities for women in particular

There is no reliable and safe transportation to the work place

I cannot afford transportation to the work place

I have concerns about safety/harassment on the way to work

I have concerns about safety/harassment in the workplace

Employers seem to prefer employing other nationality

I do not have a work permit

I am afraid to lose assistance from the government, NGOs, UN etc. if I do work

Don't know

Other, please specify

**5.2 IF YOU ARE UNEMPLOYED/NOT WORKING, HAVE YOU WORKED IN THE PAST YEAR? (SELECT ONE)**

Yes

No

**5.2.1 IF NO, HAVE YOU WORKED IN THE PAST 5 YEARS? (SELECT ONE)**

Yes

No

**5.2.2 IF YES FOR EITHER PAST YEAR OR PAST 5 YEARS, WHY DID YOU STOP WORKING? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)**

I retired

I got married  
 I had children/Childcare  
 I moved  
 Started /continued university/training  
 Illness, disability, injury (medical reason)  
 Lost interest  
 No longer financially necessary for me to work  
 Working was incompatible with house work responsibilities  
 My family objects (parents, husband)  
 Salary too low  
 Job/work environment was dangerous/unsafe  
 I quit/lost my job and could not find a new one  
 I quit/lost my job and did not want a new one  
 Personal differences with management/colleagues  
 I had concerns about security on the way to work (incl. harassment)  
 Harassment in the workplace  
 I felt discriminated against  
 I was afraid to lose assistance from the government, NGOs, UN etc. if I do work  
 Lack of work permit  
 Don't know  
 Other, please specify

**5.2.1A IF NO, HAVE YOU ACTIVELY SEARCHED FOR EMPLOYMENT IN THE PAST YEAR? (SELECT ONE)**

Yes  
 No

**5.3 IF YOU ARE UNEMPLOYED/NOT WORKING, WOULD YOU CURRENTLY LIKE/WANT TO WORK IF JOBS WERE AVAILABLE IN YOUR AREA? (SELECT ONE)**

Yes  
 No  
 Don't Know

**5.3.1 IF NO, WHY NOT? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)**

I am not interested in working  
 I don't think women should work  
 I don't need to work/my husband/father/brother/mother works  
 I prefer to stay at home  
 Childcare  
 I am pregnant  
 Housework responsibilities  
 Lack of education/training  
 My family objects to me working  
 Illness, disability, injury (medical reason)  
 I am in university/training  
 Security concerns on my way to work (incl. harassment)  
 I am caring for other family members (excl. children)  
 Lack of reliable and safe transportation  
 I cannot afford transportation to work  
 Don't know  
 Other, please specify

**3.5.2 IF YES, WOULD YOU PREFER TO WORK AT HOME OR OUTSIDE THE HOME? (SELECT ONE)**

At home  
 Outside the home  
 Either/no preference  
 Don't know

**3.5.3 IF YES, WHAT TYPE OF WORK WOULD YOU PREFER? (SELECT ONE)**

Permanent full-time employment  
 Permanent part-time employment  
 Seasonal work (i.e. agriculture)  
 Temporary full-time employment  
 Temporary part-time employment

Own business/self-employed  
Don't know  
I have no preference

**5.3.4 IF YES, WHICH SECTOR(S) WOULD YOU PREFER TO WORK IN? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)**

Agriculture, forestry, fishing  
Construction  
Manufacturing  
Wholesale and retail trade  
Transportation and storage  
Accommodation and food service  
Administrative and support service  
Public administration and deference  
Education  
Human health and social work  
International organizations/NGOs  
Local charity/NGO/CBO  
Law  
Trades (plumbing, electrical, etc.)  
Religious professions  
Other, please specify

**5.3.5 IF YES, WOULD YOU CURRENTLY BE ABLE TO START WORK IF IT WERE AVAILABLE IN YOUR AREA? (SELECT ONE)**

Yes  
No  
Don't know

**5.3.5A IF NO, WHAT ARE THE PRIMARY REASONS THAT ARE PREVENTING YOU FROM WORKING? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)**

Childcare  
I am pregnant

I do not have the necessary resources to start a business  
Lack of education/training  
Housework responsibilities  
My family objects to me working  
I do not have a work permit  
Illness, disability, injury (medical reason)  
I am in university/training  
Security concerns on my way to work (incl. harassment)  
I am caring for other family members (excl. children)  
Lack of reliable and safe transportation  
I cannot afford transportation to work  
Don't know  
Other, please specify

**5.3.5B IF NO, WHAT WOULD ALLOW YOU TO ACCEPT AND START WORK? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)**

Assistance with child care (family, friends, nannies, day care)  
Financial support to start a business  
Technical support with starting a business  
Training/education  
Assistance with housework  
A work permit  
Opportunities for home-based work  
Opportunities for part-time work  
Job opportunities close to home  
I can't start until finish I university/training  
Improved security on the way to work  
Assistance with caring for other family members  
Improved availability of reliable and safe transportation  
Lower cost of transportation



There is currently nothing that could allow me to start working (need to finish university/training, am pregnant)

Don't know

Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

## PHONE CONTACT:

**6.1 IF WE HAVE FURTHER QUESTIONS OR A FOLLOW UP, COULD WE CONTACT YOU AGAIN VIA PHONE? (SELECT ONE)**

Yes

No

**6.1.1 IF YES, PLEASE PROVIDE TELEPHONE NUMBER:**

Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

### GUIDING QUESTIONS

#### STAGE 1: ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES, EMPLOYMENT-UNEMPLOYMENT

What would you say are relatively typical jobs for women to do in Jordan? What are typical jobs for men?

Probes

Why do you think women typically work in these jobs/sectors and not in others?

Are these jobs/sectors you would like to work in as well?

Are there others based on your skills? Based on your interests?

You mentioned construction as a typically male job sector. Is there anything that could make you consider working in construction?

Are there jobs/tasks in the construction field that you would be willing to do (e.g. administration, manufacturing, coordination)? Any specific conditions that could make it possible for you to work in construction (e.g. women only spaces).

#### STAGE 2: BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S WORK

In your view, why do you think many women are not working in your community? What do you think the challenges are for women to start or continue working?

Probes

Which challenges do you think are most difficult to overcome?

For Syrian groups, replace question 1 above with question 1 below:

In general, what are the main challenges that Syrian women face in accessing employment in your community, and in Jordan more broadly? What are the main challenges Syrian men face?

Probes

Which of these are the most difficult/challenging for women, for men?

Do you think Syrian women face different/more challenges when trying to start or continue work

than Jordanian women? How are the challenges different?

You mentioned work permits: What are the main challenges in accessing work permits? Would you say there are different challenges for women and men?

Do you think that most women in your community would like to work?

Probes

Why yes? Why no?

What about you personally?

Do you personally think women should be working? Why? Why not?

#### STAGE 3: HOW CAN EMPLOYMENT "WORK" FOR WOMEN?

You mentioned a range of different factors and challenges preventing women from working/making it more difficult for women to work. How do you think these challenges could be overcome? What would allow women to work?

Probes:

Who could or would need to support women in accessing employment? (e.g. the government; universities/schools; employers; NGOs/CBOs, UN; family/relatives; yourself (Instructions for enumerators: only provide these options if participants need input) Some suggestions for probes, depending on what challenges were mentioned previously:

You mentioned women's families (parents, husbands etc.) might object to them working. How do you think such objections could be overcome or reduced practically? (e.g. women only work spaces, work close to home/at home, specific kinds of jobs etc.)

Why do you think some women prefer to work outside the home as opposed to inside the home?

Probes:

Do you think home-based work opportunities could allow more women to work?

What kind of jobs do you think women could and would like to do working from home?



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UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.



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