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RECOMMENDATIONS

TO INCREASE FEMALE LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION (FLFP) IN JORDAN

INCREASING FLFP IN JORDAN requires a multi-faceted approach, addressing labor market conditions, legal reforms, support services, and social norms and beliefs.

IMPLEMENT, MONITOR, AND ADVANCE LARGE-SCALE NATIONAL PROGRAMS AND STRATEGIES THAT DELIBERATELY TARGET FLFP.

Turkey and Saudi Arabia had large-scale efforts and government-backed strategies that deliberately focused on increasing FLFP. Both countries set targets for the number of jobs created for women within a specific time. They also invested in increasing the demand for women's employment by subsidizing wages or social security premiums for newly hired women entering the labor force. Recently Jordan adopted a five-year Women's Economic Empowerment Action Plan (World Bank, 2019)*, aiming to increase women's labor force participation rates to 24% by 2025, as outlined in the Jordan 2025 national strategy (FAO, 2014)*. Though Jordan may lack the financial capacity to fund programs at the same scale as Saudi Arabia or Turkey, successful monitoring and implementation of the current plan's objectives will ensure progress toward effective outcomes seen in other countries. Strategies from other countries can also be implemented, such as micro-financing programs in Algeria to support women's entrepreneurship. With measures to protect women from failure and legal consequences, such efforts could be highly effective in encouraging women's entrepreneurship and business ownership in the country. In Jordan's case, one potential approach is to offer subsidies to select sectors specifically for expanding women's employment in the sector.

ENHANCE WOMEN'S OPPORTUNITIES IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND ENSURE IT IS AN ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVE TO THE PUBLIC SECTOR, ESPECIALLY FOR MARRIED WOMEN.

Further extending social protections and career stability in the private sector could increase women's participation in the sector. Jordan's private sector is growing at a faster rate than the public sector in terms of the number of employees, with the number of women employees in the private sector increasing 48.5% over the last decade, compared to a 24.5% increase in the public sector (DOS, 2022).** Though making up a large portion of the labor market, the public sector is still limited in its capacity to absorb many of those interested in working within it, meaning more women are taking unskilled jobs in the private sector that they are likely to leave at marriage. An overrepresented public sector could prove to be problematic for the overall growth of the economy, hinder the development of the private sector, and discourage entrepreneurship. As such, provided Jordan ensures the private sector can supply the same benefits to women as public sector employment, the increasing number of employees in the private sector will benefit women's economic participation. One possible direction Jordan can look towards is that of Turkey. The country's employment strategy for women relies on increasing their participation without neglecting their care responsibilities at home by promoting flexible forms of employment for women.

* World Bank. (2019). Jordan WEEPA Program PowerPoint. World Bank. <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/379131574445136942-0280022019/Jordan-WEEPA-Jan-19-2019-en>

* FAO. (2014). Jordan 2025, A National Vision and Strategy. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. <https://leap.unep.org/countries/jo/national-legislation/jordan-2025-national-vision-and-strategy>

** DOS. (2022). Jordan Department of Statistics. Various Indicators. <http://dosweb.dos.gov.jo/>



LABOR MARKET CONDITIONS

1. Expanding into the services sector might prove to be beneficial for enhancing overall economic growth in Jordan and FLFP.



Expanding into the services sector supported increased FLFP in Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and West Bank and Gaza. Jordan has already been implementing structural changes that include a shift into the services sector, which currently comprises 61.6% of the GDP, and women are disproportionately represented in the service sector. Jordan can work to explicitly include women in high-growth services, including tourism, technology, and high-skilled professional services.

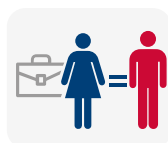


Jordan can leverage digital technologies to promote entrepreneurship and women's employment in the information and communication technology (ICT) sector, especially location-independent and time-flexible services at a large scale. Examples include call centers, e-commerce, and other business services.



LEGAL REFORMS

1. Address legal bias against women in the workplace, pay, and mobility, and promote additional legal safeguards to integrate women into the labor force further.



Ensure a woman can legally get a job or pursue a trade or profession the same way as a man.

Currently, Article 61 of the Personal Status Law states that a woman requires the permission of her husband to work outside of the marital home.



Prohibit discrimination in employment based on sex.



Legislate against harassment in the workplace – and beyond – through a suite of legal measures and enforcement mechanisms.

1

Amend legislation to expand the definition of sexual harassment and protect employees against retaliation and dismissal if they report sexual harassment cases.

2

Use the media to raise awareness about the issue and stigmatize the behavior.

3

Conduct surveys and collect data to measure progress made.

2. Assist the private sector in complying with reforms.



Develop compliance manuals explaining compliance requirements and modalities.



Assist employers through capacity building and guidance on effectively implementing and maintaining compliance regulations.



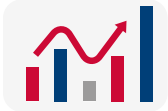
SUPPORT SERVICES

1. Improve safe, appropriate, and affordable transportation and mobility to increase women's access to work.



Jordan could launch initiatives similar to Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, or Tunisia to support women's increased mobility. For example, Tunisia launched an initiative to transport female agricultural workers to their workplaces. The Wusool Program in Saudi Arabia provides a transportation subsidy for low-wage women working in the private sector. In Lebanon, private sector employers are required to provide daily transport allowances.

2. Provide incentives for childcare support beyond the requirement imposed on companies.



Provide incentives to childcare institutions to enhance quality and reduce costs.



Expand the public sector support and provision of childcare services, depending on fiscal scope. Despite the private-sector-led provision of childcare support services, the government can still play a role through public provision where private provision is not possible or viable - ensuring affordability, quality, geographical accessibility, and convenience.



Consider innovative approaches, like Turkey, which pays grandmothers to look after their grandchildren.

3. Regulate flexible work hours for women having children under the age of four.



SOCIAL NORMS AND BELIEFS

1. Overcome social norms and beliefs that limit the type of employment opportunities women seek and expectations around women as homemakers and caregivers.



Research labor domains that were formerly socially unacceptable for women in Jordan, such as traffic police, and consider what changes social perceptions of women in those careers.

2. Expand vocational training and technical education beyond "feminine" fields and provide technical education parallel to university academic education to prepare graduates to join the entrepreneurship sector.

3. Encourage female graduates in more innovative STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields.

4. Utilize various media platforms to launch campaigns that aim to disseminate messages related to non-discriminatory gender roles. Media campaigns, aspirational videos, social media, and edutainment can play an essential role in changing men's and women's perceptions and aspirations around women's roles in the household and society and provide positive role models.



Create targeted communication materials for men to change their views of women working outside the home, in mixed environments, and on returning home after five o'clock in the evening. In Saudi Arabia, as in Jordan, studies show people underestimate society's acceptance of women working. Research shows that providing messaging about other men's support for women's economic participation impacts men's willingness to let their wives join the labor force.



Find, document, and publicize local success stories for urban, rural, and Bedouin families that supported females' non-traditional education and labor force participation, especially including the voices of fathers and husbands.