

# Agricultural Livelihoods for Syrian Refugees in Jordan



UNHCR  
The UN Refugee Agency

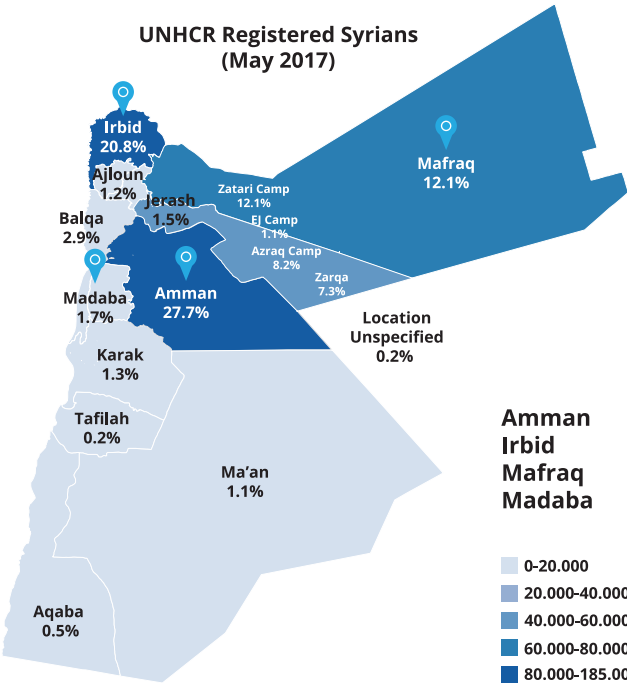
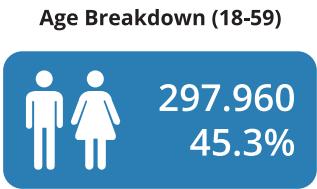
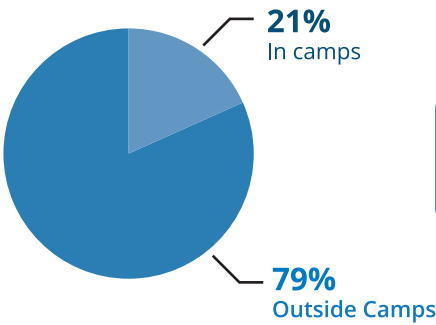
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## Defining Context and Options

The present study conducted in the governorates of Amman, Irbid, Mafraq and Madaba, analyses the current socio-economic and livelihood context of Syrian refugees working in the agricultural sector in Jordan. It is aimed at providing an up-to-date understanding of the living and working conditions of Syrian refugees.

The Syria crisis, now in its 6th year, has brought about a large influx of refugees in Jordan: 659,953 are registered by UNHCR (UNHCR 2017). Around 80 percent of them live outside the camps.



|        |         |
|--------|---------|
| Amman  | 182.039 |
| Irbid  | 136.903 |
| Mafraq | 76.673  |
| Madaba | 11.230  |

## Context

The majority of the Syrian Refugees living outside the camp works in the agricultural sectors. Agricultural activities are mainly concentrated on vegetable farming, and livestock.

Approximately 12,000 were having an official work permit in the agricultural sector in January 2017. Despite this fact, the access to work permit remains an issue for many Syrian refugees and women in particular (UNHCR, 2016).

Up to 26 percent of Syrian refugee households are Female Headed Households. 66 per cent have basic education levels.

Recent registration data (February 2017) shows that around **31 000 Syrian refugees** aged between 18 and 59 years old have a background or are working in sectors related to **agriculture**. The majority of this population are residing in Amman (34.5%), Mafraq (22.3%), Irbid (19.2%) and Madaba (3.7%) governorates.

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Although agriculture is the main sector of employment, it does not have the capacity to absorb the work demand for all Syrian refugees.  
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## Methodology

**Scope:** The aim of the study was to better understand refugees agricultural livelihoods (assets, strategies, and shocks/risks) and to identify best options to improve their agricultural livelihoods for guiding interventions targeting refugees.

Most refugees live below the official poverty line in Jordan estimated to be **2.23 JD/person/day**.



The study was conducted in February-March 2017 in the governorates of Amman, Irbid, Mafraq and Madaba.

A total number of **16 focus group** discussions were conducted with Syrian refugees working in agriculture. Key informants selected by the livelihoods unit of UNHCR-Jordan were interviewed. These informants comprised leaders of Syrian refugee communities, the Ministry of Agriculture, private agribusiness companies and the International Labour Organizations (ILO). Household surveys were additionally carried out with a representative sample of **365 Syrian refugee households**. Participatory wealth group identification was performed during focus group discussion (FGD). The results were triangulated by clustering quantitative data from household surveys. The entry variables considered for the clustering were variables from the FGD, literature review and expert knowledge.

# Results

## Employment Conditions



Refugees in Jordan are not allowed to legally own land, vehicles or getting a driving licence. Consequently, they are mostly waged-employees and need a Ministry of Labor work permit to legally work in Jordan.

Wages of refugees and payment modes differ depending on the type of agricultural activities and the landlord. The wage can be daily or monthly, starting from 1 JD/hour/adult with 8 to 10 working hours per day.

Syrians are mobile in Jordan. For an average of 4.5 years of stay in Jordan, Syrian households change location of the place where they live and work 7 times on average. They move from farm to farm, landlord to landlord, and from one location to another in search for better working conditions and wages.

## Wealth groups



This study identified different wealth groups among Syrian refugees. There are similarities but also differences between the governorates. This is because of factors such as family size, working people in the household, other remittances.



## Recommendations



The present study in reviewing the current livelihood context of Syrian refugees in the agricultural sector in Jordan proposes INNOVATIVE PATHWAYS for addressing the livelihoods of refugees and for improving the socio-economic situation in Jordan agricultural sector.



### Mafrq

Large family size, high dependency, low indebtedness and poor household group with an income of **70,5 JD/person/month**.

Small family, low dependency, low indebtedness and middle income household group with an income of **215,6 JD/person/month**.

Small family, low dependency, low indebtedness and better-off household group with an income of **412,3 JD/person/month**.

### Madaba

Large family, high dependency, low indebtedness and very poor household group with an average income of **43,7 JD/month/person**.

Small family, high dependency, low indebtedness and middle income household group with an average income of **153,5 JD/month/person**.

Small family, low dependency, low indebtedness and better-off household group with an income of **470 JD/person/month**.

### Irbid

Large family, high dependency, low indebtedness and poor household group with an average income of **82,5 JD/month/person**.

Large family, low dependency, low indebtedness and better-off household group with an income of **491,7 JD/month/person**.

### Amman

Large family, high dependency, low indebtedness and poor household group with an income of **63,1 JD/month/person**.

Small family, low dependency, high indebtedness and poor household group with an income of **62,3 JD/month/person**.

### Household livestock production-based livelihood



Consists in providing support to vulnerable Jordanians and Syrian refugees already involved in livestock production for intensification. This passes through training in best practices, access to feeds and health services as well as to market.

### Diversified household vegetable based livelihood



Consists in supporting refugees to rent land or engaging in sharecropping with Jordanian farmers, training in irrigation and climate smart techniques, access to implements and inputs, and access to the market for selling and buying.

### Diversified labour/employment based livelihoods



Foresees Syrians as wage employees for livestock production, fruit or crop production and ensures stable and good enough earnings by Syrians. At the same time vulnerable Jordanians and Syrian refugees are supported with a start-up livestock flock of 3-5 small ruminants that they can raise for milking, and in the aim of promoting home-based activities for women.

Boundia Alexandre Thiombiano - (UBD)  
Laura Buffoni - (UNHCR)  
Elias Chadban - (UNHCR)  
Denis Ouedraogo - (UBD)

Enrico Bonaiuti - (ICARDA)  
Quang Bao Le - (ICARDA)  
Najwan Aldorghan - (UNHCR)  
Rania Bakeer - (UNHCR)