



Better Jobs, Wider Participation: Evidence from Jordan's Labour Market

LANDMARK HOTEL, AMMAN, JORDAN
AUGUST 27, 2026

Background and Purpose

Addressing Jordan's labour market challenges, low labour productivity and participation, remains a key national priority under the Economic Modernisation Vision (EMV) and the Public Sector Modernisation Vision (PSMV). Over the past several years, the [International Growth Centre \(IGC\) Jordan](#) has developed a portfolio of labour market research, in partnership with leading international academics, to generate evidence on the barriers to a dynamic labour market in Jordan and identify practical, evidence-based policy solutions.

As a number of these research projects have reached completion, this dissemination event provides an opportunity to present key findings to government counterparts, development partners, and other stakeholders engaged in labour market policy. The event aims to facilitate discussion on how this evidence can inform ongoing policy priorities and programme design, while strengthening collaboration between researchers and policymakers.

The discussions will focus on evidence from completed IGC-supported research covering female labour force participation, labour market transitions, remote work, transportation, childcare, and other structural barriers to employment. Alongside project-specific findings, participants will explore the broader policy implications emerging across the research portfolio and identify opportunities to translate evidence into practice.

Event Objectives

- Disseminate findings from IGC Jordan's labour market research portfolio
- Facilitate discussion on the policy implications of the research for Jordan's labour market priorities
- Promote knowledge exchange between researchers, policymakers, and development partners
- Identify opportunities for future collaboration and evidence-informed policymaking

Featured Research Projects

- **Enhancing Female Labour Force Participation (FLFP) through Sharia-Compliant Microfinance and Micro-Equity Impact Evaluation:** Led by Abdelrahman Nagy (International Initiative for Impact Evaluation), Eleonora Nillesen (Maastricht University, United Nations University and J-PAL), Bruno Crépon (CREST and J-PAL MENA), and Amira El Shal (Cairo University), this project examines how social norms, job attributes, and marriage expectations shape women's labour market decisions in Jordan. Drawing on qualitative research with women, family members, and employers, the study identifies key barriers to female employment, including workplace environment, safety, working hours, and caregiving responsibilities, and provides

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evidence to inform future interventions aimed at increasing women's labour force participation.

- **Remote Work Adoption, Trends, and Preferences:** Led by Nicholas Bloom (Stanford University) and Cevat Giray Aksoy (King's College London and EBRD), this project examines the adoption of remote and hybrid work in Jordan using evidence from the Global Survey of Working Arrangements. The findings show strong demand for greater workplace flexibility, particularly among parents, with remote work offering significant time savings that are reallocated towards paid work, caregiving, and leisure. The study highlights the potential for flexible working arrangements to support higher labour force participation while identifying the complementary policies needed to maximise their benefits.
- **Dinars on the Sidewalk? Linking Women's Preferences for Workplace Amenities to Worker Productivity: Evidence from Jordan:** Led by Bailey Palmer (University of California, Berkeley), this project explores how women's preferences for workplace amenities, including transportation, childcare, and predictable pay, interact with worker productivity. Using detailed productivity data and preference surveys, the study examines why firms may underprovide amenities despite high worker demand and identifies policy approaches that could expand women's employment while improving outcomes for both workers and employers.
- **Impact of Micro-job Fairs and Edutainment on Female Labour Force Participation in Jordan:** Led by Eleonora Nillesen (Maastricht University, United Nations University and J-PAL), Abdelrahman Nagy (International Initiative for Impact Evaluation), Bruno Crépon (CREST and J-PAL MENA), and Matilde João Mota (Maastricht University and United Nations University), this project investigates how social norms, perceptions of work, and marriage expectations influence women's employment decisions in Jordan. The first phase combines focus group discussions and employer interviews to identify the social and practical barriers women face when entering the labour market, providing the foundation for an ongoing experimental study testing how job attributes influence women's labour supply decisions.
- **Labour Market Framing Paper:** Led by Jonathan Leape (London School of Economics and Political Science and IGC), Salma Shaheen (IGC Jordan), Sarah Winton (London School of Economics and Political Science), and Eliot Faron (IGC), this paper presents a new conceptual framework for labour market policy centred on improving labour productivity through three key labour market transitions: from unpaid work to self-employment, to wage employment, and to specialised work in larger firms. Applying this framework to Jordan, the paper identifies the country's principal labour market challenges and outlines evidence-based policy priorities to support the objectives of the Economic Modernisation Vision.
- **What Policies Can Help Increase Female Labour Force Participation in Jordan?:** Led by Ragui Assaad (University of Minnesota), Caroline Krafft (University of Minnesota), Paloma Avendaño (University of Minnesota), and Ruotong Li (University of Minnesota), this study examines whether recent childcare and maternity policy

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reforms have increased female labour force participation in Jordan. Drawing on the 2025 Jordan Labour Market Panel Survey, the findings show that expanding early childhood care and education alone has not increased maternal employment, highlighting the continued importance of childcare quality, operating hours, and broader social norms in shaping women's participation in the labour market.

- **Is Signalling the Key to Improved Matches in the Labour Market? Evidence from Jordan:** Led by Nikita Sangwan (Indian Statistical Institute), Yasmine Abdelfattah (Universities of Canada, Egypt), and Wifag Adnan (NYU-Abu Dhabi), this project examines whether connecting young Jordanian jobseekers to global freelancing opportunities can improve employment and earnings. Using a randomised controlled trial, it tests the impact of access to the freelancer platform and whether additional mentoring can help jobseekers better signal their skills, engage with employers, and secure work.

High Level Agenda

Time	Session	Speakers
9:00 AM - 9:30 AM	Welcome Coffee & Registration	
9:30 AM - 9:45 AM	Opening Remarks	Molly Hickey (Country Economist, IGC Jordan) Dr. Barq Dmour (Secretary General, Ministry of Social Development) Thamer Shoshan (Director of the Reform Secretariat, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation)
9:45 AM - 10:45 AM	Three Transitions to Labour Productivity	Presentations (30 minutes) • Labour Market Transitions - Molly Hickey (Country Economist, IGC Jordan) & Abdelrahmen Nagy (3ie) • Concluding remarks - Salma Shaheen (Senior Country Economist, IGC Jordan) Moderated Discussion (30 minutes)
10:45 AM - 11:00 AM	Coffee Break (15 minutes)	
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Moving the Needle: Insights from the Jordan Labour Market Panel Survey	Presentations (30 minutes) • Introduction - Molly Hickey (Country Economist, IGC Jordan) • Moving the Needle: Insights from the Jordan Labour Market Panel Survey - Ragui Assaad

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		(Professor of Planning and Public Affairs, University of Minnesota) Moderated Discussion (30 minutes)
12:00 PM - 12:15 PM	Closing Remarks	Molly Hickey (Country Economist, IGC Jordan) Dr. Raad Al Tal (Associate Professor of Economics, University of Jordan; Lead Academic, IGC Jordan)
12:15 PM - 1:15 PM	Lunch	

Session 1: Three Transitions to Labour Productivity

Session Objective: Present evidence from four IGC research projects examining interventions that support women's transitions into more productive employment, with a focus on self-employment, wage employment, and higher-skilled occupations.

Discussion Themes: The session will draw on findings from research on Sharia-compliant finance, remote work, transportation, and women's labour market participation to explore how different interventions address barriers across the employment lifecycle. Discussion will focus on the policy implications emerging across the research portfolio, including how these findings can inform labour market programming, support women's economic participation, and contribute to ongoing government reform priorities.

Guiding Questions: What upcoming programmes and policies are you working that might benefit from evidence? What labour or firm data could benefit from more analysis? How can some of the solutions we have discussed be implemented?

Session 2: Moving the Needle: Insights from the Jordan Labour Market Panel Survey

Session Objective: Present evidence from the Jordan Labour Market Panel Survey (JLMPS) on the structural factors shaping female labour force participation in Jordan and discuss their implications for policy.

Discussion Themes: Drawing on nationally representative labour market data, this session will examine evidence relating to maternity protection, childcare, social norms, transportation, and early childhood care and education. The discussion will consider how these findings can support policy design, complement the evidence presented during Session 1, and help prioritise interventions that remove barriers to women's labour market participation.

Guiding Questions: What questions would you like to see answered with the JLMPS data? What policies have been effective in increasing employment in recent years and how can they be built upon?

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