

# Report: 85 per cent of businesses supported by UNHCR remain for years

**Evaluation shows high job retention thanks to training and business support to Syrian refugees and vulnerable refugees through Jordan River Foundation**

85 per cent of micro, small and medium-sized businesses supported through a project providing dedicated grants between 2017 and 2021 were still active after years, an evaluation found. Three quarters of the companies were also profitable. The project aimed at reducing poverty and supporting self-reliance of Syrian refugees and vulnerable Jordanians. The companies in the project process food, produce clothes or provide services from marketing to beauty salons. Other businesses included construction and agricultural firms.

The project, which was implemented by UNHCR's partner Jordan River Foundation (JRF), provided training to improve the chances of Syrian refugees and vulnerable Jordanians on the labour market. JRF workshops strengthened their communication skills, equipped them with marketing abilities, and raised their awareness of labour law. Apart from vocational trainings in different technical fields, JRF also assisted beneficiaries with job placement support to

help them find employment.

## **More money, better standard of living**

In order to evaluate whether the project had the intended impact, over 900 beneficiaries across seven governorates, including Amman, Irbid, Aqaba, Zarqa and Karak, participated in a representative survey and key informants – experts working on livelihoods – in interviews, both focussing on three aspects: the financial situation of beneficiaries, their standard of living, and their social life. The financial situation and the standard of living improved for most participants. Almost one in four beneficiaries supported in finding employment reported that they could save some money. The vast majority could eat nicer food, buy better clothes, and spend money on the education of their children.

The project also helped women and men find new friends through related activities. Refugees and vulnerable Jordanians were also asked about

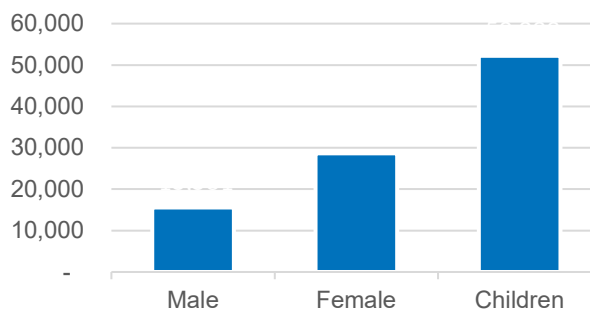


*With her JRF grant, Sumaya from Syria bought equipment and tools and opened her tailor shop in her home. © JRF*

tensions in their households which 68 per cent confirmed to have existed when joining the project. 94 per cent reported that the tension level had gone down while they participated. The project did not lift all participants to a stage of stable income. 77 per cent of employees interviewed for the evaluation stated that they were not employed at the time of assessment which was undertaken when the Jordanian economy was still digesting the economic shock caused by COVID-19. The majority of beneficiaries, however, had retained their jobs for at least three months. Those who kept their positions at the time of evaluation received a higher income than when starting the employment, eight per cent reported a promotion to a higher work title in addition to a salary increase.

Even among those who still struggled to meet their basic needs, three quarters reported a positive impact on their ability to handle the economic situation without recurring to negative coping strategies such as eating less or taking children out of school.

**Most recipients of UNHCR cash are women and children**  
 February 2023



## New analysis of World Bank & UNHCR data shows need for sustained fight against poverty

A new paper released by UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, and the World Bank found that 66 per cent of refugees in Jordan live below the international poverty line which is defined as US\$ 5.5 per person per day for middle-income countries. The study analyzes the different socio-economic situations of refugees in communities (where the majority lives) as opposed to refugees in camps who benefit from shelter, water and electricity systems for free. While 59 per cent of camp refugees live on less than US\$ 5.5, for refugees living in Jordan's communities and towns, the poverty rate is significantly higher: 68 per cent.

The results are based on UNHCR's Vulnerability Radar (also known as VAF – Vulnerability Assessment Framework) which captures the socio-economic situation of refugees in Jordan through surveys every month. Its questionnaires are designed around basic needs. For the poverty study, the consumption of the most important items purchased by the poorest non-Jordanians was analyzed. Top of the surveyed products were food and vegetables, grains, proteins, fats and beverages whereas the non-food list is topped by cleaning materials, clothing and shoes as well as education and health expenses.

The study follows the Government of Jordan's approach to measure poverty through the Household Income and Expenditure Survey. "The evidence demonstrates a clear need for sustained humanitarian assistance to stabilize the financial situation of refugees", says UNHCR's Senior Cash Officer Mette Karlsen. "Without humanitarian cash assistance, their poverty level would increase from 66 per cent to around 81 per cent."

The study can be found here: [data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/99518](https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/99518)

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