

Thumbnail Study

Issued by Tamkeen Fields for Aid

Regarding

Women in The Agricultural Sector... "Hard work and Harsh Life"



Thumbnail Study – 2017

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Introduction

The agricultural sector is an important sector in Jordan. Agriculture plays an important role in the economic and social system of rural communities and is closely linked to efforts to preserve and sustain the natural environment.

The agricultural sector in Jordan faces problems and challenges such as drought, rainfall, low agricultural land, scarcity of water resources, and various risks.

The agricultural sector contributes to 2.12% of GDP and absorbs 4.5% of the total Jordanian labor force. The agricultural sector has the highest rate of informal local labor compared to other sectors of the Jordanian economy, despite the decline in the percentage of local labor force in the agricultural sector during the past 40 years.

The total area of arable land is 3.1 million acres, of which 736 thousand acres of irrigated agriculture, of which 316 thousand acres in the Jordan Valley and the southern valleys, 420 thousand acres in the highlands and desert areas¹, and highlands such as: Ajloun, Irbid and Eastern Sahara (Mafraq Governorate).

¹ http://www.mop.gov.jo/arabic/pages.php?menu_id=200&local_type=0&local_id=0&local_details=0&localdetails1=0

Traditionally, males predominate in the agricultural sector in Jordan and this may be an explanation for the fact that the studies on female workers in agriculture in Jordan have been somewhat neglected, leading to a lack of information regarding women workers in this sector.

Although women work in this sector for many years, but it is difficult to understand the exact number of their numbers, since agriculture is a largely informal sector in Jordan, where many women work with either employers or unpaid family farms, where their contributions are often considered as part of domestic work rather than actual work.

Women working in agriculture come mainly from poor or marginalized families, either from poor rural families, or from marginalized Pakistani communities, and recently from Syrian refugees.

The agricultural sector is hard work, and workers can be exposed to a range of risks and harsh working conditions ranging from low wages to long working hours in the sun, as well as poor occupational safety and health standards.

Women and girls – especially Syrian refugees – can be especially vulnerable on farms, where they can become victims of gender-based violence or are at risk of exploitation, forced labor and trafficking in human beings.

According to data from the Jordan Valley Agriculture Directorate, the number of farm workers in the valley exceeds 10 thousand workers², and the proportion of girls working in the agricultural sector increase between June and September each year, during the summer vacation of schools, where the most recent study of the situation of children in agriculture was conducted in 2008 with the International Labor Organization (ILO), which indicates that the number of working girls is 3,605 or 11% of all working children, which age ranging between 12-17 constitute the largest proportion of all children.

This study presents a general overview of the legislative and legal framework for the work of women in agriculture sector in Jordan, the reality of their work in the labor market, and figures and statistics on women's work in agriculture sector in Jordan, and the conditions of their work and what violations they face in the presence of multiple challenges encountered during work.

² Jordan Valley Agriculture Directorate

The importance of the study:

The importance of this study is that it examines the conditions of young women working in the agricultural sector, including girls, and the legal and economic status of a wide range of women workers in these sectors, this study also gains its practical importance through analyzing the work environment and the rights of women workers and its effectiveness on the ground, in light of the scarcity of studies related to this aspect.

Objectives:

The aim of the study is to review the nature of the conditions in which workers in the agricultural sector work in terms of wages and working hours, access to annual and sick leave, social insurance and other basic labor rights stipulated in Jordanian labor legislation.

Study Methodology:

The research methodology was adopted using the method of preparation of the study, specifically the qualitative and descriptive approach. The working mechanisms focused on collecting quantitative and qualitative data from official sources, conducting field visits and interviewing dozens of female workers, in

addition to conducting a number of interviews with many farm owners, to form a clear picture of the nature of work in this sector.

The working methodology included:

1. Desktop Search: Reports, studies, previous publications, records and documents on the subject, as well as related websites, were reviewed as required by the nature of the study.

2. Field research: A visit to the work sites, selection of a specific random sample of workers in the agricultural sector of Jordanian and Syrian nationality, and employers in each of the following regions: Jordan Valley (Deir Alla, Kreimyeh, South Shouna, Joufeh and Sweimeh), Capital Governorate (Hashmi Al Shamali and Ashrafyeh).

Sample Characteristics:

A random sample of female workers in the agricultural sector was selected, consisting of 83 workers, of whom 13 were Syrian nationals. The research team visited the following areas: : Jordan Valley (Deir Alla, Kreimyeh, South Shouna, Joufeh and Sweimeh) Capital Governorate (Hashmi Al Shamali and Ashrafyeh) , the characteristics of the sample were as follows:

1. 70 Jordanian nationality female workers and 13 Syrian nationality workers were interviewed and recorded their views on the conditions and environment of their work in the agricultural sector.

2. The distribution of female workers by educational level of both nationalities was as follows: 48 female workers high school and less, and 35 female diploma/university graduates.

3. Female workers by age of both nationalities were distributed as follows: 15 women under 18 years old, 43 female workers from 18 to 30 years old and 25 women over 31 years old.

4. The distribution of female workers according to the social status of both nationalities was as follows: 29 single workers and 54 married women.

Women in The Agricultural Sector... "Hard Work and Harsh Life"

The reality of the Jordanian agricultural sector (figures and statistics)

Jordan is one of the most water-scarce countries in the region and the world because of its limited natural resources and low arable land. The arable land is 3.1 million acres of which 736,000 acres of irrigated agriculture, In the Jordan Valley and the southern valleys, and 420 thousand acres in the highlands and desert areas³, and include the main agricultural areas: Jordan Valley, and highlands such as: Ajloun, Irbid and Eastern Sahara (Mafraq Governorate).

In Jordan, most agricultural workers are either migrant workers or Jordanian workers. Jordanian males tend to ignore this sector in recent years. The low participation of national workers in the agricultural sector is due to the lack of minimum decent work conditions, in particular low wages compared to the hard work of the agricultural sector compared to other economic activities, which leads the Jordanian worker to refrain from working in this sector and the search for other employment opportunities, so there was "feminization" of the Jordanian agricultural labor market.

³ http://www.mop.gov.jo/arabic/pages.php?menu_id=200&local_type=0&local_id=0&local_details=0&localdetails1=0

Many Jordanian women from poor rural households usually work in agriculture, especially in the Jordan Valley, where about 10,000 women are currently working on farms, according to the Jordan Valley Directorate, most of whom have no education or a low level of education (primary education).

In this sense, there is a paucity of statistics regarding Jordanian workers working in the agricultural sector, but estimates can be summarized as (10%) of the total workers in the Jordanian agricultural sector, the majority of whom are women, as mentioned above, and there are also children working in this sector and increasing their proportion in the period between June and September of each year, during the summer holidays of schools, to reach more than 40%, and the girl working on farms face different levels of fatigue and exhaustion, in addition to many health risks, according to the ILO study on children working on farms for the year 2014 and included Jordanians and Syrians, where more than half of working children by 55.2% reported that they are stressed strongly as a result of the work and 5% reported that the work did not affect them⁴.

⁴ http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/genericdocument/wcms_246208.pdf A study on child labor in the agricultural sector in Jordan / Jordanians and Syrians

We note here that women are engaged in various agricultural fields including: weeding, sapling, harvesting, irrigation, crop picking, insecticide workshops, food processing (e.g., processing of milk and other products such as wool)⁵.

Legislative and legal framework for the work of women in Jordan

Jordan signed 24 international conventions⁶ out of 188 conventions and 198 recommendations related to male and female workers and ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 2000. The Jordanian Constitution also equated women and men with rights and duties, where Article 6 (1) of the Jordanian Constitution states that Jordanians are equal before the law, regardless of their rights and duties, race, language or religion. Article 2 of the same article stipulates that the State guarantees work and education within its control and ensures tranquility and equal opportunities for all Jordanians.

⁵ According to Tamkeen Center team interviews with workers in the agriculture sector

⁶ Namely; C029 of 1930 concerning forced labour, C081 of 1947 concerning labour inspection in industry and commerce, C098 of 1949 concerning the application of the principles of the right to organize and collective bargaining, C100 of 1951 concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value, or Equal Remuneration, C111 of 1958 concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation, C116 of 1961 concerning the Partial Revision of the Conventions Adopted by the General Conference of the International Labour Organisation at its First Thirty-two Sessions for the Purpose of Standardising the Provisions regarding the Preparation of Reports, C118 of 1962 concerning Equality of Treatment of Nationals and Non-Nationals in Social Security, C119 of 1963 concerning guarding of machinery, C120 of 1963 concerning Hygiene in Commerce and Offices, C122 of 1964 concerning Employment policy, C123 of 1965 concerning the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment Underground in Mines, C124 of 1965 concerning Medical Examination of Young Persons for Fitness for Employment Underground in Mines, C138 of 1973 concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment.

Article 13 of the Constitution states that compulsory employment shall not be imposed on anyone, but under the law, a person may be subject to a charge or service except in a case of necessity such as a state of war, public danger, fire, flood, famine or earthquake, severe disease for animal or people, animal or insect or plant or other pest or similar pest or in any other circumstances that may endanger the safety of all or some of the population.

Article 23 of the Constitution stipulates that work is a right for all citizens and that the State must provide Jordanians with the direction and promotion of the national economy. Accordingly, the provisions of the Constitution did not discriminate between women and men with regard to rights and duties specifically the right to work.

However, there are many labor-related legislation that discriminates against women. The Jordanian Labor Law and its amendments No. 8 of 1996⁷ do not contain explicit provisions prohibiting discrimination in employment and occupation. It requires equal pay for men of equal value. The law also lacks clear provisions that protect women From all forms of harassment in the workplace.

⁷<http://www.mol.gov.jo/Echobusv3.0/SystemAssets/PDFs/AR/Laws/%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%88%D9%86%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%85%D9%84%20%D9%88%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%87%2015-7-2010.pdf>

The vast majority of working women in Jordan (95%) are concentrated in three economic sectors out of (13) economic sectors. These three sectors are represented in public administration, education, health and social work.

Women in the Jordanian Labor Market

The Jordanian labor market is characterized as an unfriendly environment for women. The rate of participation of women in the Jordanian labor market remains among the lowest in the world (14% for women and 66% for men). The World Economic Forum's Gender Report 2014 ranked Jordan 140 out of 142 countries⁸ , And the unemployment rate among women in Jordan is very high, reaching 22%, while in poor areas it rises to 40%.

On the other hand, the latest figures issued by the Social Security Corporation during the year 2015 indicate that the proportion of women participating in the institution is approximately 26.0% of the total participants in the institution⁹.

Women working in Jordan also suffer from wage discrimination in favor of males. According to statistics issued by the Department of Statistics, the average monthly wage of workers in the public sector is (JD 412) and in the private

⁸ The World Economic Forum's Gender Report 2014

⁹ Social Security Corporation

sector (JD 338), with a gap of (63) dinars for males, and (69) dinars per month; respectively.¹⁰

Many labor and human rights reports indicate that women working in the private sector are subjected to numerous violations and transgressions contrary to the provisions of the Jordanian Labor Law. Large numbers of women work for hours more than 8 hours a day and are deprived of any form of social protection and social security. Receive wages well below the minimum wage and do not enjoy job stability and other decent work conditions.

Many women workers, especially in the private sector and the informal sector, are subject to various forms of forced labor in accordance with the internationally recognized concept of "all acts or services imposed by force on any person under the threat of any punishment which the person has not acted voluntarily."

Of forced labor practices imposed on some workers in several economic sectors, to be forced without choice or against their will or by force in the performance of work or by physical violence against the worker, the intentional seizure or delay of the salary by the employer or the change of the nature of the work agreed upon, etc.

¹⁰ Department of Statistics

Female workers in agriculture

Female labor force participation in Jordan is very low, and the vast majority of women residing in Jordan are unemployed. It is difficult to determine the exact figures on the number of women unemployed due to the high level of the informal sector in the Jordanian economy and the scarcity of available data on women's employment.

According to the World Bank and ILO, women's labor force participation rate in Jordan was not higher than 14.39% in 2016¹¹. Similarly, the female unemployment rate in Jordan is very high, with the unemployment rate for women in the second quarter of 2017 at 33.9%; almost double the rate of unemployment among men (13.4%).

Working women tend to remain in traditionally female-dominated sectors. According to a study conducted by the Economic Research Forum, women workers in Jordan are mainly concentrated in the education sectors (38.5% female workers), health care and social work (12.6% female)¹².

¹¹ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.FE.ZS?locations=JO>

¹² Economic Research Forum, 2012, Raji Assaad, Rana Hindi, Shaima Yassin, Gender and the Jordanian Labor Market

The work of Jordanian women is largely concentrated in the fields of education, health care, social work, finance, insurance and business services; Syrian refugees work in the housing, food, agriculture and humanitarian sectors.

In addition to the factor of nationality, there is also the educational level factor. The data indicate that women are more likely to get a job if they have a higher education level, such as university education. Therefore, female activity rates tend to be higher in highly skilled sectors, such as the education and health care sectors. Conversely, women with lower education tend to be less active in the labor market.

In terms of the estimated participation of women in agriculture, forestry and fisheries in 2013, according to the World Bank, their participation rate was 4.6%¹³, but there are a large number of informal workers and workers working in these sectors, in addition to their work in various forms (paid, unpaid, or seasonal work), make it very difficult to obtain accurate figures for the number of female workers in agriculture, which are not adequately represented or sometimes not included even in official statistics, especially those seasonal or temporary jobs or carried out in home, this leads to non-inclusion of economic

¹³ World Bank, 2013. Gender Assessment for Jordan: Economic Participation, Effectiveness and Access to Justice in Jordan, p. 90

activities for women in many studies using statistical data to analyze trends in national economies¹⁴.

Women are often involved in agriculture in cases of unpaid family work that are not subsequently reflected in official statistics. Moreover, their contributions to agricultural activities on family farms are considered part of domestic work. For these reasons, women's participation in agricultural work is much lower than the size in labor force surveys and statistics, and the estimated rate of women's participation in agriculture is likely to be much higher in reality.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Jordan has the highest rates of female participation in agriculture in the MENA region¹⁵. As a result, the percentage of female labor in the agricultural sector is likely to increase in the coming years.

¹⁴ United Nations Women's Fund, Malika Abdel-Al-Martini, 2011. Empowering women in rural labor force with a focus on agricultural employment in the Middle East and North Africa, p.2

¹⁵ FAO, 2010-2011. The State of Food and Agriculture - Women in Agriculture: Bridging the Gap for Development, p9



Working conditions of Female workers at the agricultural sector

Wages and Working hours

The workers start their productive day at 6:00am and finish at 6:00pm, and may reach 7:00pm in the summer. The tasks are distributed according to the agricultural season, as in the winter citrus farming is increased, while in the spring, vegetables farming.

Women working in the agricultural sector suffer from multiple violations, the most important of which is their low wages, which are often paid on a daily basis, and they cost five dinars every six working hours. After six working hours, the wage becomes hourly and varies from JD 1 to JD 1.50, as the monthly income of the majority of female workers does not exceed 250 Jordanian Dinars, adding that they do not have a stable source of income. In return for low wages, some employers are obliged to insure their movement from their homes to their workplaces and their return, Which are usually carried out by Pick-ups rather than private passenger transport modes.

The low level of wages paid by women workers is not sufficient to meet their basic needs. While many employers acknowledge that the majority of female workers are either under or below the minimum wage, a small number of

female workers are paid more than the minimum wage which is based on their long work experience in agriculture.

There are many forms of payment of wages in this sector, according to the prior agreement between the worker and the employer. Some women earn their wages on a daily basis, while others; the majority are paid monthly, whereas others are paid after the end of the agricultural season, in return for receiving financial advances sufficient for their daily needs, which is a clear violation of the text of Article (46) of the Jordanian Labor Law, which stipulates that the worker must be paid his wages within the maximum of the seventh day of the month following the month where the worker worked.

Some of the workers are not being paid their wages, and not able to contact their employers after the work is done, and there were dozens of cases in which farm owners refrained from giving workers their wages due to loss of the agricultural season, either due to lower prices of agricultural products or the collapse of the agricultural season.

In addition, a number of women working in agriculture work in informal and unpaid family work; that is, they receive no remuneration for the work they do.

In the same context, some farm owners see that the wages they pay to workers in their farms are commensurate with the income of the sector, which has declined significantly in recent years, causing the farmers' debts to rise, as well as weather conditions and large areas of land damaged due to frost.

Female workers from the Jordan Valley and commenting on their acceptance of low wages, indicated that most of them are families that receive salaries from the National Aid Fund and rely on work during the winter season to harvest agricultural crops in the region, which is one of the twenty pockets of poverty in the Kingdom and the high unemployment rate, especially among girls, according to surveys which was carried out by the social development departments in Der Alla and the southern Shouna in 2015, as approximately 25% of the population receive national aid salaries, which are the category that cannot provide for their livelihood, while the total class below the middle and the poverty level in the Jordan Valley constitute (83%), while it constitutes (50.8%) in the Kingdom, according to the study of social and economic reality of the Jordan Valley region between 2012-2014, which also showed that the unemployment rate in the Jordan Valley region is very high, which is higher than the general average of the Kingdom.

Vacations and Holidays

In addition to the long hours of work in light of the high summer heat, the cold winter and the low wages, workers in the agricultural sector are denied vacations and public holidays, including the weekly day-off (Friday), which is a clear violation of article 57 of the Jordanian Labor Law, except for special cases for a period of not more than 30 days per year and a maximum of two hours per day, provided that additional work shall be calculated for a minimum wage of one and a quarter hours per hour of his usual wage in accordance with the provisions of Article (59) of the law, in addition to forcing the worker to work for hours. It falls under the "suspicion of forced labor," which is a crime according to Jordanian laws and international labor standards.

With regard to sick leave, women workers are denied the right to sick leave, which reaches (14) days per year and under special sick conditions of up to (28) days, which is a clear violation of article (65) of the Labor Law, "Every worker shall have the right to fourteen days' sick leave during the whole year at full wage on the basis of submitting a report from the physician approved by the institution. It may be renewed for a further fourteen days with full pay if he is hospitalized or on the basis of submitting a report of a medical committee approved by the institution.

If the worker is forced to leave for sick reasons, the owner of the farm deducts the wages of the days of absence from her monthly wage, as well as of the emergency leave resulting from the occurrence of an emergency of any sort for the worker, the owner of the farm deducts the wages of days of absence from her monthly salary.

Social Protection

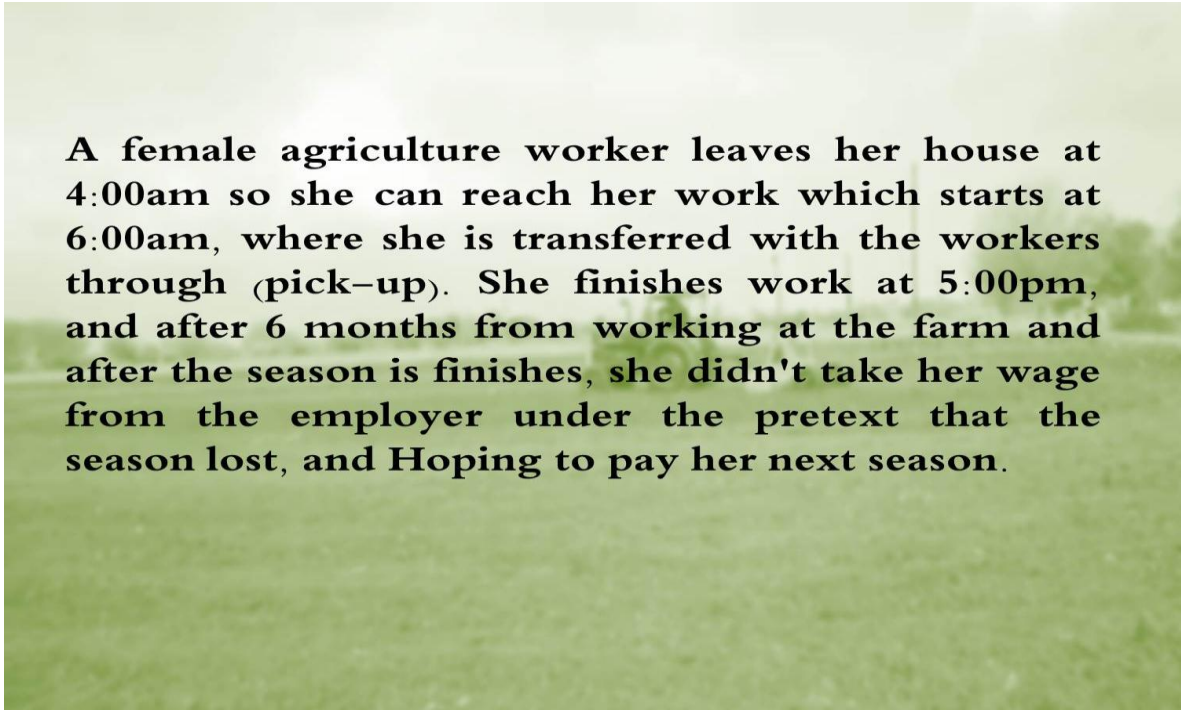
The workers asserted that they are not included in the social security, which is contrary to the provisions of article 20 (c) of the Social Security Law. In case of injury at work, they are charged for the treatment, since the employer does not recognize any injury.

Workers are also denied health insurance, and some employers justify this at high financial cost, since the financial income after the end of the agricultural season is not sufficient to cover workers in the social security and health insurance.

Workers confirmed that when they get sick they cannot get treatment, because they are not insured and cannot pay the cost of treatment, and the employer does not recognize the provision of treatment to the workers as they were injured on the farm, and some farm owners, according to workers do not

provide the simplest equipment that protects them from the sun and pesticides sprayed on trees to protect them from insects.

In the details, workers interviewed said that if they were injured, they had to be treated at their own expense, while others pointed out and confirmed by some employers that dealing with work injuries varies according to the employer. Some employers bear the cost of treating their workers on humanitarian grounds, and others do not care about that.



A female agriculture worker leaves her house at 4:00am so she can reach her work which starts at 6:00am, where she is transferred with the workers through (pick-up). She finishes work at 5:00pm, and after 6 months from working at the farm and after the season is finishes, she didn't take her wage from the employer under the pretext that the season lost, and Hoping to pay her next season.

Job stability

The sector lacks job stability, as do many private sectors. Many of those interviewed in this sector have emphasized job instability in their workplace, as their continuation at work depends on the degree of personal loyalty to the employer, in addition to staying at work is linked to the temperament of some employers, where it is easy to dispense their services at any time of the agricultural season and without specifying the reasons.

As a result of the nature of the agricultural work and its seasons, the workers find themselves demanding to find work through which to live after being laid off by the employers at the end of the agricultural season and stop paying their salaries. If the agricultural season extends for eight months from October to May, employers at the end of May each year lay off employees to return at the beginning of the agricultural season to reduce financial costs, worsening living conditions for workers.

Occupational Health and Safety

The provision of safe work is one of the basic standards of decent work. The application of occupational health and safety standards is therefore one of the

basic conditions for decent work, which is the main objective of all labor policies around the world. The concept of decent work refers to "promoting opportunities for all to acquire productive employment in conditions of freedom, equality, security and dignity as well as non-discrimination between males and females."

In this context, women workers in the farms lack the means of physical protection and protection requirements. The nature of their work compels them to cope with the difficult weather conditions during the hot summer, especially with the high temperatures in the area of the Jordan Valley and during the winter, In addition, they are subjected to exploitation related to the lack of occupational safety and health conditions and the absence of any form of health insurance, as well as the lack of social insurance provided by the social security subscription.

Exposure to chemical pesticides is offset by primitive safety measures such as face fabrics, which is a violation of the conditions and breach of safety requirements and preventive health, resulting in many respiratory diseases.

Workers interviewed said that the working conditions are difficult and harsh, as they bear the summer heat in the green houses, and in the winter rain falls on them as they sit in the pick-ups carrying them to and from the farms.

In addition, agricultural workers are also exposed to a range of risks, including physical abuse, lack of protective equipment, heavy loads, hazardous machinery, exposure to pesticides and chemicals, dust and vapors, high noise and vibration, lack of medical services. They also work long hours in farms under high temperatures in the summer and cold weather in the winter, while girls are exposed to dust and chemicals and long hours under the sun during their work in weeding, harvesting of beans, picking olives. In addition, the farms lack the availability of a first-aid kit where in the event that the workers are exposed to work injury they are not being treated at the right moment, as the hospitals and health centers are far from the workplaces.

The agricultural sector according to the Social Security Corporation, is one of the highest sectors in which the workers are exposed to occupational hazards, and at the same time are not subject to any type of insurance. In most cases, work injuries are not reported because the legislation does not clearly require the employer to report injuries and accordingly does not bear the costs of treating workers injuries. So how is it for those who are under the legal age?

All matters related to the issues of agricultural workers are related to the issuance of the regulation. If enacted, all workers in the sector will be included and will

therefore enjoy all the rights under the Labor Law in terms of determining working hours, minimum wages, leave and social security.

With regard to the mechanism of transporting women workers to the workplace, workers may be exposed to multiple risks, as they are transported in pick-ups, which is an insulting way to transport them as well as suffering.

Respiratory diseases and skin diseases are widespread among women workers in agriculture, leading to an increased risk of other diseases such as cancer, reproductive health and risk of abnormal growth of the fetus or miscarriage.

Trafficking in Persons

Migrant workers and refugees working in the agricultural sector are at high risk of trafficking in human beings, as indicated by the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, in her report after her visit to Jordan in 2016¹⁶, where she expressed her concern about Syrian refugees and asylum-seekers, including women and children, who are at risk of being forcibly exploited in terms of their illegal entry into the labor market in order to

¹⁶ Human Rights Council, 8 June 2016. Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, on her mission to Jordan, A/HRC/32/41/Add.1

preserve their families. She also said that Syrian women and girls are especially vulnerable to greater risks, such as violence, forced labor and human trafficking.

The report enumerated a situation in which "an entire family, including children under the age of 3, was deceived to work in the agricultural sector at low wages that had never been paid, and because of the precarious financial situation of the family they continued to work in exchange for the employer providing them with a place to live."

The report also indicated that many Syrian children are the sole breadwinner of their families and are mainly employed in retail and services, while girls work as domestic workers and in agriculture. She concluded that there was growing concern that such children might be exposed to the worst forms of child labor, including the risk of trafficking.¹⁷

Because of the lack of inspections in the agricultural sector and the weakness of the sanctions imposed on employers (imposing a financial sanction of only JD500 for those arrested for employing children, for example¹⁸), many cases of human trafficking remain undisclosed in Jordan. According to a Euromed report, "when many working children are caught simultaneously, the Ministry

¹⁷ Human Rights Council, 8 June 2016. Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, on her mission to Jordan, A/HRC/32/41/Add.1

¹⁸ The same reference, page 5-6

of Labor and other concerned bodies do not adequately investigate whether these children are in fact victims of human trafficking"¹⁹

In her report, the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in Jordan recommended that Jordan "develop appropriate tools and indicators to enable labor inspectors to identify victims of trafficking during labor inspections, including in agriculture ..., as well as provide immediate protection measures for victims of forced labor."²⁰



¹⁹ Euro-Med Observatory for Human Rights, Syrian Human Rights Network, 2016. Syrian Refugee Children in Jordan, p18

²⁰ The same reference, recommendations 90(c) page 21

Syrian Workers in the Agriculture Sector

The Syrian refugees who crossed the border because of the ongoing crisis in their country are mostly family groups, where they are motivated by the desire to work in the agricultural sector, especially since the proportion of women and girls among Syrian refugees in Jordan is high, according to the latest statistics, 654,582 Syrian refugees registered with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), of whom 50.5% are women and girls. Moreover, 51% of the Syrian refugees in Jordan are children under the age of 18, of whom about half (48.6%) are girls²¹.

It should be noted that a large proportion of the Syrian refugees who crossed the border into Jordan come from the rural areas of southern Syria, where they usually participate in agricultural activities, and there are a large number of Syrian female refugee workers on farms.

The vast majority of Syrian women in Jordan do not work, according to a study conducted by REACH and UN Women in 2016, 94% of Syrian women refugees in Jordan are unemployed and only 6% of them have participated in the Jordanian labor market.

²¹ UNHCR <http://www.unhcr.org/ar/>

There is a wide disparity between Syrian and Jordanian women as the proportion of Syrian women unemployed is much higher than that of Jordanian women. Moreover, the study reported that about 17% of Syrian refugees were previously employed in Syria, indicating a significant decline in their employment rate before and after displacement.

Unlike Jordanian women who tend to work in highly skilled sectors, Syrian refugees often work in low-skilled sectors, such as agriculture, domestic work, food services, manufacturing and humanitarian work.

The study showed that "unlike the employment sectors employed by Jordanian women, which largely reflect their level of education, the sectors in which Syrian working women refugees are working in likely to reflect the opportunities currently available to Syrian refugees in Jordan, rather than reflecting their training, level of education or their previous work experience"²². However, it should be noted that a large proportion of the Syrian refugees who crossed the border into Jordan come from rural areas in southern Syria, where they usually participate in agricultural activities, and there are a large number of Syrian refugee female workers on farms.

²² United Nations Women's Organization, REACH, 2017. Working Women: Participation and Positions of Jordanian and Syrian Labor Force in Employment, p. 9-10

Syrian women are often heads of their families. Female-headed households tend to be the most vulnerable. Women are more likely to accept informal work in poor conditions because of the extreme need, taking advantage of the desire of farm owners to help them secure a decent living under the difficult conditions they have been experiencing since their arrival in Jordan.

The sympathy of farm owners with what might be termed "refugee employment", put the local labor force in overcrowded field of job opportunities. According to workers, employers prefer to employ Syrian refugee families, in order to help them on one hand, and for accepting less wages on the other.

The agricultural workers confirmed that the owners of farms with large areas are using Syrian families to work in picking crops and other agricultural work, after they have resided in the employers' agricultural units, pointing out that the lack of supervision by the concerned parties contributed to the increase in the number of Syrian women workers in the sector.

However, Syrian workers do not differ in their working conditions from the conditions of a large sector of workers in agriculture in terms of low wages, which are often paid on a daily basis, in addition to exposure to other workers

in agriculture for exploits related to the lack of occupational safety and health conditions, pointing out that employers justify this to seasonal work, and irregularity of workers.

Syrian women workers, however, want to work in the agricultural sector because the majority of employers (farm owners) provide accommodation for them, usually in or near farms, and most of their housing is made of tin or plastic, which considered as another violation in addition to the violations against Syrian workers, who live with their families in small places served by one toilet, and described by many of the workers that they sometimes wait at length to enter the toilet, especially in the morning, and although the majority of female workers live in or near farms, employers do not provide them with food, which drains their wages. These situations was confirmed by many of the employers interviewed.

In addition to the harsh working conditions, women workers do not enjoy any of the rights of other workers, especially health insurance and social security, and they do not demand these rights for fear of being evicted by some farm owners.

They also accept to work without the general protection and safety measures that are not provided to them by the owners of the farms, such as: gloves, sun

visor caps and pests that prevent their inhalation of pesticides and chemical fertilizers dust.

By the end of the agricultural season, which provided them with income to cover their expenses, Syrian families suffer from the inability to provide food for their young children, where they rely on what the charities in the region and the benefactors offer them, especially since most of the Syrian refugees in the Jordan Valley area live in tents made of wood and plastic, with difficulty of living with every temperature rise.

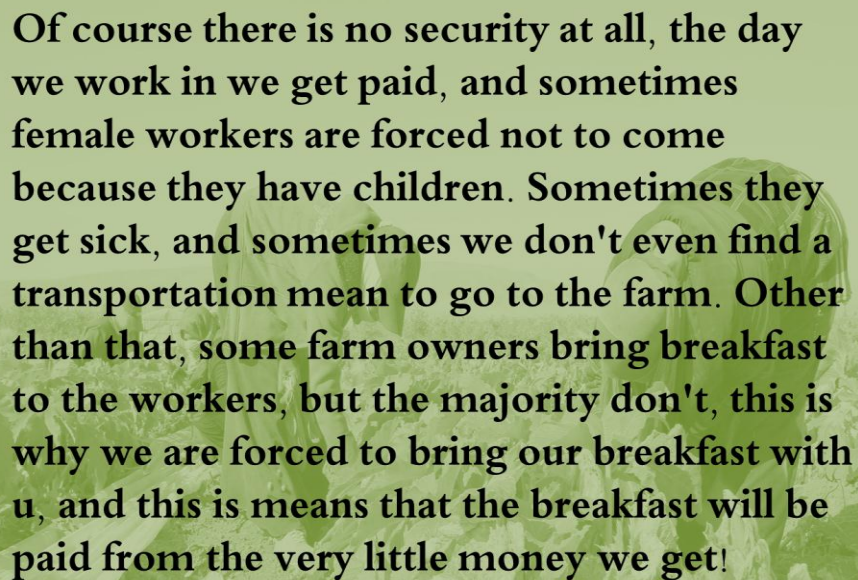
It is noteworthy that the Syrian labor is increasing dramatically in the areas of the Jordan Valley during the agricultural season to work in the agricultural sector with their family members, to ensure decent living for them and their families, while the work in the sector provides housing in or near farms.

Harassment in the workplace

Harassment in the workplace, according to interviewees, ranged between verbal or nonverbal behavior, unwanted physical contact, and direct sexual abuse. The most common form of sexual harassment is harassment of the opposite sex, such as: harassment of men by women, including unwanted verbal comments, notes about the shape, non-verbal behavior, such as: stare and whistling sometimes.

Harassment in the workplace according to interviews leads to psychosocial vulnerability, including depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder, and may affect the victim's career over time, resulting in frequent absences, loss of job opportunities, it can also affect others who witness that behavior, and live the hostile environment directly.

Female workers have shown that they are harassed by persons with non-Jordanian nationality, but their need for work, the environment and culture of society and their view of women prevents them from making a complaint or leaving the workplace in light of the scarcity of jobs in their areas.



Of course there is no security at all, the day we work in we get paid, and sometimes female workers are forced not to come because they have children. Sometimes they get sick, and sometimes we don't even find a transportation mean to go to the farm. Other than that, some farm owners bring breakfast to the workers, but the majority don't, this is why we are forced to bring our breakfast with u, and this is means that the breakfast will be paid from the very little money we get!

Child laborers in agriculture

The Labor Law No. 8 of 1996 defines the age of the child as 17 years, thus preventing the child from working under that age in dangerous, burdensome or harmful work, as stipulated in the special instructions approved by the Ministry of Labor which was based entirely on ILO Convention No. 138.

Child labor is defined as "every mental or physical effort done by the child for wages or without, whether permanent, temporary or seasonal, is considered harmful to him, and is done on the mental, physical, social, and moral levels, and deprives him of the opportunity to continue education by forcing him to leave school prematurely, or commit him to try to combine the school hours with intensive long working hours".

The Ministry of Labor regards child labor in the agricultural sector as one of the worst forms of child labor and one of the hazardous jobs issued by the Ministry in 2011 under article 74²³, children in the agricultural sector are exposed to physical and chemical hazards, as well as exploitation and lack of protection, while the Ministry does not have complaints to handle despite the inclusion of the sector in the provisions of the Labor Law. However, no special regulation

²³ Decision for hazardous or hard work, or harmful to health for juvenile - 2011

has yet been issued for the sector's work in terms of its specificity and the nature of the work, which requires long, early and seasonal working hours.

At the international level, Jordan is bound by the provisions of ILO Convention No. 138 of 1973 concerning the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment adopted in 1997, Convention No. 182 concerning the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor and the Arab Labor Convention No. 18, of 1966 on the work of juveniles, which constitute a framework that is superior to law.

With regard to girls working in the agricultural sector, they increase between June and September of each year, during the school summer holidays, to more than 40%, and girl working on farms face different levels of "fatigue and exhaustion, in addition to many health risks , according to the ILO study on children working on farms for the year 2014, which included Jordanians and Syrians. More than half of working children (55.2%) reported that they were severely overworked and 5% reported that work did not affect them.

In its evaluation in Mafraq and the Jordan Valley in 2014, the International Labor Organization found that the proportion of children working in agriculture among Syrian refugee children was three times higher than that of Jordanians at 51% and 18%, respectively.

Many Syrian children, including girls, from 5 to 18 years old work on farms. Where they pick vegetables, while those above 13 carry crops.

In the agricultural sector, children are forced to start work from a young age. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), one out of every five Syrian children (17.9%) works in agriculture under the age of 12, and the highest percentage among boys (13%) compared to girls (5%).

Children in agriculture, including girls, work long hours in addition to their work six to seven days a week without interruption, and in the Jordan Valley, children work in agriculture on an average of 25 to 30 hours per week²⁴, often at very high temperatures.

For age groups, children between the ages of 5 and 8 years are found in farms as part of their families working with their parents and/or siblings. However, the majority (82%) of those aged between 12 and 17 years almost approximately equal percentage between the Syrians and Jordanians working there independently.

Through the Tamkeen Center team interviews with working girls in the agricultural sector, they show that they work like their older counterparts, but at a much lower wage. The employer considers the child to be accompanied by

²⁴ Save the Children, UNICEF, 2015. Small hands, heavy burden: how the conflict in Syria leads more children to the workforce, p. 4

her mother or a family member and because of this exact reason sometimes she does not get paid. There are also many girls who have been infected with allergies because of their handling of chemical pesticides. If the exposure of working girls to pesticides is a serious violation of their health, the biggest violation is the employment of girls under the age of 18 under the Labor Law No. 8 of 1996 and its amendments, which prohibits the employment of children and juveniles.

However, despite difficult work, girls continue to work because of the conditions of their families in terms of poverty, unemployment and high prices, as well as access to a sum of money through which they can purchase their own needs.

young girl working in agriculture sector, not more than 15 years old. I joined work in agriculture sector due to the harsh financial situation of my family; is complaining form not receiving an equal wage to her older colleagues, clarifying that "her wage is half a JD less than of her colleagues who get paid 1.5 JD per hour, despite that they are performing the same task, under the pretext that she is younger.

Early marriage also push girls to work in the agricultural sector, where many of the female workers interviewed said that the marriage of young girls between the ages of 13 and 14 is widespread in their areas. The girl is forced to work in agriculture to help her husband and contribute to her household expenses.

The agricultural sector is considered as one of the most dangerous sectors of work on the health of children in terms of dealing with chemicals and working in the sun for long hours, which means that they are directly vulnerable to danger and makes them vulnerable to various environmental diseases, such as: (Malaria, Balaharsia, and demogera), as a result of dealing with agricultural pesticides directly or indirectly, and to eat vegetables and foods in the work environment, and exposure to the sun for long hours, confirms the study of the National Council.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) has defined the form of child abuse under its framework of 1999 Convention on the Rights of the Child: "all forms of ill-treatment, whether physical, psychological, sexual, neglect or exploitation, which result in obvious harm or potential harm to the health, development and dignity of the child through his work", and children are unable to work as the Convention makes it clear, and they are still in or out of school.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The thumbnail study examined the situation of female workers in agriculture in Jordan. The study started by classifying different categories of workers, explaining the working conditions of these groups, and then presenting a range of issues facing them.

Female agricultural workers in Jordan include women and girls coming from poor rural households, Syrian refugee populations, and child labor that is particularly prevalent among Syrian refugee communities.

Workers in agriculture face difficult working conditions, including long working hours, low wages, absence of appropriate occupational safety and health on farms, and are at serious risk, such as sexual violence and human trafficking. Moreover, high levels of informal employment, Gender and discrimination, barriers to education in rural areas are other issues affecting women and girls in the agricultural sector.

In addition, child labor, including the work of girls in agriculture in Jordan, remains a source of concern, and there is an urgent need to find ways to improve the livelihoods, economic conditions and standard of living of rural Jordanian families and Syrian refugees. This is the only way to prevent child labor and to enable these children to obtain education and opportunities for

their lives, and education and protection programs for children in rural areas are also urgently needed to respond to this serious phenomenon.

Another worrying feature of the agriculture sector is the disparities between Jordanian and Syrian workers, such as the low wages of Syrian refugees, their work under harsher conditions and their greater reliance on child labor by Jordanians. More efforts are needed to ensure that Syrian refugees have better access to the Jordanian labor market and find decent work to cover their basic needs and the ability to send their children to school.

It should be noted that, regardless of their nationality, agricultural workers have been generally marginalized from development projects aimed at addressing and alleviating the difficult working conditions they are exposed to, this is especially the case for women. The study therefore recommends that:

1. Demanding the establishment of legal regulations protecting workers in agriculture; ensuring their coverage in social security and health insurance.
2. Activate the inspection role in the Ministry of Labor on agricultural units.
3. Progress should be made in monitoring the situation of agricultural workers and increasing the number of labor inspections carried out by the

Ministry of Labor in agriculture as the current number of such inspection rounds is largely inadequate. Only 2% In 2015 in agriculture, It should be noted that these inspections to date focus on work permits, not on working conditions, but that the possession of workers to work permits is only one of many issues that must focus on.

4. To make more efforts to improve working conditions and protect the rights of agricultural workers and ensure that they have decent working conditions.
5. A critical necessity for development programs aimed at enhancing the economic empowerment of agricultural workers in Jordan – with particular need for projects specifically empowering women. These projects have the potential to bring about changes in social and cultural attitudes and attitudes regarding the role and status of women in society and the labor market in Jordan.



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