

ILO/SDC Research and Advocacy Initiative for Mixed Migration Strategies in Jordan

Towards comprehensive labour migration governance within broader labour market governance, with particular attention to Jordanization, fair migration and decent work for refugees

Background

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has a complex mixed migration context as both an emigration and immigration country. Jordan hosts approximately 2.9 million migrants (including refugees) – almost half of its local population of 6.5 million. The country has a high demand for low skilled workers, high levels of irregular migration (in particular from Egypt and Syria), and significant youth unemployment. An outflow of high skilled workers hampers the competitiveness of the economy, and ensures a dependence on remittances. Jordan is also dealing with a mass influx of people affected by conflict and fragility (Syrians, Iraqis, Palestinians, Yemeni). To respond to the Syrian refugee crisis, Jordan recently committed to creating up to 200,000 formal jobs for Syrians under its laudable Jordan Compact initiative. The labour market is characterized by segmentation between the public and private sector (with Jordanians predominating the public sector, and migrant workers in the private sector), low labour force participation rates (especially for women), and a high share of informal wage workers with limited social protection. To address these particular issues, Jordan has promoted a nationalization (or Jordanization) strategy.

To address this complex migration situation - while ensuring fair migration and decent work for Jordanians, migrant workers and refugees - Jordan is required to develop and strengthen its migration institutions, policies and protection mechanisms.

Strategy and Objectives

In responding to these challenges and to the three potentially conflicting policy objectives (i.e. Jordanization of the labour force, inclusion of Syrians in the labour market and fair and decent work for migrants), ILO and SDC will collaborate on an exploratory research and advocacy initiative, in close consultation with the Jordanian authorities (through the Ministry of Labour).

The objective of the initiative is to contribute ways forward for the government to consider, to improve the functioning of the labour market by focusing on enhanced migration governance, while improving conditions of work in migrant intensive sectors (i.e. agriculture, construction, domestic work and light manufacturing). The initiative will focus on the mixed migration flows within Jordan, including attention to the forced displacement of Syrians and traditional in-migration from mainly Egypt and South Asia, with a view to creating more decent jobs for migrants (including refugees) and Jordanians in the labour market, and thus contributing to a less segmented and more vibrant economy.

Deliverables

A comprehensive report based on the implementation of a research protocol¹, to be agreed among the research team and the ILO. The report will analyse the mixed migration situation; the regulatory framework, enforcement mechanisms and levels of compliance in relevant sectors; and put forward practical policy recommendations for smart labour market governance with a particular focus on migrant intensive sectors.

Policy dialogue and advocacy for policy change undertaken – with the comprehensive report as basis– during a high level policy dialogue and sector specific launch events in Jordan, along with meetings with neighbouring countries. Learning from the initiative is also envisaged to feature in global meetings on mixed migration.

Timeframe: 16 July 2016 – 15 March 2017

Contact:

Hans van de Glind (ILO Senior Migration Specialist for Arab States) at: vandeglind@ilo.org

Patrick Daru (ILO Country Coordinator for Jordan) at: daru@ilo.org

Pascal Raess (SDC regional office in Jordan) at: pascal.raess@eda.admin.ch

Donor: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

¹ Research methods will include a desk review of recent literature and policy documents along with qualitative rapid assessments through Focus Group Discussions, key informant interviews, and sectoral roundtable consultations.