



International
Labour
Organization

Reaffirming and Promoting Rights During Transition

Development Results 2012-2013
Regional Office for the Arab States



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**Development Results
2012-2013**

International Labour Organization
Regional Office for the Arab States

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Reaffirming and promoting rights during transition

ILO Development Results 2012-2013

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Who we are

The **International Labour Organization** is a specialised agency of the United Nations concerned with labour rights. Through its tripartite constituent structure, the ILO brings together government, employer and worker representatives to effectuate labour standards and to promote decent work in different parts of the world.

The ILO Regional Office for the Arab States supports constituents in Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, occupied Palestinian territory, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

What we do

The ILO Regional Office for Arab States strives to promote decent work for women and men throughout the region.

Decent work epitomises the aspirations of peoples' working lives. Decent work involves job opportunities that are productive and deliver fair income, security in the workplace, social protection for families, better prospects for personal development, and social integration. The concept of decent work also encompasses the rights of people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives, as well as promoting equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men.

The ILO Decent Work Agenda is structured around four inseparable, interrelated and mutually supportive objectives: creating jobs, extending social protection, promoting social dialogue and guaranteeing rights at work.

Gender equality and youth employment are crosscutting objectives of ILO programmes that aim to address the region's high youth unemployment rate and low female labour force participation.

Decent Work Agenda



Creating Jobs:

Building societies and economies that generate opportunities for investment, entrepreneurship, skills development, job creation and sustainable livelihoods.



Extending Social Protection:

Promoting both inclusion and productivity by ensuring that people enjoy working conditions that are safe and allow adequate free time and rest, while also taking into account family and social values, providing adequate compensation for lost or reduced income, and permitting access to adequate social security.



Promoting Social Dialogue:

Creating efficient labour market institutions as well as effective independent employers' and workers' organizations to enable strong engagement from all sides, in order to increase productivity, manage labour relations, and build cohesive societies.



Guaranteeing Rights at Work:

Ensuring that economic development goes hand in hand with social development and respect for the rights of all workers, including those in the informal economy.

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Eliminating the Worst Forms of Child Labour

Better Work Jordan

“We must tap into the region’s youth potential: Arab youth are increasingly more and better educated. Promoting decent work opportunities for young people requires smart education and skills policies in line with market needs. Young women must be a target –despite unprecedented achievements in education, this region still has the lowest female participation rates in the labour market.”

*Guy Ryder, ILO Director-General
40th Arab Labour Conference
Algeria – April 2013*

Foreword



By looking at a narrow set of indicators, such as the rate of privatization, trade openness, debt, inflation and foreign direct investment, most analysts had concluded that Arab countries were on the right track economically in the lead up to the Arab uprisings.

Pro-market reforms introduced since the 1990s had spurred economic growth and reduced unemployment, but most of this growth was inequitable and the jobs created were of low added value.

Skewed economic policies failed to create a level playing field for the private sector, stymied productivity gains, failed to enhance comprehensive social protection policies, and deprived most citizens of access to the benefits of growth. Though economic growth was not jobless, employment was unrewarding for many workers, which, coupled with a lack of social dialogue, prevented inclusive growth, and caused citizens to feel increasingly insecure and alienated.

The 2012-2013 biennium was characterized by further political instability in the on-going Arab transformations. Conflicts in the region notably the Syrian crisis one of the largest and most protracted humanitarian emergencies in history, are having severe consequences on neighbouring countries. The massive influx of Syrian refugees has led to an urgent need to assist refugees and residents in host communities to deal with increased pressure on livelihoods, public resources, rising inflation, humanitarian needs

and the effects of a dramatic increase of labour supply on already fragile labour markets.

More generally, this biennium has seen unprecedented demand for ILO support to minimum wage policies, the improvement of working conditions and collective bargaining. A critical underpinning is the support to both established and emerging trade unions to produce broad-based and representative institutions that can respond to the socio-economic and political challenges, with reformed internal structures. Assistance to employers' organizations has been extended in parallel to re-define roles and responsibilities in the new emerging context and to reinforce their capacity to engage in effective policy and social dialogue.

Rising unemployment and informal employment, pressure on wages, deteriorating working conditions, and rising child labour are among the many challenges that Arab States have to contend with. In the coming years, economic growth in the Arab States is expected to remain among the lowest worldwide, and much too low to reduce unemployment. For these reasons the Arab States require a new development model grounded in social justice: one that creates prosperity through equal opportunities, productivity gains, and decent work that expands social protection and reinforces social dialogue.

Nada Al-Nashif
Assistant Director-General
Regional Director for the Arab States
International Labour Organization

ILO in the Arab States

Resources

The ILO has three types of funding sources.

Regular Budget contributions are provided by all ILO member states according to each country's United Nations distribution assessment. The Regional Office for the Arab States Regular Budget for the 2012-2013 biennium was set at US\$16.5 million.

Earmarked Voluntary Contributions support specific projects and programmes with a clear timeline as well as a pre-defined geographic and thematic

focus. In 2012-2013, new earmarked voluntary contributions raised and allocated to the Arab States region reached US\$12 million, which is below past levels and can be partially attributed to the shift of donors' priorities to the Syrian refugees' humanitarian crisis.

Unearmarked Voluntary Contributions are allocated in a flexible manner when and where they are most needed, and amounted to US\$1.5 million during the 2013-2013 biennium.

Countries covered by the ILO Regional Office for the Arab States



Bahrain



Qatar



Iraq



Lebanon



Yemen



Oman



Jordan



Syria



Kuwait



Saudi Arabia

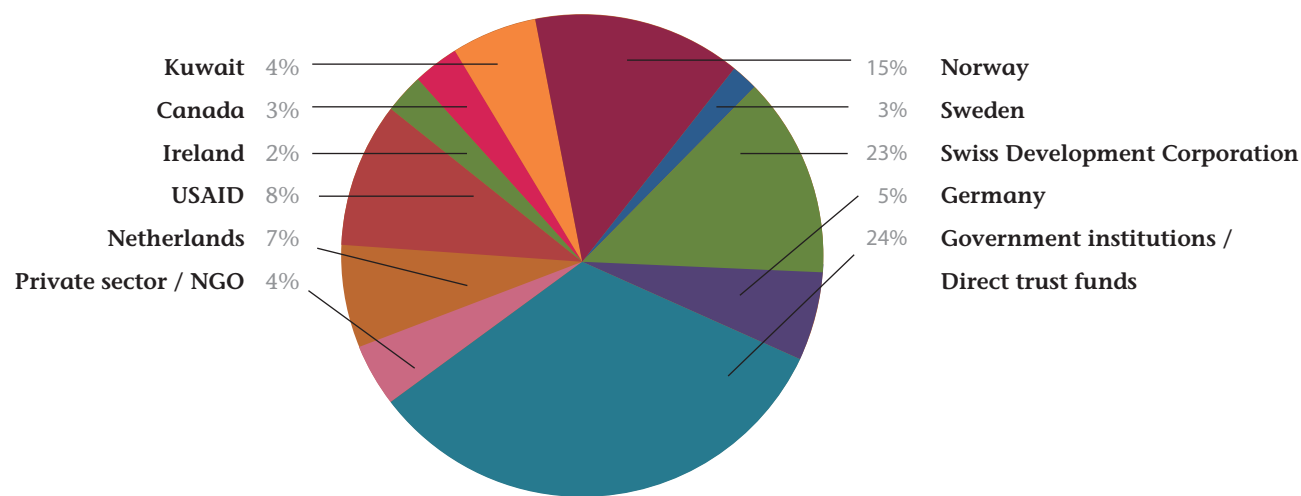


United Arab Emirates



occupied Palestinian territory

Share of Donors Earmarked Voluntary Contributions (2012-2013)



Distribution of Technical Cooperation Expenditures by Strategic Objective (In Us Dollars)



List of policy/legislative texts and documents supported by the ILO in 2012-2013

Jordan

- National Tripartite Policy on HIV and AIDS and the World of Work (*adopted in 2013*)
- Temporary Social Security Law
- Review of the national labour legislation with focus on Pay Equity

Lebanon

- National Action Plan to eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Lebanon by 2016 (*adopted in 2013*)
- Standard unified contract for Migrant Domestic Workers (*pending adoption*)
- Regulation of Private recruitment Agencies for Migrant Domestic Workers (*pending adoption*)
- Legal review and draft decree for the restructuring of the National Employment Office (NEO)

Palestine

- Social Security Strategy and law for private sector workers, including pension scheme, maternity insurance scheme and an employment injury scheme (*ongoing*)

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

- Unemployment insurance scheme for Saudi nationals (*adopted in 2014*)

Yemen

- National Youth Employment Action Plan, 2014-2016 (*adopted in 2013*)
- Draft Bill on combatting human trafficking

Iraq

- Review and technical comments on the national labour legislation
- National Employment Policy for KRG (*adopted in 2012*)
- Review of KRG Labour Code
- Regulation on social security for casual workers (construction workers) in KRG (*adopted in 2013*)
- KRG Unemployment Insurance law (*ongoing*)

10,000+

persons trained for self or wage employment

Manuals: *Work Improvement in Small Enterprises (WISE), Know About Business (KAB), Apprenticeship Resource Guide, Competency Based Training, Cooperative Creation and Green Construction*

90

trainers trained on Gender and Entrepreneurship Together Ahead in Jordan

7,600+

person/days of training for constituents and partners

Topics: *Decent work, National Employment Policies, Labour Force Surveys, Persons with Disabilities, Green Jobs, Informal Apprenticeships, Social Economy, Strategy Planning, Local Economic Recovery, Child Labour and Migration*

10,100+

person/days of policy events or expert meetings

Topics: *Decent Work, Technical and Vocational Education and Training Policies, National Employment Policies, Labour Law, Trade Union Law, Social Dialogue, International Labour Conventions, Persons with disabilities, Green Jobs, Child Labour and Migration*

ILO Response to the Syrian refugee crisis in Jordan and Lebanon

Since 2012, the flow of refugees from Syria to neighbouring countries has continued unabated and today constitutes one of the largest, most protracted humanitarian emergencies of its kind. The effects of the crisis are also increasingly spilling over into neighbouring countries' economic and social spheres, resulting in loss of economic activity and income, as well as dwindling access to quality public services.

The host countries of **Jordan** and **Lebanon** were already experiencing difficult economic conditions before the Syrian crisis led to a dramatic increase in labour supply, which has added considerable pressure to their fragile labour markets. Against this backdrop, the Regional United Nations Development Group (R/UNDG) prepared a strategy that looks beyond the immediate humanitarian assistance and provides a regional resilience-based development response to address the short, medium, and long-term impact on neighbouring countries. In unison with the R/UNDG strategy, the ILO has developed its own development-focused strategy as a response to the crisis in **Jordan** and **Lebanon**.

The ILO strategy builds on its core mandate for the promotion of employment, social dialogue, social protection and international labour standards. This complements existing and planned country-level and regional response programmes, such as the Syria Regional Response Plans and the UN Strategic Framework on vulnerable Jordanian host communities.

The ILO's work so far has focused on immediate action to build a knowledge base on the impact of the Syrian crisis on the labour market in **Jordan** and **Lebanon**, the incidence of child labour amongst Syrian refugees, together with the bolstering of national response capacities and support to adversely affected host communities. In 2013, the ILO conducted a series of studies to assess the impact of the Syrian refugee crisis in both **Lebanon** and **Jordan**, with a focus on labour market dynamics, working conditions and child labour in **Jordan**.

In **Jordan**, the ILO also launched a project to enact several interventions that aim to promote

“The crisis in Syria is a crisis for development across the Arab region.”

*Sima Bahous, Chair of the UNDG in the Arab States Region and Director of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) Regional Bureau for Arab States.
September 2013*



employment in host communities by establishing an enabling environment for job creation and enterprise development, as well as building the capacity of employment services. Another ILO project is stepping up efforts to work with other UN agencies and national partners to combat the rapidly growing problem of child labour among refugees and obtain more data on this issue to inform the development of future interventions. Moreover, the ILO is currently exploring a joint initiative with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to promote economic governance and self-reliance of Syrian Refugees in Jordan's Za'atari Camp and the Mafraq host community.

In Lebanon, the ILO has also conducted a labour market survey to determine the effects of the Syrian refugee crisis. Building on the survey's initial results, the ILO launched a project to build the resilience of rural host communities by enhancing access to employment opportunities and improving livelihoods of rural host communities in areas affected by the Syrian refugees in Northern Lebanon. The project also seeks to enhance the capacities of service providers to enable the creation of Local Economic Development opportunities and the establishment of coping strategies for affected producers in rural areas.

ILO and the United Nations

The spread of popular uprisings across the Arab region beginning in December 2010 prompted a review by the Regional UN Development Group (R/UNDG) of the Arab States' priorities and approaches. The R/UNDG Arab States adopted an integrated response strategy to key development challenges based on four interrelated priority areas: inclusive development; democratic governance; and youth and the humanitarian-development interface.



As part of this agenda, the ILO Regional Office for Arab States and number of UN agencies, principally the United Nations Development Programme's Regional Bureau for Arab States, prepared a flagship report entitled "Rethinking economic growth: towards productive and inclusive Arab societies" [page 13]. Following its launch in February 2013, the report was presented in a number of roundtable meetings at both the regional and national levels. These included the Arab Development Forum organized by the Regional United Nations Development Group as part of the post-2015 consultations, an ILO-UNDP regional workshop on the informal economy, an ILO-UNDP workshop on employment and decent work in Jordan, as well as a joint ILO-Carnegie Centre event in Morocco in which the report was discussed with a group of experts.

United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks

During the 2012-2013 Biennium, the ILO participated in the preparation of the Jordan **United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2013-2017**, which was officially launched in 2012. Included in the UNDAF outcomes were several strategic ILO interventions related to the enhancement of systemic reforms, ensuring social equity and implementing a social protection floor, and investing in youth development.

In July 2013, the United Nations Country Team launched the first **UNDAF in the occupied Palestinian**

territory (2014-2016) after a year of preparations. Out of the five priorities identified, four of them include ILO interventions in areas related to economic empowerment, livelihoods, food security, and decent work and social protection.

Regional Development Actions

As a member of the **ESCWA-led Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Thematic Working Group of the Regional Coordination Mechanism**, the ILO made important contributions to the 2013 joint UN-League of Arab States MDGs report entitled "**Facing challenges and looking beyond 2015**", with a particular focus on the employment and decent work related targets and recommendations.

Under the MDG Achievement Fund (MDG-F), a project on **Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the occupied Palestinian territory** was completed in the first quarter of 2013, with key ILO-led achievements in the areas of **cooperative development, development of skills for women in non-traditional occupations** (e.g. civil engineers) and **gender based violence in the workplace**.

A tripartite workshop on "**Mainstreaming Decent Work in National and UN Programming Frameworks in the oPt**" was also convened in Amman, Jordan in July 2012, whereby the whole UNDAF process and linkages between the Decent Work programme and the UNDAF were presented to constituents.

Within the framework of the first round of consultations on the post-2015 development agenda, the ILO participated in a number of events in the Arab states that aimed to generate ideas towards national visions. One key consultation at the regional level was the **Arab Development Forum**, which was organized by the R/UNDG with the participation of civil society, academia, and the private sector from 18 countries across the Arab region. The ILO contributed a **background paper summarizing priorities for the post-2015 Agenda** in the areas of poverty reduction, inclusive growth, and employment generation.

The ILO partnered with the UNDP, in collaboration with several UN agencies¹ under the supervision of an Advisory Group comprised of leading regional practitioners and employer and worker representatives, to produce the report *“Rethinking Economic Growth: Towards Productive and Inclusive Arab Societies”*.

The report traces the consequences of the Arab Spring for labour markets in the wake of a surge in commodity and energy prices; the recessionary impact on public revenues; increased uncertainty for investors; a rise in unemployment; and greater demands for social justice. It highlights the region’s significant deficits in social protection and social dialogue and calls for a new development model that seeks to:

- **redefine the role of the State;**
- **increase private sector competitiveness and transparency;**
- **equip youth with the right skills;**

- **deliver high quality care;**
- **provide universal social protection; and**
- **engage stakeholders with open and effective social dialogue.**

After the launch of the report in February 2013, a series of roundtable discussions were held in Beirut, Amman, Rabat, Geneva and Dubai. The meetings fostered policy dialogue and explored policy options around the core topics of the report, including the economic empowerment of women, workers’ rights and wage-led growth, and the informal economy.

To view the report visit the ILO Regional Office for the Arab States’ website at:

http://www.ilo.org/beirut/events/WCMS_205425/lang--en/index.htm

¹ Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Office of the High Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Food Programme (WFP).

Feature

Jordan’s Labour Minister elected President of the International Labour Conference

The Minister of Labour and Minister of Transport of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Dr. Nidal Katamine, was elected president for the 102nd session of the International Labour Conference (ILC), from 5 to 20 June 2013. The ILC sets the broad policies



of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and meets once a year in Geneva, Switzerland. The annual Conference brings together some 5000 government, worker and employer delegates from the ILO’s 185 member States.

Dr. Katamine has been Jordan’s Labour Minister since 2010. It is the third time a Jordanian Labour Minister has been elected to the ILC presidency.

To read more about the 102nd session of the International Labour Conference (ILC), and Dr. Nidal Katamine’s election visit the ILO Regional Office for Arab States website at:

http://www.ilo.org/ilc/ILCSessions/102/media-centre/news/WCMS_215031/lang--en/index.htm



Creating Jobs



A female construction engineer works as the only woman on a construction site in Amman, Jordan (© ILO/Jared J. Kohler – ILO Arab States Flickr).

The ILO helps to identify policies that create and maintain decent work and income through policies that are formulated by governments, employers and workers in a comprehensive Global Employment Agenda.

“In the Middle-East and North Africa many economies are facing weak job creation, entrenched inequalities and post-Arab Spring policy shifts which have not yet addressed the underlying weaknesses.”

*Guy Ryder, ILO Director-General
International Monetary and Financial Committee and
Development Committee
Washington DC – April 2013*

The situation surrounding employment in the region continues to require urgent action be taken, especially with regards to women and youth. The Middle East and North Africa suffer levels of unemployment higher than any other global region at 10.9 and 12.2 per cent respectively. Both regions also have the highest regional youth unemployment levels globally at 27.2 per cent and 29 per cent respectively.

Women face particular challenges in the labour market in the Arab region. Female labour market participation rates are lower than in any other region, reaching barely 25 per cent in North Africa and not even 20 per cent in the Middle East.

This reality poses a significant challenge for governments, workers, employers and Arab societies alike. Growth levels will need to be comparatively high to reduce unemployment and low labour market participation among youth and women.

To combat both the scale and structure of unemployment, as well as build the resilience of tripartite partners to develop sustainable and productive employment markets, the ILO has made a number of interventions across the Arab States region.

**12.2 and 10.9%
unemployed
in North Africa
and Middle East
respectively 2013**

*(P.18, GLOBAL
EMPLOYMENT TRENDS
2014, ILO)*

**27.2 and 29%
youth
unemployed
in Middle East
and North Africa
respectively in
2013**

*(p.64, GLOBAL
EMPLOYMENT TRENDS
2014, ILO)*

**21.1 and 21.3%
women
unemployed
in Middle East
and North Africa
respectively in
2013**

*(p.90, GLOBAL
EMPLOYMENT TRENDS
2014, ILO)*

**1 in 4 young
people
unemployed
in 2013**

*(P. 19, GLOBAL
EMPLOYMENT TRENDS
FOR YOUTH 2013)*

Policy support

Cohesive employment policies among workers' and employers' organizations as well as governments are a crucial component of creating jobs. As such, the ILO offers tripartite members technical policy support to assist decent work opportunities across the Arab States.

Country-level actions

As part of the **Decent Work Strategy for the Saudization of the Labour Market**, the ILO and the Ministry of Labour produced a study of the current labour market challenges and government policies in view of Saudi Arabia's Five-Year Development Plan, its Employment Strategy and various sectoral strategies.

The ILO and the Iraqi Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs produced the **"Operational Manual for the implementation Unit of the National Employment Strategy"** to ensure the effective management of the National Employment Strategy and worked with the Governors' offices in Anbar, Basra, Erbil, Babel, Missan, Thiqr, and Sulaimanieh to develop their **Provincial Economic Development Strategies** in seven governorates.

The ILO also prepared an **Evaluation of Active Labour Market Programmes (ALMPs)** to strengthen the quality assurance of ALMPs supported by the Executive TVET Council and to promote the accountability of ALMPs under the National Employment Strategy.

In **Lebanon**, the ILO helped to upgrade the website of the National Employment Office to include an **electronic labour exchange and job search resources**. The ILO also worked in Lebanon with **Employment Services Centres** to improve occupational classification standards, connect with employers' organizations and trade unions, as well as provide better **labour market transition services to Palestine refugees**. The Organization also carried out a **needs assessment** to support the **development of policy guidance for the application of labour laws and policies in the country**.

As part of efforts to improve access to employment and social protection for Palestinian Refugees living in Lebanon, the ILO and the Committee for the Employment of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon carried out, implemented and released the **Labour Force Survey among Palestinian refugees** living in camps and gatherings in Lebanon in 2012.

The survey resulted in the development of an online user-friendly database for Palestinian employment, a financial assessment on the cost and feasibility of providing social protection for Palestinian refugees, as well as the preparation of a draft "Q&A" on the rights, entitlements and responsibilities of Palestinian refugee workers.

Skills and employability

While the region's economies still grapple with structural issues, business investments need to be matched with market relevant skills in order to lead to economic growth and decent work. Accordingly, the ILO Regional Office for Arab States provides policy advice, technical assistance and knowledge development related to skills and employability in the Arab States.

On the regional level the ILO conducted training on **public employment services** to facilitate the exchange of experiences between countries in the region in terms of innovative outreach and job matching techniques, labour market information and analysis, management of labour market programmes and supervision of private recruitment agencies.

A regional training programme on **persons with disabilities** in the workplace was also organized by the ILO and supported by the Business and Disability Network for employers. The programme allowed participants to identify successful



employers' approaches for the recruitment of persons with disabilities, which complemented the documentation of good practices for the training and placement of persons with disabilities in **Lebanon**.

In a similar effort, the ILO launched a manual on **Employment Service Centres** for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) that has been used as the basis for humanitarian organizations to design **employment interventions for Syrian refugees in the region**.

As part of ILO efforts to address skills-mismatches and education-to-work transitions, a regional training session was implemented on **apprenticeship systems** with seven countries of the region that resulted in an **action plan currently being implemented in Jordan and Lebanon**.

At the country level, in Oman, the ILO trained officials at the Ministry of Manpower and the Public Authority of Manpower Register on labour market information and analysis.

Local economic recovery in post-conflict situations

After conflicts, local economies conflict-affected groups are intimately related to the capacity of local economies to create job opportunities but are often stagnant and unable to do so.

With this in mind, the ILO has launched its first post-conflict Local Economic Recovery (LER) initiative in the **occupied Palestinian territory (oPt)** to support livelihoods and job opportunities in the fisheries sector, hard hit by Israel's military operations and continued blockade of Gaza. The project targets capacity building for local stakeholders, a comprehensive fisheries development plan and alternative **livelihoods for workers in the fisheries sector** who are unable to earn a decent living.

An instructor shows interns a machine in a technical training center (© ILO/Apex – ILO Arab States Flickr).



Youth Employment



A young Arab is welding a piece of metal in a shop (© ILO/Apex – ILO Arab States Flickr).



Young Arabs - estimated at 100 million (aged 15-29)² - have the potential to contribute significantly to the economic development of their countries and to turn the challenge posed by youth employment into a demographic dividend. The ILO Regional Office for the Arab States supports efforts by countries within its mandate to enhance the employability of youth and create the enabling environment that will be needed to sustain value-added jobs for Young Arabs in the decades to come.

Apprenticeship systems

Apprenticeship systems can facilitate school-to-work transitions by making it possible for young people to acquire work experience along with technical and professional training. They also give the apprentice a chance to demonstrate his or her productivity potential to companies who may be otherwise reluctant to hire young people. As such the ILO has initiated a series of actions to bolster the capacity of young Arabs to acquire market-relevant skills and enter employment.

On a regional level, the ILO and the Jordan ETVE Council hosted a five-day regional seminar on apprenticeship systems in the Arab region with key players that resulted in time-bounded action plans to improve existing apprenticeship schemes developed in **Oman, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, the occupied Palestinian territory, Jordan, the UAE and Lebanon.**

Country - levels action

In **Jordan**, the ILO supported the inclusion of **youth employment** as a priority in the National Employment Strategy launched in 2012. The ILO also launched a national **school-to-work transition survey** with the Department of Statistics in Jordan. Capacity building for the Centre for Accreditation and Quality Assurance for a **national system for assessment and certification of skills** was also conducted by the ILO in addition to the

Facts

With 70 per cent of Jordan's population under 30, some 80,000 new jobs will be needed each year to avoid higher levels of unemployment and poverty.

preparation of and design of a **Youth Rights at Work Manual**. In **Jordan**, the ILO has also pilot tested an innovative approach for the upgrading of **informal apprenticeships** in auto-repair workshops. Besides that, support was provided for the evaluation of active labour market policies targeting young people as part of the Employment, Technical Vocational Education and Training system.

In the **occupied Palestinian territory**, the ILO partnered with UNRWA and Palestinian businesses to develop a competency-based six-course curriculum for six occupations in the construction sector targeted to school under-performers. More than **700 trainees** took the training and **92 per cent participated in the six-month on-the-job training programme. Most accessed a job and are now breadwinners for their families.**

In **Yemen**, the ILO supported the launch of a national labour force survey and contributed to shaping the Youth Employment Action Plan, approved by the Council of Ministers and the Friends of Yemen that will be implemented in 2014-2018. An ILO project focussing on entrepreneurship development and competency based technical training for youth was initiated in 2013, based in Sana'a. The "Mubadara" is the first formal entrepreneurship training programme launched at university level in Yemen.

² World Economic Forum: Addressing the 100 Million Youth Challenge Perspectives on Youth Employment in the Arab World in 2012.



Know About Business

The promotion of an enabling business environment that allows young entrepreneurs to establish socially responsible and sustainable enterprises that create decent work opportunities is key to achieving inclusive job rich growth. Entrepreneurship education is increasingly recognized as critical to tackling the global youth unemployment challenge.

Know About Business (KAB) is an ILO education programme that promotes entrepreneurship by targeting social and environmental entrepreneurs and introducing young men and women to the world of business and entrepreneurship.

In the **Arab States**, the ILO integrates entrepreneurship education into general secondary school and technical/vocational education curricula to foster an enterprise culture. In 2007, the ILO developed an Arabic version of the KAB programme and began to pilot it in the **Middle East** in line with the KAB Implementation Process. Concepts relating to gender, people with disabilities and 'greening' enterprises have been mainstreamed into the upgraded **Arab States** KAB 2013.

KAB is currently implemented in eight Arab countries: **Syria, Oman, Iraq, Lebanon, the occupied Palestine territory (oPt), Yemen, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia**. The programme has informed and impacted policy in several Arab countries.

In **Oman**, for example, KAB replaced the national curricula in all vocational training centres under the Ministry of Manpower in 2008. **Syria** introduced KAB to its national curriculum in 2007, Yemen and the oPt signed the national rollout of the programme in March 2010 and

July 2011, respectively. In **Iraq**, a KAB unit was established in 2011 in the Department of Labour and Vocational Training in order to follow up on the implementation of KAB programmes in vocational training centres at a national level.

By the end of 2013, there were five KAB Regional Key Facilitators training teachers to ensure the implementation and dissemination of the KAB programme in the Middle East.

A total of twenty KAB National Key Facilitators from **Yemen, Iraq and the oPt** have been certified and oversee the implementation of KAB programmes in line with ILO requirements and standards in their respective countries.

“Know about Business (KAB) has helped over 1 million young women and men in more than 55 countries to develop core entrepreneurial skills. Studies have shown that former KAB students are more likely to start a business and have more positive attitudes to entrepreneurship, whether as owners or employees.”

*Fostering Future Entrepreneurs,
International Labour Office, 2012.*



During the 2012-2013 biennium, **Jordan** established a **network of KAB trainers** and teachers and introduced **entrepreneurship education at the National Company for Employment and Training, Vocational Training Centres** and the Development and Employment Fund based on the KAB programme.

The **occupied Palestinian territory** adopted the KAB programme at all vocational training centres nationwide, and began to roll out its adoption at **all industrial schools**. The ILO is further supporting national capacity building to deliver the KAB programme through the training and certification of national facilitators.

In **Saudi Arabia**, the ILO trained male and **female teachers on the delivery of the KAB** programme and helped to pilot the KAB programme in colleges across the Kingdom in the governorates of Abha, Tabuk, Arar, Najran, Al-Baha, Medina, Al-Majmaa, Jeddah and Taef.

Yemen's Ministry of Technical and Vocational Education has decreed the implementation of KAB in all vocational and technical education institutions nationwide. The ILO has **trained more than 280 teachers**, and several national and regional facilitators. The ILO's Women Business Owners Training package was **delivered to over 500 women in five governorates**.

Facts

If the employment rate for women and youth rises to global averages in the Middle East and North Africa, **58 million people will enter the job market** and average GDP per capita will rise by 20 per cent.

All statistics come from the International Labour Organization (2014), "Global Employment Trends 2014 | Risk of a jobless recovery?" report.



Women At Work



Over recent decades, gender equality has come to the forefront of social justice and inclusive economic growth for women and men. Indeed, much progress has been made to advance gender equality, especially in the fields of health and education. Yet, structural impediments such as legal regulations and societal norms continue to limit women's access to their rights. The result is that women in the Arab region continue to have lowest female economic participation in the world. The world of work in the Arab states remains unattractive to women, partly due to social values that assign women the primary role of caring for the family, but more importantly due to the failure of policies to provide women with opportunities and incentives to enter the labour market. Accordingly, the ILO is actively engaged in promoting gender equality and non-discrimination in the world of work through continuous support to constituents and civil society.

A lab technician prepares a blood sample for testing (© ILO/Apex – ILO Arab States Flickr).

Country-level actions

In order to make appropriate amendments to the Jordanian labour law which reflect the principles of pay **equity and non-discrimination**, a technical meeting with 22 parliamentarians, **30 constituent representatives of the ILO**, the National Commission for Women in Jordan, and representatives of civil society and women's organizations was organized.

A workshop related to non-discrimination in the workplace was held with advisers from Jordan's flagship work programme Better Work Jordan [see Better Work Jordan section]. The **Better Work Jordan** project of the ILO also organized a workshop on **Gender Equality, Discrimination and Labour Inspection** with in order to acquire a better understanding of issues related to gender equality and discrimination in Jordan's Export Processing Zones.



Palestinian Women's Economic Empowerment Initiative In Lebanon

The Palestinian Women's Economic Empowerment project organized a two-month embroidery workshop for more than 50 women in the Nahr al-Bared and Ain al-Helwe Palestine refugee camps in Lebanon. The project also provided 43 women in both camps with financial support in the form of grants and micro-loans, which resulted in the establishment of 11 business groups whose aim is to cooperate in order to improve production quality and access to markets. Furthermore, the Atayeb Falastine workshop targeted ten Palestinian women in each camp, enabling them to create their own cooking and catering lines by reviving Palestinian culinary traditions. Subsequent to an external evaluation, the effectiveness of this approach in improving women's economic empowerment through business group formation was confirmed.

The ILO in the oPt also conducted an assessment of agricultural cooperatives in the West Bank, in cooperation with the General Directorate of Cooperative at Ministry of Labour. The study profiled 230 cooperatives and their key functions with regard to agricultural section to ascertain the key challenges and development opportunities. Particular attention was given to women's roles in these cooperatives.

“Atayeb Falastine” empowers Palestinian refugee women to improve their livelihoods by celebrating their Palestinian culinary heritage while generating an income. Dishes are prepared in collective kitchens in the Ain al-Helwe and Nahr al-Bared camps, where strict quality standards are adhered to. Orders are delivered to homes across Lebanon.



Palestinian Women's Entrepreneurs in Palestinian camps in Lebanon (© ILO – ILO Arab States Flickr).



Extending Social Protection



A migrant Yemeni laborer works on handmade crafts (© ILO/Apex Image - - ILO Arab States Flickr).

The ILO promotes policies and provides assistance to countries to extend adequate levels of social protection to all members of society. Effective social protection contributes to fair growth, social stability and enhanced productivity.

There is a growing recognition in the Arab region that social protection should be expanded as part of coherent national social security strategies that aim to provide coverage to all workers, including those in the informal economy.

Some countries have taken steps to develop comprehensive systems that view social security as a human right. The roll out and consolidation of a social protection floor initiative in **Jordan**, the commitment to ratify the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), and the support for the establishment of a pension scheme for private sector workers in the **occupied Palestinian territory** and **Lebanon** illustrate a strong commitment to provide social security benefits to all workers and their family members as well as to move away from defined contribution end-of-service schemes to defined benefit pension schemes.

The Social Protection Floor

Social protection floors are nationally defined sets of basic social security guarantees that should ensure, as a minimum that, over the life cycle, all in need have access to essential health care and to basic income security. Together, both these social protection elements secure effective access to goods and services defined as necessary at the national level.

To extend social protection the ILO adopts an approach that is based on two criteria.

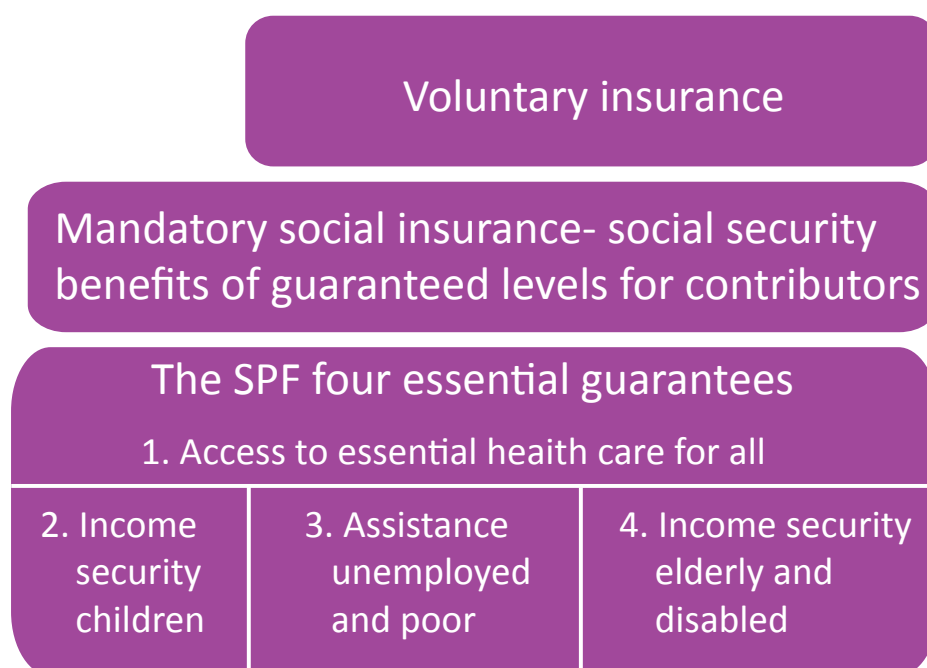
The first is that basic social security guarantees universal access to essential health care and income in line with the **ILO's Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202)** and national circumstances.

Secondly, Social Protection Floors should progressively achieve higher levels of protection within comprehensive social security systems, according to the ILO's Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102).

The ILO and the World Health Organization are the lead agencies for promoting this UN system-wide effort to ensure basic social guarantees for all.



A woman prepares olives for pressing
(© ILO/Apex – ILO Arab States Flickr).
(© ILO/Jared J. Kohler – ILO Arab States Flickr).



together with the Jordanian Social Security Corporation under the Patronage of the Prime Minister. Partially as a result of the conference, the **Jordanian Prime Minister established a tripartite SPF Advisory Board with the assistance of the ILO.**

After several meetings held with tripartite stakeholders over the period 2012-2013, the Jordanian Government also finalized the process of **ratifying the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), based on an ILO legal assessment.**

In December 2013, **Jordan's parliament adopted Social Security Law No. 7**, which extends social security coverage to those previously excluded, including all workers in small enterprises. ILO supported these efforts through a number of measures which include: **costing of social security reform scenarios; training staff at the Social Security Corporation on actuarial techniques as well as conducting a legal assessment of Jordan's Temporary Social Security Law No. 7 of 2010 in line with international standards; basic social security principles; and good practices.**

In cooperation with the Jordanian Social Security Corporation, the General Budget Department

and the Ministry of Social Development, the ILO also carried out, a **comprehensive study on the establishment of a national SPF.** The study included a Rapid Social Protection Floor cost assessment to find the fiscal space for the SPF within Jordan's budgetary constraints.

In Iraq, the ILO assisted the Parliament of the semi-autonomous **Iraqi Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) to implement the amendment of the Social Security Law (1 July 2002) which extends social security coverage in case of old-age, disability, death and employment injury to all temporary and casual workers in the private sector above the age of 18.** The Cabinet of the KRG is also in the process of adapting an unemployment insurance law, which was drafted with the assistance of the ILO.

After extensive national dialogue in 2013, the **occupied Palestinian territory National Tripartite Social Security Steering Committee adopted a social security sector strategy** in order to establish the first ever social security system for private sector workers and their family members. The ILO assisted the occupied Palestinian territory in the design parameters of the new social security system for private sector workers and their families. Furthermore, the ILO contributed to

the process through the facilitation of **national tripartite dialogue**, the preparation of the policy design matrix for the new social security system, the establishment of an actuarial valuation, as well as the provision of regular advisory services and capacity building on social security policies, principles, financing, and best practices.

In September 2012, the ILO commissioned **Lebanon's first-ever poll on universal healthcare**, asking whether the Lebanese population regards universal healthcare as a necessity. Based on the findings of the poll, 93 per cent were **strongly supportive** of universal healthcare and the idea that it should be accessible to all on a universal basis regardless of income, ability to pay, age, and work status or health conditions. The poll also revealed that respondents felt government should play an important role to encourage preventive approaches in healthcare and introduce relevant procedures.

With ILO assistance, the Shura Council of **Saudi Arabia** approved the **first unemployment insurance legislation of the Kingdom** at the end of 2013. This new scheme provides unemployment benefits for a certain period to workers in the private sector upon loss of their employment. ILO's technical assistance included the policy design of the new scheme, and the drafting of the legislation.

Along with the UNDP Regional Centre in Cairo, the ILO also organized a regional workshop entitled **"Rethinking Informal Economy in the Arab Region: a Human Rights-Based Approach"** in 2013. The workshop brought together some 45 participants from eight Arab countries. At the conclusion of the workshop, participants recommended widening the knowledge base on the informal economy, increasing access to information for those working in the informal economy, expanding social protection to cover informal workers, and reviewing legal frameworks so that labour legislation covers informal workers in accordance with international human rights and labour standards.

Actuarial Studies

Actuarial studies, sometimes called actuarial valuations, are intended to review the present and expected future financial developments of existing or new social security schemes.

It is a tool of financial governance and planning that is undertaken at the onset of a scheme and on a regular basis afterwards. The actuarial studies must be performed at time intervals of no longer than three to five years as stipulated by national legislation in order to ensure timely monitoring of a scheme's operations.

Over the course of 2012-2013, the ILO supported actuarial studies on various schemes in the Arab states of Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and the occupied Palestinian territory.



Lebanon's Long Awaited Pension Reform Is Within Reach

For many workers in the Lebanese private sector, reaching retirement age means facing an uncertain future with little access to social protection. But that is about to change thanks to the collaborative work of the government, its social partners, the ILO and the World Bank.

Seventy-year-old Josephine Tohme worked as an insurance broker in Beirut for forty years before retiring in 2006. Upon retirement at age 64, she received a lump sum which covers some of her basic necessities but she relies on other savings and support from her daughter to cover the shortfall.

"I don't know how retired persons without access to other sources of income survive," she says.

Tohme, like 28 per cent of Lebanon's 1.5 million-strong workforce, is covered by the

country's decades-long retirement scheme for the private sector, which includes an end-of-service indemnity but provides no further social security benefits.

Lebanon operates an End-of-Service indemnity (EOSI) programme for the private sector – a one-off payment amounting to one month for each year worked, based on the worker's final salary. So a private sector worker who retires on a salary of US\$1000 per month after twenty years of employment can expect US\$20,000 upon retirement but no further state support. There are no monthly payments and all benefits end at retirement, including health coverage at an age when it is often most needed.

To read more about this feature, visit the ILO Regional Office for the Arab State's website at:

http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/features/WCMS_207664/lang--en/index.html

A nurse tend to an elderly woman in a medical center in Baghdad (© ILO/Apex – ILO Arab States Flickr).



Palestinian Authority To Adopt Private Sector Social Security Scheme By 2015

The occupied Palestinian territory is preparing to roll out a comprehensive social security scheme to cover all private sector workers.

Developed by the tripartite National Social Security Committee with support from the International Labour Organization, the scheme was produced in consultation with workers' and employers' organizations, government officials, and other stakeholders. The Committee is

drafting the new social security law with ILO's assistance to be submitted to the Council of Ministers for adoption by 2015, which includes setting up an independent tripartite social security institution to administer the scheme's implementation.

To read more about this feature, visit the ILO Regional Office for the Arab State's website at:

http://www.ilo.org/beirut/media-centre/news/WCMS_231142/lang--en/index.htm

HIV and AIDS and the World of Work

Jordan became the first Arab country to adopt a national policy targeting HIV/AIDS in the workplace since an international labour standard on HIV/AIDS and the world of work was adopted at the 99th International Labour Conference in 2010. The National Tripartite policy on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work spells out workplace issues, protects against employment discrimination, prevents the occupational risk of HIV transmission and ensures the participation of people living with HIV in the policymaking process.

This policy is linked to national plans and policies, especially the National Agenda and the National Strategic Plan on HIV and AIDS 2012-2016, in addition to international conventions and the national plans and strategies concerning different groups, including youth, women and children, and

reproductive health. A legal analysis of the policies and practices affecting people living with HIV and the workplace in **Jordan**. A legal analysis of the policies and practices affecting people living with HIV and the workplace in Jordan.

In **Lebanon**, the ILO partnered with the Association of Bankers in Lebanon and trade unions to distribute awareness-raising materials at bank branches for World AIDS Day (*December 1*) and with the Cabriolet Film Festival to launch a competition for the best script and best short film about non-discrimination in the workplace.



Migrant Workers



Migrant workers fasten metal rods together at a construction site (© ILO/ Apex Image - ILO Arab States Flickr).

In the Middle East, the proportion of migrant to local workers is amongst the highest in the world, particularly in the Gulf Cooperation Council states. In Qatar, over 90 per cent of workers are foreign while in Saudi Arabia that figure exceeds 70 per cent. In Jordan and Lebanon, migrants also make up a significant part of the workforce, particularly in sectors such as construction and domestic work. The ILO estimates that almost half of migrant workers in the region are women.

Country-level actions

The development and enforcement of a legislative and policy framework to protect the rights of domestic workers in line with international standards is being developed in **Lebanon** with ILO assistance and in partnership with the European Union and the Swiss Agency for Development Corporation. In 2013, the ILO raised awareness among ambassadors and labour attaches of international standards relating to domestic work, supported the Syndicate of Owners of Recruitment Agencies (SORAL) to adopt a **Code of Conduct** and monitoring mechanism for the recruitment of workers and raised awareness of the new code among **100 recruitment agencies**. With ILO support, the National Federation of Workers'

and Employers' Unions in Lebanon (FENASOL) developed a new referral mechanism in collaboration with NGOs to better address domestic workers' grievances and established the Founding Committee for Migrant **Domestic Workers in Lebanon, the first representative body for migrant domestic workers in the Arab region.**

In order to develop a **trade union policy on migrant workers** in **Jordan**, the ILO assisted the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions work with the government on a migration policy that improves the working conditions and social protection of foreign workers. The ILO conducted **assessments of the construction and domestic work sectors**, reviewed the **national labour inspection policy and occupational health and safety strategy**, and trained labour inspectors and labour attaches. The ILO also assisted in the formation of a **Labour Attaché Network** together with representatives from the embassies of Egypt, the Philippines, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

On behalf of the Ministry of Human Rights in **Yemen**, the ILO hosted a seminar that helped **enact a draft trafficking bill**, which has been submitted to Parliament. The ILO also assisted the Ministry of Labour in developing a programme for the reintegration of Yemeni workers who have been **repatriated** from Saudi Arabia back to the Yemeni labour market.

A qualitative assessment of trafficking and forced labour conditions in the **United Arab Emirates** as part of the publication "Tricked and Trapped: Human Trafficking in the Middle East" was also conducted by the ILO.

The ILO convened a Regional Tripartite Conference on Promoting Convention 189 "Raising Awareness and Sharing Knowledge on Decent Work for Domestic Workers" (Cairo, October 2012), which brought together government, employers' and workers' representatives, and officials from civil society and international organizations in the first Arab meeting on the Convention.

The conference participants recommended raising awareness of Convention 189 among social partners, law enforcement authorities, civil society, organizations, NGOs, employers and workers' organizations and recruitment agencies. Participants

also recommended conducting further training on rights and obligations under the convention, including countries of origin in future processes, expanding existing protection frameworks, developing feasible labour inspection mechanisms, ensuring the privacy of households, developing conflict dispute mechanisms, and building response capacity.

Tricked and Trapped: Human Trafficking in the Middle East

ILO reveals how an estimated 600,000 migrant workers are tricked and trapped into forced labour across the Middle East.

An ILO study has offered a rare glimpse into the hardships endured by workers from some of the world's poorest countries while also examining the structural hurdles to protecting their rights at work in the Middle East and combating human trafficking in the Arab States.

Based on more than 650 interviews conducted over a two-year period in Jordan Lebanon, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, the study sheds light on the situation of trafficked adult workers in the Middle East, the complex processes by which they are 'tricked and trapped' into forced labour and sexual exploitation, and the constraints that prevent them from leaving. It also examines the responses to human trafficking recently put in place by governments, employers' and workers' organizations and other stakeholders and provides regional policymakers with recommendations to help them effectively counter the phenomenon.

To read more about this report, visit the ILO Regional Office for Arab State's website:

http://www.ilo.org/beirut/media-centre/news/WCMS_211162/lang--en/index.html





Promoting Social Dialogue



Genuine social dialogue promotes better living and working conditions and greater social justice. The ILO helps tripartite partners to establish sound labour relations, adapt labour laws to meeting changing economic and social needs, and to improve labour administration.



During the 2012-2013 Biennial the ILO Regional Office for the Arab States spearheaded a series of initiatives to further social dialogue in a manner that promotes social justice in the Arab States region.

In collaboration with the Arab Labour Organization, the ILO Regional Office for Arab States organized a pan-Arab conference entitled “**Labour Market Governance in the Context of Changing Arab Societies**” that brought together some **80 senior delegates** from governments, as well as workers’ and employers’ organizations to contribute to the reform of labour administrations and labour governance given the new realities in the Arab region. The conference produced and approved a **series of recommendations** that focused on creating a new development paradigm that balances social and economic considerations through social dialogue.

The ILO also organized a regional workshop in Beirut, Lebanon entitled “**Women and Trade Unions in the Arab States: Decent Work Through Organizing**” to act as a platform for trade unions to engage in open and constructive discussions amongst themselves and with pro-women civil society organizations.

Country-level actions

An action plan to introduce **Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work in the Aqaba Special Economic Zone in Jordan** by promoting collective bargaining and enhancing labour inspection effectiveness, on the basis of the findings and recommendations of a labour inspection audit. Several **training courses and workshops** were conducted with ministry and economic zone officials, as well as social partners, on **labour inspection and the management of migrant workers**. In addition, two workshops were held to **review and update the national Operational Safety and Health profile** and the national labour inspection policy and strategy.

The ILO has continued to promote tripartism and support social dialogue and industrial relations in the **occupied Palestinian territory** in line with international labour standards. Specifically, it has supported a number of social dialogue mechanisms, including:

- the revitalization of the National tripartite Committee for Labour Affairs (NTCLA); the establishment of a tripartite committee to advise on the adoption of a national minimum wage;
- continued capacity building of the National Committee for Women's Employment (NCWE) that was established in 2010 and mandated with increasing women's participation in the labour force and advancing gender equality in the world of work;
- the establishment and capacity building of the national tripartite committee on social security on the development of an integrated social security system in line with ILO standards; and
- the establishment of the national tripartite steering committee on child labour mandated with addressing the worst forms of child labour in the oPt.

Strengthening workers' organizations through economic, social and legal literacy

The ILO has provided critical support to both new and established organizations in the quest for broad-based, democratic and representative institutions that can respond to the socio-economic and political challenges of transition. The regional USDOS funded project "Strengthening Workers' Organizations in the Arab Countries through Social, Economic and Legal Literacy" supported efforts to establish an independent Arab trade union structure through actively promoting regional trade union cooperation in the areas of Freedom of Association, Collective Bargaining, women and migrant workers' rights.

At the country level, the project supported the development of medium term vision and strategies around trade union reforms, the expansion of their outreach and the organization of informal workers.

Country-level actions

To foster an enabling environment for freedom of association and collective bargaining the ILO encouraged trade union cooperation among the different workers' organizations to develop a **joint union strategy** and action plan concerning labour and trade union reforms.

The ILO also supported unions and workers' sectors in **Lebanon** to promote freedom of association and collective bargaining through the initiatives to improve the representativeness and democratic structure of the trade unions movements. Moreover, the ILO supported organising informal, unorganized workers, and **migrant domestic workers** – the latter setting a precedent in the Arab region.

The ILO's activities in the **occupied Palestinian territory** also provided space to **build new alliances** between the PGFTU and the university teachers' trade union, the UNRWA staff union and other sectoral unions. The ILO supported the PGFTU in holding its **first unified executive committee**



meeting for many years by **overcoming restrictions on mobility imposed by occupation.**

The ILO support to the General Federation of Oman Trade Unions (GFOTU) resulted in building a **team of trade union trainers**, enabling the federation to design its own **sustainable training programme**. Moreover, the project developed policy position papers for the GFOTU that allowed the union to effectively participate in social dialogue and national debates on **minimum wage and amendments of labour legislation**. Furthermore, through project advice and assistance, the GFOTU was able to expand its representation in enterprises to reach 160 company based trade unions.

On a regional level, the ILO held a workshop was held in Amman on **Trade Union Rights, Freedoms and the Right to Strike** bringing together participants from Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, the occupied Palestinian territory, Lebanon, Jordan, Bahrain, Oman and Yemen, as well as the International Trade Union Confederation. The workshop's **recommendations** include the establishment of an Arab observatory for trade union rights and freedoms, and the formation of a joint ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities and International Trade Union Confederation committee to support unionists against violations and abuses.

Developing the capacity of employers' organizations in the Arab Region to contribute to job rich growth through effective policy and social dialogue

Throughout the biennium the ILO has been working with employers around the Arab States to assure they play an active role in representing the private sector in tripartite and bipartite discussions through evidence-based policy positions. In addition, the ILO has focused on ensuring these employers' organizations have the capacity to provide adequate services to their memberships through **training sessions on advocacy, lobbying, communications**, governance and strategy.

A total of 30 representatives from employers' organizations have received ILO training on advocacy,

lobbying and communications in two separate workshops in **Oman** and **Jordan**. The ILO has also carried out several **capacity assessments** of employers' organizations across the Arab States to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses.

Following a capacity assessment of the Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (FPCCIA) in the **occupied Palestinian territory**, its board of directors decided to setup a policy unit with the capacity to assist the FPCCIA to engage in social dialogue and draft policy papers to support the private sector view in tripartite and bipartite discussions.

In **Jordan** the ILO undertook a **capacity assessment** of the Jordan Chamber of Industry (JCI), which was present and discussed with its board of directors. In addition, an extensive **enterprise survey** was undertaken which focused on the obstacles faced by industrial companies in Jordan employed by the JCI to evaluate the efficiency and reach of its business services.

With ILO support, the **Oman** Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) employed a previous capacity assessment to review its internal structure and define staff roles more clearly. The OCCI also undertook a revision of its internal law in an effort to become representative and hold elections for its board of directors at the end of 2013. These elections were the first time all board members were elected rather than partly appointed by government decree.



More rights for Jordan's garment worker

Workers in Jordan's Qualified Industrial Zones have held numerous strikes over the past years to protest against what they perceive as labour rights violations. A new collective bargaining agreement is now aiming to improve the situation.

Twenty-four year old Bangladeshi Nour Jihan moved to Jordan a year ago to work in a clothing factory in the industrial city of Sahab. Her employer provides food and board, which allows her to send about US\$150 back home to her family.

"I've worked in several countries, but last year I heard that many women from my country were moving to Jordan for work so I decided to do the same," she said, adding that she started to look for work abroad after her father died. "I had to help my mother take care of my seven siblings."

Jihan is one of about 40,000 mostly South Asian workers employed in Jordan's garment manufacturing sector, whose exports last year reached a record US\$1.2 billion. But while business has boomed across Jordan's Qualified Industrial Zones (QIZs), relations between workers and factory bosses have often broken down. QIZs are special areas that manufacture goods for sale in foreign markets; there are 14 in the country.

Over recent years, QIZ workers have held numerous strikes to protest against what they perceive as labour rights violations, low wages, and poor working and living conditions. In response, a collective bargaining agreement was signed in May this year between two apparel employers' associations and Jordan's union of garment factory workers. The agreement was widely viewed as an unprecedented step forward in the enhancement of social dialogue and



Jordanian workers are employed at a textile manufacturing facility in the Qualifying Industrial Zone near the town of Irbid, Jordan (© ILO/Jared J. Kohler – ILO Arab States Flickr).

industrial relations within the sector.

The agreement between the Jordan Garments, Accessories and Textiles Exporters' Association, the Association of Owners of Factories, Workshops and Garments, and the General Trade Union of Workers in Textile, Garment and Clothing Industries was facilitated by Better Work Jordan (BWJ) and the International Labour Organization (ILO).



It aims to provide workers like Jihan with better representation and improve their working and living conditions. Even though the majority of employees in the apparel sector are migrants, the agreement also covers the thousands of Jordanian men and women who work beside them. It may also help to attract more young Jordanians to the sector. This hard-fought deal also strives to enhance productivity and ensure that the interests of both workers and employers are met.

To read more about this feature and the collective bargaining agreement and the plight of QIZ workers in Jordan, visit the ILO Regional Office for Arab State's website:

http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/features/WCMS_228131/lang-en/index.htm

Guaranteeing Rights at Work



Man and woman discussing business related news in the office (© ILO/Apex Image - ILO Arab States Flickr).

The ILO maintains and develops a system of international labour standards aimed at promoting opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and dignity.



Ratification of Labour Standards

After several ILO meetings held with tripartite stakeholders in June and July 2012, the Jordanian Government began the process of ratifying Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102). The ILO also advised officials in the Maritime Administration in Jordan on methods to report on the application of the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003 (No. 185), ratified by Jordan in 2004.

In 2013, the ILO provided capacity building and advisory services to at a tripartite workshop in **Kuwait** to enhance their ability to report on the application of international conventions including those related to hours of work, mandatory holidays, night time employment, weekly rest, discrimination in the workplace, and social policy.

In partnership with the South Asian Regional Trade Union Council the ILO also convened a workshop on labour migration from South Asian countries to the Arab region, and in particular the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries. Members of trade unions, representatives from migrant workers communities, and human rights groups from in Bahrain, Jordan, Oman, Qatar, Lebanon, Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Sri Lanka and Pakistan produced a set of recommendations at the conclusion of the conference that focus on establishing and joining migrant workers' organizations, as well as better working conditions for migrant workers in destination countries.

Labour law Reform and enforcement

The ILO Global Business and Disability Network gathered employers to share experiences on how to

make the workplace more inclusive for **people with disabilities** in the Arab States. The initiative came after a two-day workshop on employment strategies to recruit and retain persons with disabilities, with participants from Jordan, Iraq, Yemen, Egypt, Oman and the occupied Palestinian territory.

Labour inspection

With support from the ILO the **Jordan Ministry of Labour** has drafted a decree establishing the Central Labour Inspection Authority and developed a **short-term labour inspection reform plan**. The ILO also provided technical assistance to **automate labour inspection activities** at the Ministry of Labour as well as to develop and pilot a **comprehensive labour inspection database**. The ILO also conducted a **labour inspection audit** in the country and provided recommendations for enhancing labour inspection effectiveness in line with international labour standards.

Labour inspections and gender equality and non-discrimination in the Arab States

Across the region, the ILO has tested a new **guidebook to equip labour inspectors** with the knowledge, attitudes and tools to allow them to recognize and address differing needs, expectations and experiences of male and female workers. The organization also held a regional workshop for labour inspectors from **Jordan, Lebanon, the occupied Palestinian territories and Yemen** to train them in identifying gender gaps, collecting and analysing information on gender disparities, as well as taking remedial action when possible.

To highlight the issue at the national level and to influence future policy-making, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics also conducted a **study in the on gender-based violence** in the workplace in partnership with the ILO and the Institute of Women Studies at Birzeit University.

Promoting equal pay for men and women

Jordan

With ILO support, the Jordanian National Steering Committee for Pay Equity (NSCPE) produced a legal review and an in-depth study on the dimensions of the **gender pay gap in the private education sector**.

A series of national workshops were also held in Jordan with ILO support to disseminate knowledge and to create awareness around the gender pay gap.

Further action took place under the patronage of Princess Basma Bint Talal, whereby a **national campaign on pay equity** was launched in **Jordan** followed by a series of consultations with policymakers, civil society organizations, employers' and workers' representatives and academics to **lobby for the amendment of Jordanian legislation** in line with ILO Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100).

occupied Palestinian territory

In the context of ILO pilot work on gender-based violence in the workplace a five-day filmmaking workshop/media training exercise was conducted with students of Bethlehem University. Students were trained to produce short **videos on their perceptions related to gender based violence**. A complementary initiative the ILO ran in two Palestinian universities also targeted around 50 students with extensive training on perceptions related to gender based violence in the workplace. In addition, round table discussions were held with a group of university teachers at Bethlehem University.

Regional training of facilitators on ILO Participatory Gender Audits (PGA)

A **regional training session** was organized in Amman with a total of 20 facilitators from **Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, the oPt, Tunisia and Yemen**. **During the workshop participants** were trained on the ILO Participatory Gender Audits tool, which is a transformational process that ultimately results in enhanced **gender mainstreaming in organizations**. The key objectives of the training session included the creation of a pool of regional Arabic speaking facilitators in the ILO PGA methodology, and the promotion of gender equality among ILO constituents in the Arab region by conducting PGAs.

Gender pay discrimination in Jordan: A call for change

The International Labour Organization is working with the Jordanian government and its social partners to help narrow the pay gap between men and women.

When Amira*, a Jordanian schoolteacher, asked her principal for a pay rise, it was refused. A few months later she was fired. Banan* works for a media company and complains she is paid at least 30 per cent less than her male colleagues for performing the same job.

“Everyone was given a pay increase but I only received a rise of around three per cent, while my male employees received seven per cent. When I pointed out this disparity to my manager, I was told it was deliberate and that a married woman’s place is at home with her children,” Banan explains.

These stories provide a snapshot of the discrimination faced by many women in Jordan’s labour market – despite the fact that the country has ratified the ILO **Equal Remuneration Convention, No. 100** and the **Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, No. 111**.

Men working in Jordan’s private sector earn on average 41 per cent more than women. In the public sector, men earn about 28 per cent more. According to official figures, the pay gap in manufacturing is 41.3 per cent; in health and social work, 27.9 per cent and 24.5 per cent in education.

Discrimination also extends to non-wage benefits such as health insurance and paid expenses, which many women are not entitled to. In addition, many employers do not provide maternity leave, forcing women to take long career breaks, leading them to fall behind in pay and promotion.

To read more about pay equity in Jordan, visit the ILO Regional Office for the Arab States’ website:

http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/features/WCMS_213754/lang--en/index.htm



Female Jordanian medics react during a first aid training in a car ambulance (© ILO/Apex Image – ILO Arab States Flickr)

Eliminating the worst forms of child labour

According to the ILO's latest global estimates on child labour, published in 2013, there are 9.2 million child labourers in the Middle East and North Africa. The overall activity rate stands at 8.4 per cent of the 5 to 17 year age group. Factors such as household poverty, weak social protection and poor quality of education make many children join the labour force prematurely. Most working children in the region are employed in agriculture. More than half are exposed to hazardous work.

The last decade has witnessed significant progress in the fight against child labour in the Arab region. Coming close to universal ratification of the most important child labour-related ILO Conventions, Arab States have shown an increasing commitment to tackling child labour. Corresponding child protection measures, such as raising the minimum age for work, have come into force in many countries.

In **Lebanon**, for example, the ILO has supported the reactivation of the National Steering Committee Against Child Labour (NSC) along with developing the capacity of the Child Labour Unit within Lebanon's Ministry of Labour (MOL).

As a result of this support, Decree 8987 on the most hazardous forms of child labour in Lebanon was endorsed in 2012. Most importantly, the ILO led the development of the National Action Plan to eliminate the worst forms of Child Labour (NAPWFCL) by 2016. A National Awareness-Raising Strategy (NAS) was also developed and supported by the ILO. A comprehensive national child labour survey is planned to be undertaken in cooperation with the Central Administration of Statistics (CAS) in early 2014.

The private sector also joined more forcefully the fight against child labour, as reflected in its engagement in and patronage of a conference on corporate social responsibility and child labour in Lebanon, which was convened by the ILO and the American University of Beirut (AUB) in 2013. A

Stop child labour (© ILO – ILO Arab States Flickr)



large number of enterprises, representing the full scope of Lebanon's corporate sector, participated and reflected on how businesses can lend voice and funding to work against child labour

In the **occupied Palestinian territory**, the ILO helped to set up the National Steering Committee on Child Labour, provided training for the new Child Labour Unit at the Ministry of Labour, and conducted a number of research and awareness raising activities.

In **Jordan**, the ILO supported the implementation of the National Framework to Combat Child Labour (NFCL) in selected governorates through the provision of technical support and capacity building for senior officials from the Ministries of Labour, Social Development and Education. In parallel,

the ILO assisted in the development of a national database on child labour, and strengthened national authorities' coordination mechanisms and ability to manage complex information related to confirmed child labour cases.

A number of capacity-building workshops were held in Jordan to engage stakeholders in the review of the **NFCL** and the development of programmes and action plans to address child labour; enhance the role of trade unions in eliminating child labour; implement the NFCL and enforce the Hazardous Work List for Juvenile Workers.

In both Lebanon and Jordan, the ILO expanded its child labour related work to include **Syrian refugee children**. Quantitative and qualitative

Young boy in hazardous work (© ILO – ILO Arab States Flickr)



assessments were commissioned to gauge the scope and depth of Syrian refugee child labour. In addition, key partners were trained to extend awareness-raising, inspection and care services to the refugee population and its accommodating host communities.

In **Yemen**, the results of the first-ever national child labour survey, conducted by the Central Statistical Organization and the ILO, were launched in Sana'a in February 2013. The survey provides indicators on three main aspects of children's lives: economic activity, schooling, and unpaid household services.



A young foreign girl sells gum (© ILO/Apex – ILO Arab States Flickr).

Feature

Lebanon Pledges To End Worst Forms Of Child Labour By 2016

Lebanon stepped up efforts to combat child labour, joining global calls for the elimination of its worst forms by 2016, less than a month after the release of the Brasilia Declaration on Child Labour.

In November 2013, President Michel Suleiman presided over the launch of the National Action Plan to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labour by 2016 at the presidential palace in Baabda. The Plan was prepared by the National Steering Committee against Child Labour, under the stewardship of Minister of Labour Salim Jreissati, and with support from the International Labour Organization.

To read more about Lebanon's National Action Plan to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labour by 2016 visit the ILO Regional Office for Arab State's website at:

http://www.ilo.org/beirut/events/WCMS_222881/lang--en/index.htm



President Michel Sleiman with children at the Presidential Palace (© ILO - ILO Arab States Flickr).

Better Work Jordan (BWJ), a partnership between the ILO, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and local and international stakeholders, geared up its activities during the 2012-2013 biennial to bring dignity, rights and respect to tens of thousands of workers in Jordan. By enhancing economic performance at the enterprise level and improving compliance with Jordanian labour law and ILO core labour standards, the programme assesses workplace conditions and offers customized advisory and training services to factories to address their individual needs.

During the course of the 2012-2013 biennial, BWJ reached several key milestones including the signing of a collective bargaining agreement in May 2013 between two apparel employers' associations and Jordan's garment union, thus promoting social dialogue and improving the working conditions of some 55,000 workers in the sector. The agreement is considered to be one of the more comprehensive of its type in the garment sector anywhere in the world.

Under the BWJ project, a multi-purpose service centre has opened at Jordan's Al-Hassan Industrial Zone to improve the lives of the thousands of clothing factory workers offering support to workers in the form of skills training, legal advice, and mental health counselling. The centre, the first of its kind in the country, offers support to workers in the form of skills training, legal advice, and mental health counselling and is an effort to improve the lives of tens of thousands of garment workers living and working within Jordan's 14 Qualified Industrial Zones (QIZs), particularly migrant employees who make up about 80 per cent of the workforce.

Finally, in cooperation with the Jordanian government, BWJ also published a legal guide that outlines the rights and obligations of stakeholders involved in Jordan's burgeoning garment manufacturing sector, including workers and employers.

To read more about Better Work Jordan, visit the ILO's Regional Office for the Arab State's website:

http://www.ilo.org/beirut/projects/WCMS_221207/lang--en/index.htm

Migrant workers - most from throughout Asia - make up most of the work force at this textile factory in the Ad-Dulayl Qualified Industrial Zone near Zarqa, Jordan (© ILO/Jared J. Kohler – ILO Arab States Flickr).



The Palestinian economy will not grow if restrictions on it remain

The ILO Director-General's annual report on the Situation of Workers in the occupied Arab territories, including the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan, has reaffirmed that systematic restrictions continue to stymie decent work and economic development.

The report, submitted to the 102nd International Labour Conference, calls for the lifting of restrictions on movement, employment and economic activity, in order to increase opportunities for decent work. The report warns that, as the momentum for growth has come to a halt, the fiscal crisis in Palestine is turning into an economic and social one.

According to the report, the crisis is due to a number of factors, including the continued failure of donors to meet their commitments, the decision of Israel to suspend (at least

temporarily) the payment of clearance revenues, as well as the pace of settlement growth.

The report emphasizes that there is no viable or just alternative to ending the occupation of the Arab territories and that the status quo is not an option. The report also highlighted that efforts toward state building and a thriving Palestinian economy are being thwarted. Furthermore, the report called on Israel to lift excessive restrictions on Palestinian movement, employment and economic activity in a transparent and permanent manner, while also calling for the Palestinian private sector to be empowered and not be subject to administrative, political or economic decisions by Israeli authorities, enterprises or other entities.

To read more about this news and the report on the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories, visit the ILO Regional Office for the Arab State's website at:

http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_215030/lang--en/index.htm



Palestinian worker
(© Mohamed Badarne - ILO Arab States Flickr).

Photo Exhibition

Photographer Mohamed Badarne, a Palestinian Photographer, illustrates the daily struggles of Palestinian workers in an exhibition during the 102nd International Labour Conference.

To see the full exhibition visit the ILO's Regional Office for the Arab State's Flickr account at:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/iloarabstates/sets/72157634581211326/>



Regional Office Publications for the 2012-2013

- Freedom of association for women workers in EPZs: A manual **(English & Arabic)** http://www.ilo.org/gender/Informationresources/WCMS_186807/lang-en/index.htm
- Working children in the Republic of Yemen: the results of the 2010 national child labour survey **(English & Arabic)** http://www.ilo.org/beirut/publications/WCMS_223622/lang-en/index.htm
- Towards pay equity: a legal review of Jordanian national legislation **(English & Arabic)** http://www.ilo.org/beirut/publications/WCMS_215608/lang-en/index.htm
- National tripartite policy on HIV and AIDS and the World of Work: Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan **(English & Arabic)** http://www.ilo.org/beirut/publications/WCMS_210510/lang-en/index.htm
- HIV and AIDS and the World of Work: legislative framework review for Jordan **(English & Arabic)** http://staging.ilo.org/beirut/publications/WCMS_232973/lang-en/index.htm
- Statement of commitment and recommendations HIV and AIDS and the World of Work **(English & Arabic)** http://www.ilo.org/beirut/publications/WCMS_210512/lang-en/index.htm
- Social justice for a new Arab era: promoting jobs, protection and dialogue in a changing region **(English & Arabic)** http://www.ilo.org/beirut/publications/WCMS_211215/lang-en/index.htm
- Working with migrant domestic workers in Lebanon (1980-2012): a mapping of NGO services **(English)** http://www.ilo.org/beirut/publications/WCMS_208346/lang-en/index.htm
- Rethinking economic growth: towards productive and inclusive Arab societies **(English & Arabic)** http://www.ilo.org/travail/whatwedo/publications/WCMS_168266/lang-en/index.htm
- Decent work for domestic workers: Convention 189 & Recommendation 201 **(English & Arabic)** http://www.ilo.org/travail/whatwedo/publications/WCMS_170438/lang-en/index.htm
- C189 & R201 at a glance: decent work for domestic workers **(English & Arabic)** http://www.ilo.org/travail/whatwedo/publications/WCMS_168266/lang-en/index.htm
- Effective protection for domestic workers: a guide to designing labour laws **(English & Arabic)** http://www.ilo.org/travail/whatwedo/publications/WCMS_170438/lang-en/index.htm
- Towards sustainable construction and green jobs in the Gaza Strip **(English)** http://www.ilo.org/travail/areasofwork/domestic-workers/WCMS_173365/lang-en/index.htm
- Rapid assessment on child labour in North Lebanon (Tripoli & Akkar) and Bekaa Governorates **(English)** http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/green-jobs/publications/WCMS_184265/lang-en/index.htm
- Action against child labour in Lebanon: a mapping of policy and normative initiatives **(English)** http://www.ilo.org/ipecc/Informationresources/WCMS_IPEC_PUB_20621/lang-en/index.htm
- Information guide for migrant domestic workers in Lebanon **(Arabic, English and French)** http://www.ilo.org/ipecc/Informationresources/WCMS_IPEC_PUB_20620/lang-en/index.htm
- National Study on worst forms of child labour in Syria **(English & Arabic)** http://www.ilo.org/beirut/publications/WCMS_234373/lang-en/index.htm
- ABC of women workers' rights and gender equality (second edition) **(English & Arabic)** http://www.ilo.org/beirut/publications/WCMS_204043/lang-en/index.htm

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