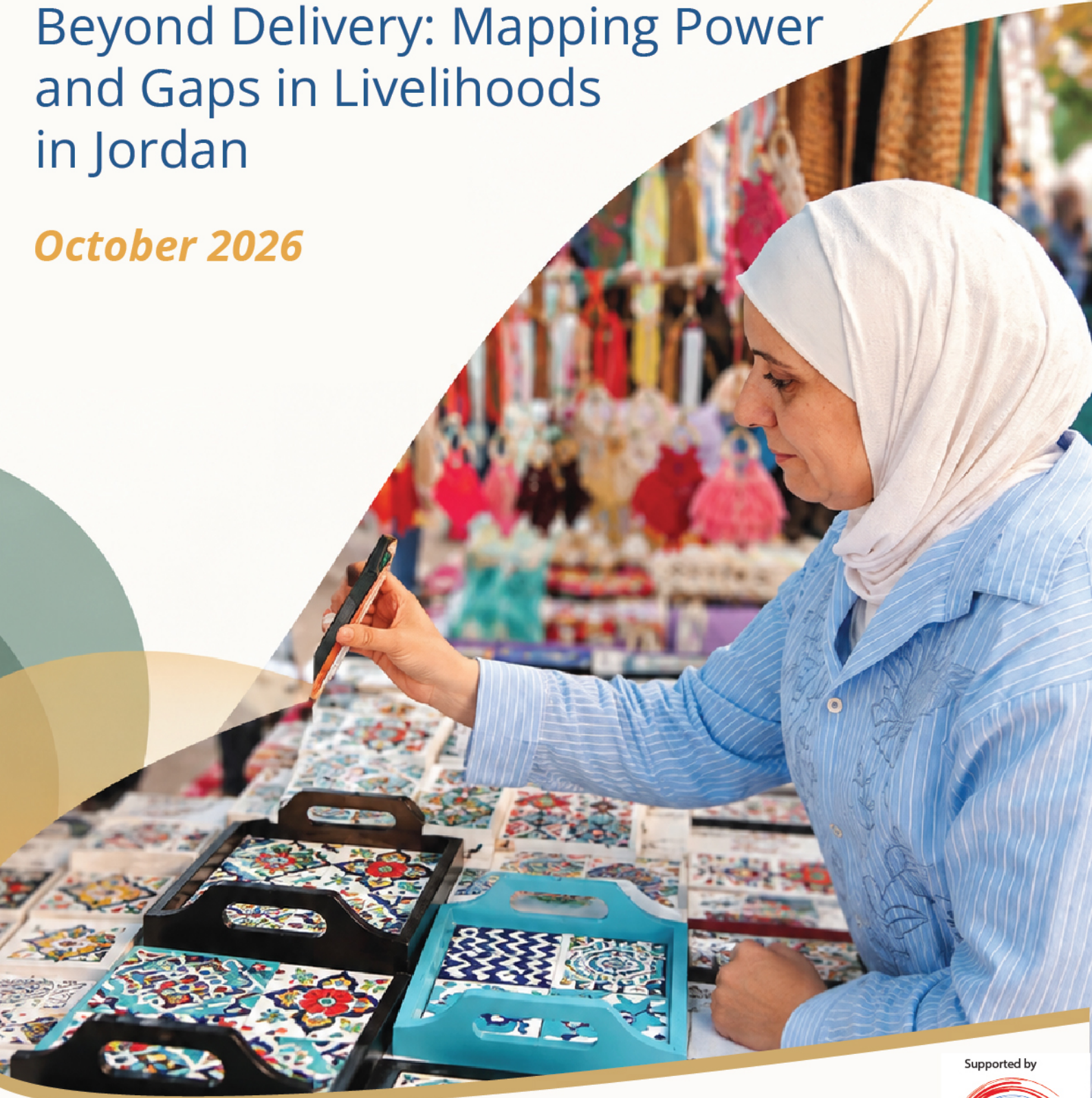


LOCALIZATION IN PRACTICE

Beyond Delivery: Mapping Power and Gaps in Livelihoods in Jordan

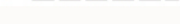
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List of Abbreviations

Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development	ARDD
Department of Statistics	DoS
Education for Employment	EFE
Home-based Business	HBB
Information and Communication Technology	ICT
International Actors	IA
International Labor Organization	ILO
International NGO	INGO
Jordan River Foundation	JRF
Jordan National NGO Forum	JONAF
Local and National Actors	NLA
International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities	ISIC
National and Local NGO	N/LNGO
Persons with Disabilities	PwD
United Nations Development Program	UNDP
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	UNHCR
European Regional Development and Protection Program for Jordan and Lebanon	RDPP
Small and Medium Enterprises	SME
Technical and Vocational Training and Education	TVET
Vulnerability Assessment Framework	VAF

Introduction

Over the past decade, livelihoods have become one of the central pillars of humanitarian and development programming in Jordan. Livelihood interventions are increasingly expected not only to address immediate economic vulnerability, but also to contribute to longer-term resilience, social cohesion, and self-reliance among both refugee and host communities. Donors, UN agencies, international NGOs, and local organizations have all invested heavily in initiatives ranging from vocational training and entrepreneurship support to financial inclusion, business development, and green economy interventions.

Despite the scale of these investments, however, there has been no comprehensive effort to map how livelihood programs are distributed across Jordan, which populations they target, which sectors they prioritize, and to what extent they support the localization agenda. Existing discussions on livelihoods in Jordan often focus on individual projects, donor priorities, or specific target groups, without providing a broader picture of how the sector operates as a whole.

This study addresses that gap through the first analytical mapping of 108 livelihood and economic empowerment programs implemented in Jordan between 2020 and 2030. Covering all twelve governorates, the mapping captures a broad range of interventions targeting Jordanian host communities, Syrian and non-Syrian refugees, women, youth, and persons with disabilities. The study goes beyond documenting projects to examine the wider livelihood landscape in Jordan, identifying key trends, gaps, geographic disparities, partnership models, and barriers to sustainable localization.

By systematically reviewing 108 programs implemented by donors, UN agencies, INGOs, local NGOs, government institutions and private sector actors, this report provides one of the most comprehensive overviews of Jordan's livelihood sector currently available.

The findings show that while livelihood initiatives have expanded considerably in recent years, they remain highly concentrated in specific geographic areas, particularly Amman and northern governorates with large refugee populations. At the same time, important gaps remain in southern governorates and in interventions targeting non-Syrian refugees, persons with disabilities, and some of the most marginalized communities. The mapping also demonstrates that livelihood programming continues to rely heavily on international actors, with local and national organizations often positioned as implementers rather than equal partners in design, funding, and decision-making.

This raises important questions about localization. Although localization has become a central principle in humanitarian and development discourse, its application in the livelihoods sector remains uneven.¹ Local and national actors possess deep contextual knowledge, trusted community relationships, and long-term presence in the areas where programs are implemented.

¹ OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC). *DAC Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance*. OECD/LEGAL/5021. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Yet they continue to face significant barriers in accessing direct funding, participating in strategic decision-making, leading coordination mechanisms, and shaping priorities.

The report therefore examines not only the content of livelihood interventions, but also the power relations that underpin them. It explores how partnerships are formed, how funding flows, how capacity-building is designed, and how local organizations experience their role within a system still largely dominated by international actors. In doing so, it highlights both the structural barriers that hinder localization and the opportunities for creating more equitable and sustainable approaches.

The study is also situated within the broader policy context that has shaped livelihoods in Jordan over the past decade. Since the outbreak of the Syrian refugee crisis, livelihoods have become increasingly tied to international responses aimed at promoting self-reliance, reducing aid dependency, and supporting Jordan's economic resilience.² Frameworks such as the Jordan Compact created new opportunities for integrating refugees into labor markets and expanding economic interventions.³ However, these approaches have also been criticized for privileging donor priorities, emphasizing short-term employment outcomes, and failing to sufficiently address structural inequalities, informal labor, and the role of local actors.⁴

Against this backdrop, the report argues that livelihoods should not be understood only as technical or economic interventions. They are also deeply connected to questions of power, participation, sustainability, and local ownership. Effective livelihood programming requires more than job creation or income generation. It depends on whether communities are genuinely involved in shaping priorities, whether local organizations are empowered to lead, and whether programs are designed in ways that respond to the realities of different groups and regions.

By combining analytical mapping with qualitative insights from key informant interviews, this report provides a detailed picture of the livelihood sector in Jordan and the challenges of advancing localization within it. It is intended as a resource for donors, UN agencies, INGOs, local organizations, government institutions, and researchers seeking to strengthen the effectiveness, inclusivity, and sustainability of livelihood interventions.

²Huang, C., & Gough, K. (2019, March 11). *The Jordan Compact: Three Years on, Where Do We Stand?* Center for Global Development. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/report/jordan/jordan-compact-three-years-where-do-we-stand>; Barbelet, V., Hagen-Zanker, J., & Mansour-Ille, D. (2018). *The Jordan Compact: Lessons Learnt and Implications for Future Refugee Compacts*. Overseas Development Institute. <https://odi.org/en/publications/the-jordan-compact-lessons-learnt-and-implications-for-future-refugee-compacts/>

³ Lenner, K., & Turner, L. (2018). Learning from the Jordan Compact. *Forced Migration Review*, (57), 48–51. <https://eprints.soas.ac.uk/25807/1/lenner-turner.pdf>; Morris, J. (2021). The International Governance of Refugee Work: Reflections on the Jordan Compact. *Global Public Policy and Governance*, 1(2), 146–163. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s43508-021-00019-6>

⁴ Lenner, K., & Turner, L. (2024). The Jordan Compact, Refugee Labour and the Limits of Indicator-Oriented Formalization. *Development and Change*, 55(2), 302–330. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/dech.12824>; Huang, C., Ash, N., Gough, K., & Post, L. (2018). Learning from the Jordan Compact. *Forced Migration Review*, (57), 52–55. <https://www.fmreview.org/syria2018/huang-ash-gough-post>

Ultimately, the report argues that more locally led livelihoods are not only more equitable, but also more effective. Supporting local leadership, expanding direct funding, strengthening local participation, and building long-term partnerships are essential if livelihood programs are to contribute to durable resilience and inclusive development in Jordan.

About the Research

This study has been conducted as part of the “Future Forward: Unlocking Sustainable Local Opportunities” (2024 - 2026), a project implemented by the Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARDD), with the financial support of the European Regional Development and Protection Program (RDPP) for Jordan and Lebanon - Phase III.

This project seeks to localize and promote sustainable livelihood solutions for Syrian refugees and host communities in Jordan. To achieve this objective, it works on strengthening the governance structure and capacities of the Jordan National NGO Forum (JONAF), enhancing its advocacy efforts for the operationalization of the localization agenda in Jordan. Additionally, the project implements targeted economic empowerment initiatives and generates new evidence-based knowledge on Jordan’s livelihood sector, exploring the challenges and opportunities for its localization.

This study examines the humanitarian-led livelihood landscape in Jordan through the dual lenses of localization and the sustainable development framework, focusing on projects implemented since 2020. It critically analyzes the economic dimensions of livelihood interventions while addressing the broader emphasis on localization within the humanitarian and development sectors. By investigating how these initiatives align with the principles of localization, the study delves into their approaches, processes, and outcomes in the context of Jordan’s livelihood sector and its sustainable development priorities.

While not an exhaustive account of all livelihood projects currently implemented in Jordan, the mapping captures the majority of publicly available projects at the time of analysis, offering a comprehensive overview of the sector. This mapping exercise provides critical insights into the trends, gaps, and opportunities shaping Jordan’s livelihoods, serving as a foundation for further research and programmatic refinement.

Moreover, the research presents the first analytical mapping of livelihood projects within this specific context, shedding light on how these initiatives navigate the intersection of economic resilience, community empowerment, and sustainability. By highlighting successes, challenges, and systemic barriers, the study serves as a valuable resource for humanitarian and development actors seeking to advance equitable and localized approaches to livelihood programming in Jordan.

A Note on Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach that combines a systematic desk review, analytical mapping, and qualitative Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) to provide a comprehensive assessment of the livelihoods landscape in Jordan and examine the extent to which localization principles are reflected in current programming.

Project Identification

The foundation of the study is a systematic desk review of **108 livelihood and economic empowerment initiatives** implemented in Jordan between **2020 and 2030**. Information was collected from publicly available sources in both English and Arabic, including websites, project pages, reports, and official communications produced by donors, United Nations agencies, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), local and national organizations (L/NNGOs), government institutions, and implementing partners. Where relevant, publicly accessible social media announcements and project communication materials were also consulted to complement project documentation and verify implementation details.

The objective of the mapping was not simply to compile a list of projects, but to establish a comprehensive analytical database capable of identifying trends, patterns, and gaps across the livelihoods sector. Information gathered through the desk review was cross-checked whenever possible using multiple sources and subsequently verified and complemented through interviews with practitioners working in the sector.

Inclusion Criteria

Projects were included in the mapping when they met the following criteria:

- they contained a livelihoods, economic empowerment, employment, entrepreneurship, or economic resilience component;
- they were implemented wholly or partially within the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan;
- they were launched during the period **2020–2030**, including both completed and ongoing initiatives;
- sufficient publicly available information existed to allow their classification according to the analytical framework adopted in this study.

Although every effort was made to identify the widest possible range of initiatives, the mapping does not seek to provide an exhaustive inventory of all livelihood interventions implemented in Jordan. Rather, it captures the vast majority of publicly documented initiatives available at the time of analysis, providing a robust basis for identifying sector-wide trends and patterns.

Analytical Coding Framework

Each mapped project was systematically coded using a standardized analytical framework developed specifically for this research. The framework enabled consistent comparison across initiatives and examined six principal dimensions:

- **Target population**, including refugees, host communities, women, youth, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups;
- **Economic interventions**, such as education and training, entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, market development, advocacy, and institutional support;
- **Economic sectors**, classified according to the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC);
- **Livelihood capitals**, drawing on the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework by assessing contributions to human, social, physical, financial, and natural capital;
- **Geographic distribution**, identifying the governorates and regions where interventions were implemented;
- **Implementing and partnering actors**, examining the roles of international organizations, local and national organizations, government institutions, private-sector actors, and partnership arrangements relevant to localization.

This analytical framework makes it possible to move beyond project-level description and examine broader structural characteristics of Jordan's livelihoods sector, including patterns of investment, geographic concentration, sectoral priorities, and partnership modalities.

Qualitative Component

To complement the desk review, the study incorporated qualitative data through **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)** with representatives of international organizations, United Nations agencies, and local and national organizations active in Jordan's livelihoods sector.

Interviewees were selected based on their direct experience with livelihoods programming and their institutional knowledge of localization practices, partnerships, and coordination mechanisms. Rather than evaluating individual projects, the interviews explored broader operational experiences and institutional perspectives on localization within the livelihoods sector.

The qualitative component focused on five analytical themes:

- partnership dynamics between international and local actors;
- funding arrangements and resource allocation;
- capacity strengthening approaches;
- participation of local actors in planning and decision-making processes;
- operational strategies adopted to advance localization.

The interviews were intended to **contextualize and interpret the findings emerging from the analytical mapping rather than to provide statistically representative evidence**. Their primary contribution was to explain the institutional dynamics, operational challenges, and perceptions that cannot be captured through documentary analysis alone.

Limitations

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the desk review relied primarily on publicly available information, which frequently lacked detailed descriptions of project implementation, funding arrangements, partnership structures, or outcomes. The varying quality and completeness of publicly available documentation inevitably affected the level of detail that could be incorporated into the mapping.

Second, while considerable efforts were made to interview personnel directly involved in the mapped initiatives, many respondents occupied broader livelihoods or program management roles rather than having responsibility for specific projects. Consequently, interview findings should be understood as reflecting institutional experiences and sector-wide perspectives rather than project-specific evaluations.

Finally, the mapping necessarily reflects the visibility of projects within the public domain. Interventions that were poorly documented or implemented without publicly accessible information may therefore not have been captured.

The findings should therefore be interpreted as representative of the publicly documented humanitarian and development livelihoods landscape in Jordan rather than as an exhaustive inventory of every livelihood intervention implemented during the study period. Nevertheless, the breadth of the mapping and the triangulation of documentary and qualitative evidence provide a robust analytical basis for identifying the principal trends, gaps, and opportunities shaping localization within Jordan's livelihoods sector.

SECTION I: Mapping Jordan's Livelihood Landscape

This section provides an analytical mapping of livelihood and economic empowerment initiatives implemented in Jordan between 2020 and 2030. It examines 108 projects conducted across the Kingdom's 12 governorates, targeting diverse populations, including Jordanian host communities, Syrian and non-Syrian refugees, women, youth, and persons with disabilities (PwD). By focusing on key dimensions such as economic interventions, economic activities, livelihood capitals, and partnership modalities, this mapping highlights both the successes and gaps in addressing socio-economic challenges in Jordan.

Central to this analysis is the exploration of localization within the livelihood sector, the active and meaningful involvement of local and national actors (LNA) in designing, implementing, and managing interventions. Despite the growing global emphasis on the localization agenda, the mapping finds that international actors (IA) dominate the landscape. This imbalance not only undermines local ownership and sustainability but also highlights a missed opportunity to harness the expertise, networks, and trust of local stakeholders.

In addition, the analytical mapping underscores the need for greater inclusivity and geographic equity. While significant efforts have been made to encourage marginalized groups and regions,

gaps persist, particularly for non-Syrian refugees, PwD, and southern governorates that remain underrepresented in project implementation. By presenting key trends, challenges, and actionable insights, this document aims to guide stakeholders in advancing localized, inclusive, and sustainable livelihood strategies that foster resilience, economic growth, and social cohesion in Jordan's complex humanitarian and development landscape.

Scope and Dimensions of Analysis

This mapping exercise examined livelihood projects implemented by aid actors across all twelve governorates of the Kingdom of Jordan. The temporal scope focused on initiatives launched between 2020 and 2030, encompassing projects that began in 2020 or later and concluded by 2030 or earlier.

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of the scope and inclusivity of these projects, the analysis employed six key analytical categories:

1. Targeted Population: Mapped projects were categorized based on the populations they aimed to support, with particular attention to refugees and Persons with Disabilities (PwD). This classification highlights the diversity of groups involved in the interventions and underscores the emphasis on addressing the needs of vulnerable populations. By identifying the targeted populations, the mapping provides insights into how projects are tailored to meet specific demographic needs.

2. Economic Interventions: Interventions of the mapped projects were grouped into categories that organically emerged from the mapping process, such as Education and Training, Economic Empowerment, and Financial Inclusion and Microfinance. The resulting classification illustrates the range of strategies and economic approaches employed across the mapped projects.

3. Economic Activities: The projects were classified using the International Labor Organization (ILO) standard classification of economic activities, providing a structured framework to categorize interventions by sector. This classification includes sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, construction, and tourism. By aligning with the ILO framework, the analysis ensures consistency and comparability in understanding the sectors targeted and their alignment with broader labor market trends.

4. Livelihood Capitals: Mapped projects were grouped into five major livelihood capital categories: Human, Social, Physical, Natural, and Financial. This classification, grounded in the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, facilitates a multidimensional assessment of how interventions impact individuals and communities.

5. Geographic Distribution: The analysis also looked into the geographic areas of implementation, reflecting their regional focus. By categorizing projects geographically, the mapping highlights the spatial reach of interventions and provides insights into regional activity patterns and resource allocation.

6. Implementing Partners: A key dimension for localization, projects were analyzed based on the partnership modalities involved in their implementation. This dimension offers insights into the collaboration dynamics between local, national, and international actors. It identifies the roles played by stakeholders such as government agencies, NGOs, and private sector entities, shedding light on the nature of partnerships and their alignment with localization principles. This first analysis of partnerships is further developed through sections III and IV, through KII interviews.

Although not exhaustive, the mapping captures the majority of publicly documented livelihood initiatives implemented during the study period, offering a broad overview of the humanitarian-led livelihood landscape in the country. This effort serves as a valuable foundation for identifying trends, gaps, and opportunities within Jordan's livelihood sector.

Annex I contains a table listing all mapped projects, with livelihood projects numbered as referenced in the following sections.

I.1. Who Is Being Reached?

Livelihood initiatives in Jordan have adopted a holistic approach, addressing the needs of both Jordanians and refugees (Syrian and non-Syrian), including youth, women, and persons with disabilities (PwDs). By focusing on the needs of marginalized social groups, these projects have contributed to inclusive economic development, long-term resilience, and strengthened social cohesion.

Livelihood projects have prioritized women and youth, with all mapped initiatives including women within their target populations. Notably, 12 projects exclusively targeted women, such as Women Do Business Phase II (Project #16). Similarly, youth have been a central focus, with several initiatives designed to address their specific socioeconomic challenges, such as Livelihoods Planning & Guidance for Youth in Jordan (Project #92).

Although less frequently targeted, migrant workers have also been included in some projects, such as Decent Work for Migrants in the Middle East (Project #70). These efforts demonstrate an emerging commitment to addressing the diverse needs of the workforce in Jordan.

I.1.1 Refugees and the Limits of the 'One Refugee' Approach

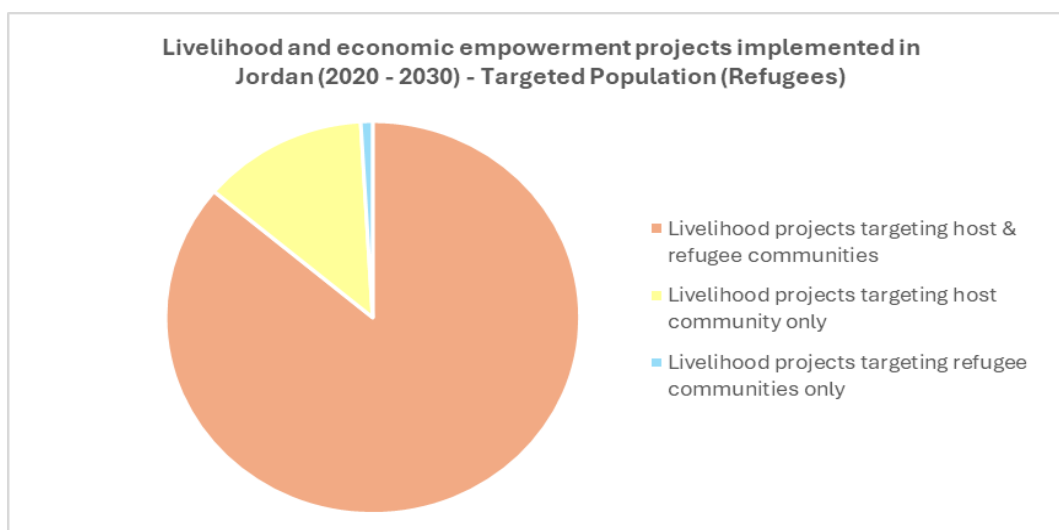
Livelihood initiatives carried out in Jordan aimed to address the needs of both host communities and refugees. Mapped livelihood projects were analyzed according to their targeting of host and/or refugee communities.

- **Host and refugee communities:** Out of a total of 108, 93 initiatives targeted both Jordanians and refugee communities, reflecting the agreement to balance support for the needs of both population groups.
- **Host communities:** Out of a total of 108, 107 projects targeted host communities, with Jordanian beneficiaries ranging from a minimum of 30% (aligning with the principle of balancing aid) to a 100%. Within these, 14 projects exclusively targeted Jordanians target⁵

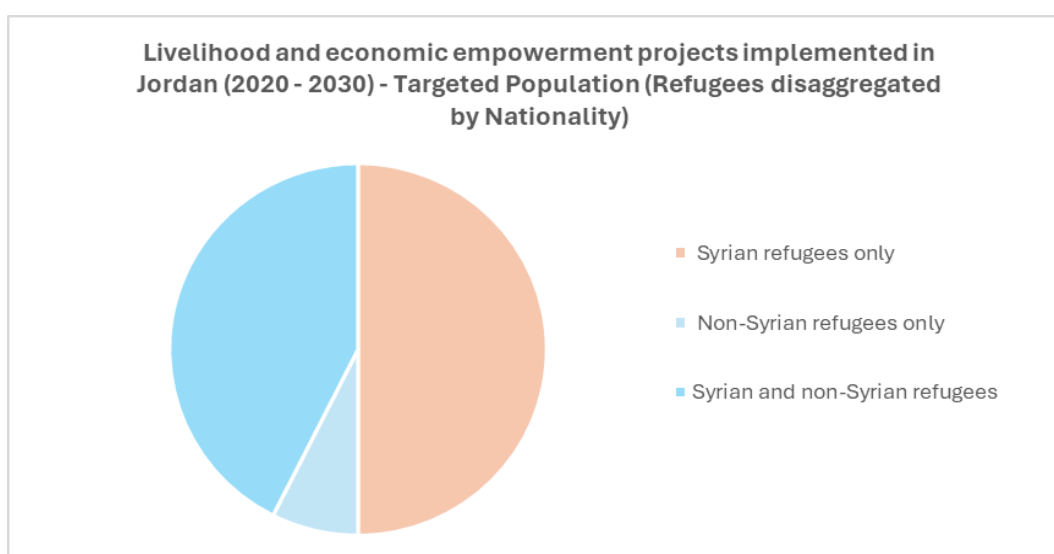
⁵ Projects #9, #10, #20, #25, #31, #33, #38, #39, #42, #51, #68, #76, #79, #95.

due to their **nature** or location. For instance, *Strengthening Social Protection in Jordan* (Project #66), which provided technical and cash support to the National Aid Fund (only accessible for Jordanian households); **location**, such as projects in Ma'an, Karak and Aqaba (governorates that host fewer refugees in comparison to Amman and the Northern ones).

- **Refugee communities:** Out of a total of 108 projects, 94 targeted refugee communities, with the percentage of refugee beneficiaries reaching a maximum of 70%, with the exception of projects implemented in camps, such as the *Digital Livelihoods in the Azraq refugee camp* (Project #21), which targeted Syrian refugees living in the Azraq refugee camp.



From the perspective of a “one-refugee approach,” disaggregated data on refugee-targeted populations reveals a notable trend: 92.5% of livelihood and economic empowerment projects in Jordan have targeted Syrian refugees, with 50% of these initiatives focusing exclusively on them.⁶ Meanwhile, 50% of livelihood projects have included non-Syrian refugees, such as Palestinians, Iraqis, Yemenis, Somalis, Sudanese, and others. However, only 7.5% of refugee-targeted projects have been exclusively dedicated to non-Syrian refugees.



⁶ UNHCR. *Jordan Multi-Year Strategy 2023–2025*. Geneva: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2023.

Furthermore, it is important to note that less than half (42%) of livelihood initiatives targeting refugees have included both Syrian and non-Syrian refugees. While these figures indicate

progress in including non-Syrian refugees, they remain far from fully achieving the “one-refugee approach” championed by UNHCR, underscoring the need for continued efforts to ensure equitable support for all refugee groups.⁷

I.1.2 Persons with Disabilities: Inclusion Still Lagging Behind

Among Arab States, Jordan has been at the forefront of PwD inclusion, ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and adopting the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities No. 20 of 2017.⁸ Nevertheless, the labor inclusion of PwD remains a challenge: A study conducted by Workers' House estimated that nearly 84% of working-age PwD are unemployed.⁹ Part of this shortcoming is closely related to the way livelihoods and economic empowerment actors in Jordan, nationals and internationals, have been operating so far.

In terms of targeting PwD, this analytical mapping classified the livelihood and economic empowerment projects into two categories:

- **“Targeted”**: Projects were designed to address the particular needs of PwD and the barriers that prevent them from participating in the labor market. They focused on their economic empowerment, social inclusion, and the creation of employment opportunities for them. For instance, *Improving socio-economic opportunities for people with disabilities in Amman, Mafrqa and Zarqa in the post-COVID-19 period* (Project #27).
- **“Not specifically targeted”**: Projects do not include PwD as a direct targeted population and are not designed taking into account PwD-specific considerations. Nevertheless, they may be included as part of a larger targeted population and/or benefit indirectly from the intervention results.

The analysis of livelihood and economic empowerment projects in Jordan reveals significant gaps in the inclusion of persons with disabilities (PwD). Out of 108 mapped projects, only 30 specifically targeted PwD, while the remaining 78 did not incorporate PwD as a primary focus. Projects that did address the needs of PwD were primarily concentrated in governorates hosting large refugee populations, including Mafrqa, Amman, Zarqa, and Irbid. These areas are home to thousands of refugees, particularly Syrians, and exhibit a higher prevalence of disability compared to the Jordanian population.¹⁰

⁷ Meral, A. G. *Inclusion and Exclusion in Urban Refugee Displacement in Jordan*. London: Overseas Development Institute (ODI), 2022.

⁸ World Bank. *Disability Inclusion and Accountability Framework*. Washington, DC: World Bank, 2018.

⁹ Worker's House. “People with Disabilities Seek Recognition of Their Right to Work” (2022), <https://www.workershous.org/t-en/%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1-1/%D8%B0%D9%88%D9%88-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%A9-%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%B4%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B9%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%81-%D8%A8%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%87%D9%85-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%85%D9%84>

¹⁰ UNHCR, “Operational Data Portal - Jordan”, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/jor>

According to the 2024 UNHCR Vulnerability Assessment Framework, 16% of surveyed refugees reported having at least one disability, compared to 11.2% among Jordanians as per the 2015 General Population and Housing Census. This disparity underscores the heightened vulnerability of refugees with disabilities and the critical need for targeted interventions in areas with significant refugee populations.¹¹

The findings also highlight the lack of tailored strategies in many livelihood projects, which fail to consider the specific barriers faced by PwD in accessing economic opportunities. While some projects were explicitly designed to embolden PwD through economic inclusion and social integration, a large proportion of initiatives only indirectly benefited PwD, leaving significant gaps in addressing their unique challenges.

These results reflect the broader challenges in labor market inclusion for PwD in Jordan and call for a more inclusive and intentional approach to livelihood programming that addresses the diverse needs of both host and refugee populations with disabilities.

I.2. What Types of Support Are Being Prioritized?

Interventions of the mapped projects were grouped into categories that organically emerged from the mapping process. The resulting classification illustrates the range of strategies and approaches employed across the mapped projects:

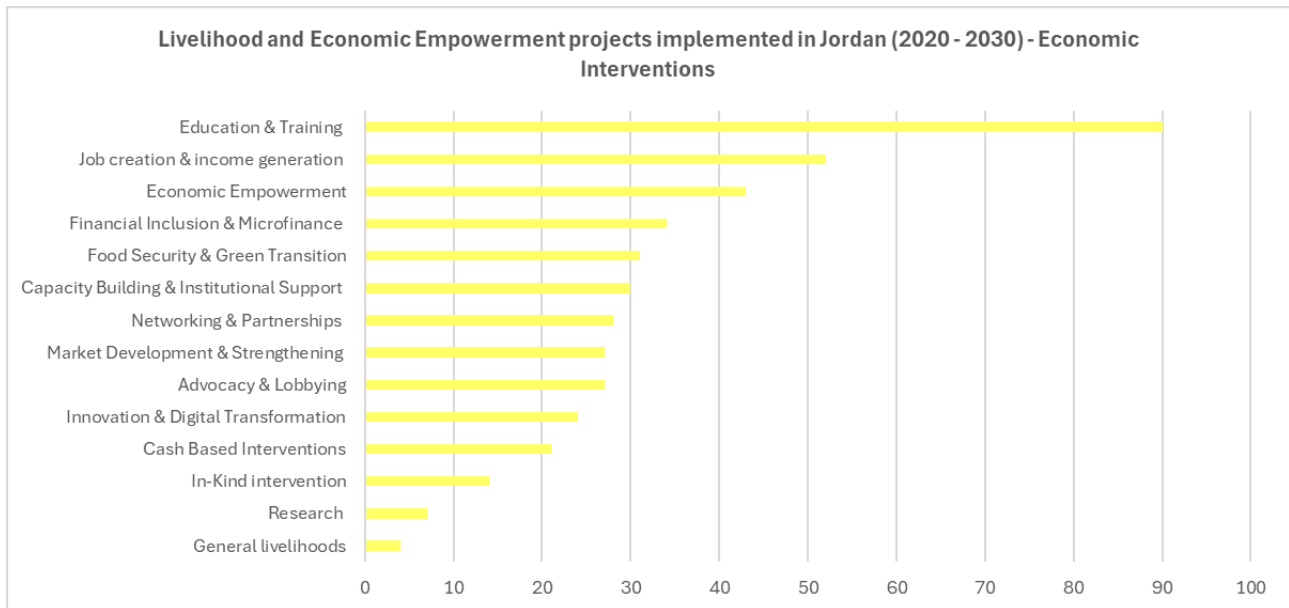
- 1. Education & Training:** Projects focused on developing demand-driven skills, including those necessary to make sound financial decisions, provision of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), tailored counseling and mentoring services, and hands-on experience through internships, traineeships, and apprenticeships.¹²
- 2. Job creation & income generation:** Projects to support entrepreneurship initiatives, including through accelerator and incubator programs. Additionally, this category includes projects that worked on job placement and matching services for job seekers.
- 3. Economic Empowerment:** Projects whose objective was to enhance the agency of traditionally disadvantaged groups, particularly, women, youth, and PwD, within the economic sphere.
- 4. Capacity Building & Institutional Support:** Projects that were designed to build and strengthen the capacities of the stakeholders involved through their cycle, as well as provide them with support at an institutional level.
- 5. Financial Inclusion & Microfinance:** Projects that sought to foster the accessibility and affordability of financial services and products, including banking, credit, insurance, and payment services, to traditionally marginalized social groups, such as women and refugees.

¹¹ UNHCR, *Vulnerability Assessment Framework: Population survey of refugees living in host communities - Jordan 2024* (June 2024), 27, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/109075>

¹² European Training Foundation (ETF). *Effectiveness and Innovation Potential in the Area of Active Labour Market Policies in Jordan*. Turin: European Training Foundation, 2021; ARDD. *Youth Unemployment in Jordan: Failed Strategies and Deferred Promises*. Amman: Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARDD), 2023.

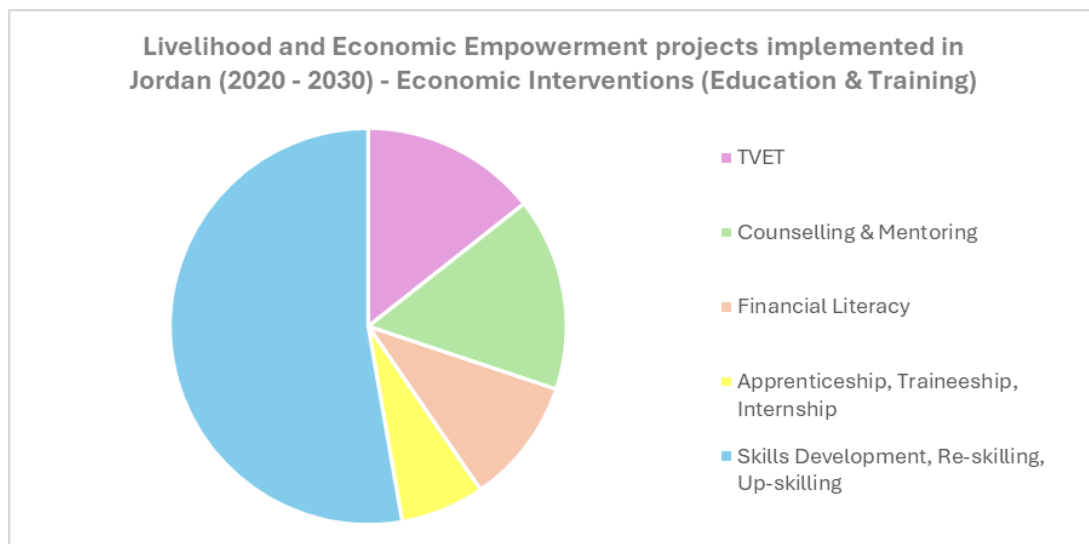
- 6. Networking & Partnerships:** Projects focused on engaging with the private sector to ensure sustainable economic growth, strengthen public-private collaboration and dialogue, and create linkages among Jordanian businesses and between them and the international private sector.
- 7. Food Security & Green Transition:** Projects that aimed to enhance food security levels among host and refugee communities through innovative, sustainable, and climate-smart agricultural practices, along with those committed to advancing the transition towards a green economy through the use of renewable energy sources, efficient water resources management, the conservation of biodiversity, and other eco-friendly actions.
- 8. Market Development & Strengthening:** Projects focused on supporting Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), including through accelerator programs, and enabling businesses to access local, regional, and international markets.
- 9. Innovation & Digital Transformation:** Project that aimed at supporting new and creative approaches towards socioeconomic challenges in Jordan, utilizing advancements in ICT.
- 10. Cash-Based Interventions:** Projects that provided conditional and unconditional cash transfers, including cash-for-work.
- 11. Advocacy & Lobbying:** Projects that sought to influence public policies, raise awareness, and shape public opinion on livelihood and broader socioeconomic issues by engaging with relevant stakeholders, networking and coalition-building, strategic communication, and targeted outreach efforts.
- 12. In-Kind intervention:** Projects that assisted in delivering goods or services, including agricultural supplies, IT items, and TVET equipment.
- 13. Research:** Projects that contributed to generating evidence on the livelihood sector and socioeconomic issues in Jordan, such as unemployment, women's labor participation, and refugee economic inclusion.
- 14. General livelihoods:** Projects that did not specify the types of economic interventions they implemented.

Among the 108 mapped livelihood projects in Jordan, Education & Training stands out as the most common economic intervention, included in 90 initiatives. It is followed by Job Creation & Income Generation (52 initiatives) and Economic Empowerment (43). Other notable interventions are Financial Inclusion & Microfinance (34), Food Security & Green Transition (31), Capacity Building & Institutional Support (30), Networking & Partnerships (28), Market Development & Strengthening (27), and Advocacy & Lobbying (27). Less frequently implemented interventions include Innovation & Digital Transformation (24), Cash-Based Interventions (21), In-Kind Interventions (14), and Research (7).



a) Skills First: The Dominance of Education and Training

Within this economic intervention category, five sub-categories emerged: **1) Skills Development, Re-skilling, and Up-skilling**, **2) TVET**, **3) Financial Literacy**, **4) Counseling & Mentoring**, and **5) Apprenticeship, Traineeship, and Internship**.



Skills development, including re-skilling and up-skilling, is present in 77 livelihood projects, meaning that almost a third quarter of the projects mapped included this economic intervention. Some examples are *Improving Resilience of Refugee and Host Population in Jordan through Development of Livelihood Skills and Opportunities* (Project #4), *Skills Training Education Program - STEP* (Project #65), and *Jordan: Modernizing Education, Skills, and Administrative Reforms - MASAR* (Project #107).

These efforts by development partners aim to address one of the major structural, supply-driven causes of unemployment in Jordan, especially among youth: the **skills mismatch**.

According to the European Training Foundation, there are two types of skill mismatches:¹³

- **Vertical mismatch:** The level of skills or education qualifications is higher or lower than what is required for the specific occupation. This is also known as over- and under-education and over-and under-skilling.
- **Horizontal mismatch:** The qualifications do not adequately match the specific occupation.

Regarding vertical mismatch, in 2016, almost a quarter of the Jordanian workforce was over-educated,¹⁴ and around 29% were under-educated.¹⁵ For the same year, the horizontal mismatch amounted to 53,5%, i.e., more than half of the workers in Jordan were working in a job for which they did not have qualification for.¹⁶ The neglect of soft skills, the predominance of the academic stream over technical and vocational education, and the lack of practical experience remain at the core of the current skills mismatch.¹⁷

In order to bridge the skills gap, and aligned with various national policies and strategies, such as the National TVET Strategy 2023 – 2027, aid actors have prioritized **TVET** over the past years, as shown by projects like *Labor Market Oriented Vocational Education, Higher Education and Training Phase II* (Project #91). This has been coupled with on-the-job experience through **apprenticeships, traineeships, internships**, and other practical modalities - which, as shown in the pie chart, still are very limited-.

Another economic intervention within Education & Training was **counseling** and **mentoring**. 23 livelihood projects included these services, supporting job seekers in boosting their employability and guiding entrepreneurs and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in enhancing their businesses.

Financial literacy is essential for making informed decisions on financial matters, like borrowing or investing money. Nevertheless, it has received limited attention from humanitarian and development organizations in Jordan: Only 16 out of 108 mapped projects contained an intervention tackling this economic issue.

b) From Entrepreneurship to Employment

Two interventions stand out under this category. First, entrepreneurship, with a range of interventions that include: **1) Entrepreneurship**, **2) Entrepreneurship – Home-based businesses (HBB)**, **3) Entrepreneurship – Social Enterprises**, **4) Entrepreneurship – Accelerator / Incubator**, **5) Entrepreneurship – Start-up**. A second set of interventions, less prevalent, Job placement and matching.

¹³ European Training Foundation, *Skills mismatch in ETF partner countries. Cross-country report* (2022).

¹⁴ *Idem*, 67.

¹⁵ *Idem*, 68.

¹⁶ *Idem*, 77.

¹⁷ ARDD, *Youth Unemployment in Jordan: Failed Strategies and Deferred Promises* (2023).

According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, in 2019, 9,1% of the adult population in Jordan were engaged in an entrepreneurial activity – either starting or running a business.¹⁸ A total of 43 livelihood projects with an entrepreneurship component were identified during the mapping process, recognizing that entrepreneurship can take several forms. As per the mapping information, humanitarian and development actors in Jordan have fostered entrepreneurship through **HBB**, **start-ups**, and **accelerator and incubator programs**.¹⁹

HBBs are a predominant intervention among women, refugees, and persons with disabilities. For women, HBBs serve as a culturally suitable livelihood modality by enabling them to work while managing household chores and care responsibilities, more aligned with the prevailing cultural and social norms, thereby helping to overcome some of the main barriers that prevent women in Jordan from participating in the labor market. In the case of refugees, HBBs have the potential to ease some of the obstacles they face in accessing income-generating opportunities, such as security concerns, mobility restrictions, and legal and administrative requirements.²⁰ Similarly, when it comes to persons with disabilities, working from home facilitates their labor integration by removing physical and logistical barriers, such as accessibility of the workspace and transportation.

On the other hand, entrepreneurship, through the setup or support of **start-ups**, has focused on innovative sectors. For instance, *From Innovation to Creation* (Project #59) is a regional initiative implemented in Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Tunisia designed to support the growth and scaling-up of start-ups in key sectors, such as green energy, digitalization, and agrifood.

Start-up companies and individual entrepreneurs also have been supported by the international and local aid community through business **incubation and accelerator programs**. Incubation programs offer early-stage entrepreneurs training, guidance, and resources to help them convert their ideas into viable businesses, while acceleration programs focus on speeding up the growth of already-running entrepreneurial businesses.

Donors, such as the European Union and GIZ, have shown to be keen on funding social entrepreneurship projects, as they not only positively contribute to national economic growth by creating jobs and fostering innovation, but also addressing pressing social and environmental challenges. For example, *IBTIKAR* (Project #85) aims to support social enterprises through the improvement of the entrepreneurial skills of youth and women.

In addition to entrepreneurship, **job placement and matching** is another relevant category within Job creation & Income Generation. Job placement is the process of actively placing a jobseeker into a specific position, facilitated by a human resources/employment agency, or in this context INGOs,

¹⁸ Center for Strategic Studies, Jordan Enterprise Development Corporation, *Global Entrepreneurship Monitor: Jordan National Report 2019/2020* (October 2020).

¹⁹ UN Women Jordan. *Women's Informal Employment in Jordan: Challenges Facing Home-Based Businesses During COVID-19*. Amman: UN Women Jordan, 2021. <https://jordan.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2021/womens-informal-employment-in-jordan>

²⁰ REACH and UN Women. *Enhancing Livelihood Opportunities for Women in Jordan: An Assessment of Women's Home-Based Businesses in Jordan*. Amman: REACH and UN Women, 2020. https://jordan.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20Jordan/Images/news-events/2020/September/REACH_UN_WOMEN_WorkingWomenReport.pdf

N/LNNGO, and UN agencies; job matching consists of finding the best fit between job seekers and available vacancies by comparing the knowledge and skills of the candidates with the requirements of the company. According to the information available in the mapping, this kind of much-needed interventions is minimal: Only 10 livelihood projects included these services.

c) Market Development and Strengthening

As an analytical category, Market Development and Strengthening encompasses projects designed to **support SMEs and enhance access to markets**. Jordan has over 100,000 SMEs, constituting 97% of all companies operating in the country. SMEs' economic activity generates more than 50% of the national GDP and provides employment to approximately 60% of the Jordanian workforce. Despite its economic importance, a limited number of livelihood projects directly targeted SMEs (19). Support to SMEs is provided in different ways: capacity development, technical assistance, mentorship, access to financial services, etc. An interesting example of a livelihood project supporting SMEs is *Business Growth Activity* (Project #9), which aims to "improve their productivity and competitiveness, create employment, foster innovation, promote economic growth, and advance Jordan towards a more prosperous, resilient, and inclusive future".

Similarly to entrepreneurship, livelihood projects also have applied accelerator programs to SMEs and have supported SMEs with social and environmental objectives.

Also, regarding Market Development and Strengthening, livelihood actors in Jordan have worked on boosting entrepreneurs and SMEs' access to local, regional, and international markets, with 12 projects addressing this matter, such as *Informal Livelihoods Advancement Activity - IQLAA* (Project #8). By enhancing access to markets, it is understood that aid actors support local producers or service providers to establish linkages with suppliers, distributors, and final consumers and users at a national, regional and/or global level. This support is done through the establishment of e-commerce platforms, organization of trade fairs, seasonal bazaars, networking events with national and international private sectors, fostering partnerships, and providing training on quality standards, and other legal requirements, among other examples.

d) Economic Empowerment as a Response to Exclusion

A total of 43 projects focused on the economic empowerment of traditionally disadvantaged groups. In these projects, economic empowerment is defined by a mix of technical and soft skills, in addition to a strong advocacy component. In addition to refugees, these livelihood initiatives primarily focused on three main social groups: women, youth, and PwD. If data is disaggregated by social group, **24 projects aimed to empower and support women, 23 youth, and 6 PwD**.

Regarding women, it should be stressed that the unemployment rate among women is 31% (Q2 2024)²¹, despite the fact they have higher educational attainments than their male peers (MENA paradox). Moreover, Jordan's female labor force participation rate ranks among the lowest worldwide, with around 14%.²² Hence, there is a need for livelihood projects whose economic

²¹ DoS, "21.4% is the unemployment rate for the second quarter of 2024" (4 September 2024).

²² World Bank Group, "Female labor force participation" (10 January 2022), <https://genderdata.worldbank.org/en/data-stories/flfp-data-story>

interventions aim at advancing women's economic independence and self-sufficiency. E.g. *Women Economic Empowerment and Leadership Activity - WEELA* (Project #10), a project that aims to strengthen Jordan's enabling environment for women's participation, increase women's waged employment in the private sector, and increase their leadership in both the public and private sectors.

Besides tackling women's unemployment, humanitarian and development organizations have used economic empowerment projects to address one of the most concerning social issues worldwide: **gender-based violence**. In fact, 8 out of 24 women's economic empowerment projects were designed or included interventions to end gender-based violence. For example, *No Woman Left Behind* (Project #30), an initiative that purposed to improve the quality of life of women with disabilities and/or at risk and/or survivors of gender-based violence.

Similar to women, youth unemployment in Jordan is also a pressing issue: 46% of young people in the country are unemployed,²³ a figure that must be understood within the context of a population where over 60% is under the age of 30.²⁴ By responding to youth employment-related challenges, livelihood actors intend to break the poverty cycle, boost innovation, and bring systemic changes, all while ensuring long-term sustainable development. For instance, *RYSE: Resilient Youth, Socially and Economically Empowered* (Project #18). This initiative has a main objective to empower Jordanian and Syrian refugee youth through training on soft and technical skills to become leaders in their communities, jointly with advocacy to address societal structures that prevent them from participating in civil society and the labor market.

Aligned with the findings of sub-section 1.2, PwD economic empowerment remains marginal, despite labor inclusion being instrumental to their social integration.

e) Financial Inclusion & Microfinance

Financial inclusion, including microfinance, is a key component in 34 livelihood projects. **Seed funding** and **unconditional grants** are the most used formulas among humanitarian agencies in Jordan to promote financial inclusion. As examples, the *COOL YA: Creating Attractive Opportunities for Livelihood of Youth in Agriculture* (Project #100) provided seed capital to establish or expand youth MSEs in the agriculture sector, and *BORO'OM – Supporting the creation and strengthening of self-employment and entrepreneurial activities, promoting social integration and contributing to local development in the agricultural and sustainable tourism supply chains* (Project #44), which provided grants for small and HBBs in the cultural heritage, agricultural and tourism sectors.

Other financial inclusion modalities identified during the mapping process include **conditional grants**,²⁵ **conditional loans**,²⁶ and **pool funds**.²⁷

²³ World Bank, "Jordan Overview", <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/jordan/overview>

²⁴ UNICEF, "Challenges", <https://www.unicef.org/jordan/youth#:~:text=Jordan%20has%20one%20of%20the,is%20not%20without%20its%20challenges>.

²⁵ Project #8.

²⁶ Project #19.

²⁷ Projects #77 , #98.

f) Linking Livelihoods, Climate, and Food Security

Food insecurity has worsened over the past decade due to a combination of external factors, including rising international food prices, an influx of refugees, decreased foreign funding, the COVID-19 pandemic, and climate change. Food insecurity has been particularly exacerbated for certain vulnerable groups, such as refugees. The World Food Program (WFP) estimates that 76% of Jordan's refugee population is food insecure²⁸ Additionally, Jordan is highly vulnerable to climate change impacts, with water scarcity as its most critical environmental and socioeconomic challenge.

With the aim of enhancing food security, strengthening self-reliance, and mitigating climate change consequences, livelihood actors have implemented 31 projects. Interventions encompassed:

- Transition toward climate-smart agriculture. E.g. *Strengthening Livelihood & Food Security of Host Communities & Syrian Refugees Through the Development of Sustainable Agricultural Practices* (Project #32).
- Sustainable management of natural resources, particularly water. E.g. *Mitigating Climate Change through Solid Waste Management in Southern Jordan* (Project #76).
- Promotion of green renewable energy. E.g. *SEED II: Sustainable Energy and Economic Development Project in Jordan – Phase II* (Project #78).
- Construction of green and climate-resilient infrastructures. E.g. *Towards a More Inclusive Economy through Immediate Job Generation and Enterprise Development for Vulnerable Refugee and Host Communities in Jordan* (Project #37).
- Development of green skills and creation of green jobs. E.g. *Creating Sustainable Green Jobs for Refugees and Host Communities through the Green Economy in Jordan* (Project #72).
- Support for entrepreneurship and SMEs in the green, blue, and circular economy. E.g. *Green Growth and Jobs Accelerator* (Project #75).

g) Capacity Building & Institutional Support

30 livelihood projects contain a component on building and strengthening institutional capacity. For instance, the *Transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agro-food systems* (Project #93) project built the capacities of more than 150 Syrian and Jordanian farmers through the establishment of Farmer Field School and Farmer Business School, fostering efficient and sustainable agri-food systems.²⁹

h) Networking & Partnerships

Networking and partnership building are included in 28 livelihood projects mapped in the analysis. This intervention often involves partnerships between L/NGOs, INGOs, and the private sector to achieve objectives such as creating decent job opportunities, increasing women's labor participation, and developing education curricula. A notable example is the Najahna project, which enhances access to employment for Syrian refugees in Jordan through private sector partnerships

²⁸ WFP, Jordan", <https://www.wfp.org/countries/jordan>

²⁹ United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Local Capacity Strengthening Policy. Washington, DC: USAID, 2022.

(Project #17). This initiative has been recognized as a good practice by the Global Compact on Refugees.

Moreover, these livelihood initiatives were designed to enhance public-private policy dialogue and collaboration, strengthen business ecosystems, create clusters and networks, develop linkages among Jordanian businesses and foreign companies and investors, and organize meetings and events where businessmen and businesswomen can expand their connections. Some examples are *Design and Determine: Building Resilience of Vulnerable Jordanians and Refugees through Livelihoods Support and Protection* (Project #3) - with the establishment of the Human and Economic Development Forum, a multistakeholder platform for social dialogue, and *Green forward: Enhancing business networks in the Mediterranean* (Project #60).

i) Innovation & Digital Transformation

Innovation and digitalization have proven to be powerful drivers for tackling Jordan's structural socioeconomic challenges. Accordingly, humanitarian and development organizations have executed 27 livelihood projects incorporating innovation and digital transformation as one of their economic interventions. As mentioned in the sub-section 2.3 Non-Agricultural Activities, livelihood actors in this regard have focused on developing the digital skills of targeted social groups, such as *Orange Digital Centers: Digital Skills for Employment* (Project #88), training youth, women, and refugees. Moreover, aid actors have worked on integrating technology-enabled solutions, including artificial intelligence, into Jordanian businesses to accelerate their growth, improve their competitiveness and productivity, and create new jobs. For example, ICT advancements were also applied for educational and training purposes, providing innovative learning experiences and preparing students and job seekers for new labor market realities.

A close connection between **digitalization/innovation** and **climate resilience** was found. Over a third of livelihood projects related to innovation and digital transformation sought to accelerate the transition toward a greener economy, foster the creation of green jobs, and promote innovative solutions to address climate change challenges. For instance, *Scaling up water innovation for climate security in northern Jordan* (Project #94).

j) Cash-Based Interventions

Two types of cash-based interventions were identified: **social** and **cash assistance**. According to the ILO, social assistance is a form of provision of social protection through non-contributory schemes³⁰, aimed at supporting individuals in need and reducing poverty levels. On the other hand, the CALP Network defines cash assistance as a type of humanitarian aid delivered to crisis-affected populations, which allows them to buy goods and services for themselves based on their own needs and preferences. It can be **conditional**, it requires the recipient to carry out an activity to receive the assistance, or **unconditional**, the recipient does not need to do anything.³¹

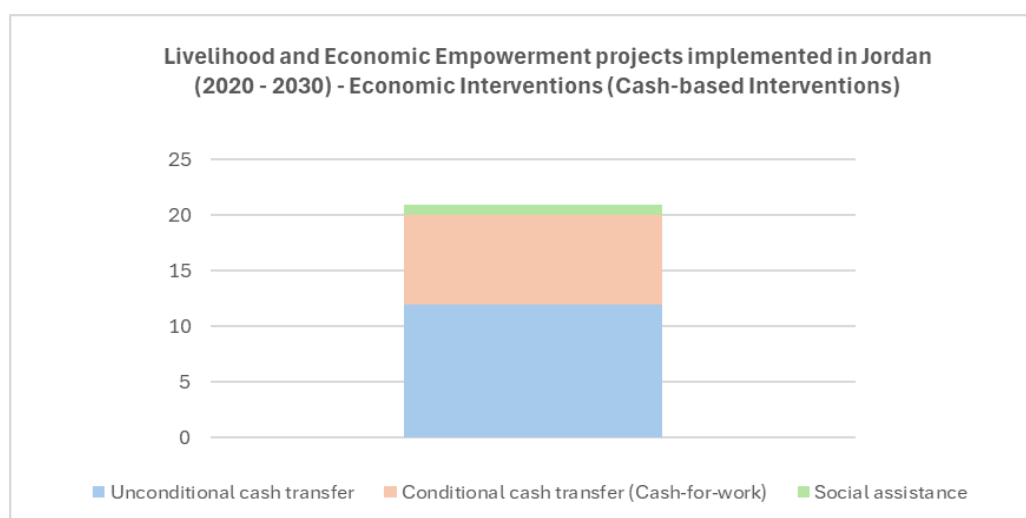
³⁰ ILO Social Protection Floors, Recommendation No. 202 (2012).

³¹ CALP Network, "Cash and Voucher Assistance: What is CVA?" (21 February 2024), <https://www.calpnetwork.org/cash-and-voucher-assistance/what-is-cva/>

During the desk-based review process, **cash-based interventions** were mapped: **1 social assistance project** and **20 cash assistance projects**. The social assistance project was *Strengthening Social Protection in Jordan* (Project #68), a multi-donor funded initiative that had as one of its strategic objectives to provide, through the National Aid Fund, targeted social assistance to an increasing number of Jordanian households who are not able to be economically self-sufficient, including as a result of COVID 19 crisis.

Regarding the 20 cash assistance projects, **12 were unconditional**, and **8 were conditional**. In the case of unconditional cash assistance, most of the projects within which the intervention was implemented started in 2020. It can thus draw the conclusion that these economic interventions, similar to the above-mentioned social assistance project, were aimed at mitigating the socioeconomic shock caused by the COVID-19 pandemic among refugee and host communities. A good illustration of this is *Natafaa: Counteract the effects of the COVID-19 emergency through an integrated system of social safety nets in the governorate of Mafraq* (Project #41).

For conditional cash assistance, **cash-for-work** was the modality chosen by all humanitarian and development actors. See *Increase Economic Self-reliance of Azraq Camp Refugees Through Environmentally Responsible Solid Waste Management Incentive-Based Volunteer Activities* (Project #83).



The notable imbalance between social assistance, an institution related to development, and cash assistance, commonly used in humanitarian crises, represents a missed opportunity to put into practice the **humanitarian-development nexus** in Jordan.

k) Advocacy & Lobbying

Of the 108 livelihood projects mapped, 27 integrated an advocacy component. These interventions primarily focused on three main advocacy issues:

- a) Refugee socioeconomic inclusion.** E.g. *Investing in the Future: Improved educational, social and economic integration of Somali, Sudanese, and Yemeni refugees in Jordan* (Project #82).

- b) **Decent work conditions and labor rights.** E.g. *Employment Intensive Investment Program and decent work in Jordan* (Project #43).
- c) **Women's economic empowerment.** E.g. *Towards stronger economic participation of women in Jordan* (Project #53).

Humanitarian and development actors utilized a range of methods to achieve their advocacy goals. The most commonly mentioned advocacy tactics were conducting **awareness campaigns, meeting with decision-makers, and engaging with stakeholders for policymaking and other strategic purposes**. To a lesser extent, training and advocacy capacity building, as well as the provision of legal aid were frequently employed as advocacy tools. Alliance/coalition building and evidence-based research were found to be the least used methodologies in pursuing advocacy objectives.

I.3. Which Economic Sectors Receive the Most Attention?

The projects were classified using the International Labor Organization (ILO)'s International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC),³² providing a structured framework to categorize interventions by sector. By aligning with the ILO framework, the analysis aims to understand their alignment with broader economic trends. The livelihood and economic empowerment projects mapped during the timeframe of 2020 – 2030 targeted **12 economic activities**.

The mapped livelihood and economic empowerment projects were classified as per the following ISIC categories:

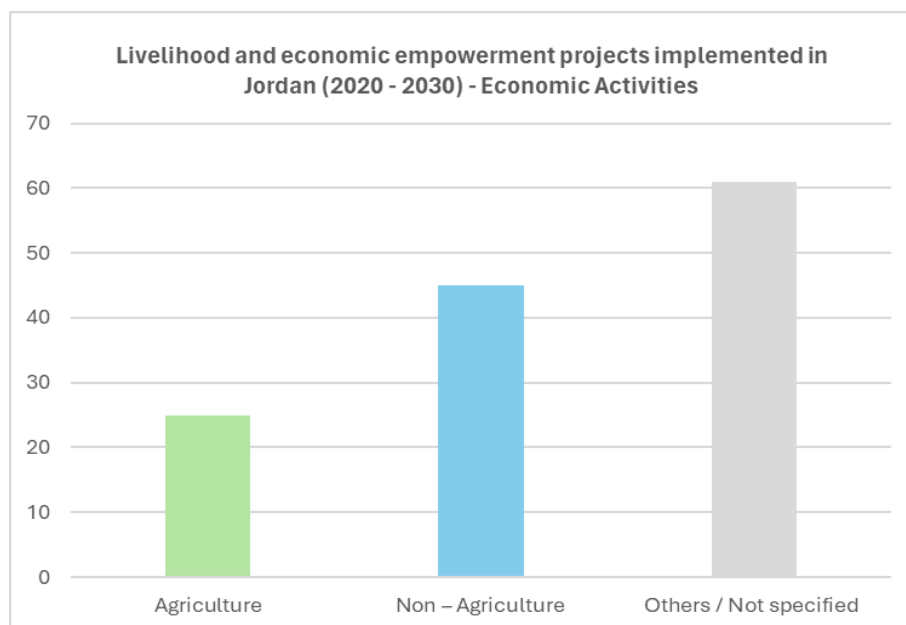
Economic Activities Classification			
Agriculture			
Non Agriculture –	Industry	Energy	
		Water supply, sewerage, waste management	
		Construction	
	Services	Manufacturing	Food processing, Garment Production
		Market Services	Domestic Work; ICT; Tourism, Accommodation, Food Services Activities
		Non-market Services	Health, Education
Others/ Not Specified			

³²All descriptions are taken from ILO, "International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC)", <https://ilostat ilo org/methods/concepts-and-definitions/classification-economic-activities/>

The mapping includes a final category of **Others / Not Specified**, that refers to economic activities that do not fall under any of the above-mentioned categories (*Others*). Additionally, this category was used when the information available online about the mapped project did not specify a particular service, industry, or agricultural activity (*Not Specified*). A subcategory was created for **“Green, blue, and circular economic activities”**. This subcategory was utilized when the information available online regarding the projects did mention it works on “green, blue, and circular economy”, but did not specify further details.

The classification of the economic activities for the mapped livelihood and economic empowerment projects is represented in the table below:

In terms of targeted economic activities, out of over the 100 mapped livelihood and economic empowerment projects implemented in Jordan between 2020 – 2030, **61** are categorized as **“Others / Not Specified”**, followed by **45** projects under **“Non-Agriculture”**, and **25** projects in **“Agriculture”**.³³



I.2.1 Others / Not Specified

Based on the desk-based review, the online information about the economic activities targeted by the projects was limited and imprecise. As a result, “*Others / Not Specified*” ranks the highest. 6 out of 61 livelihood projects within this category were identified to have worked on “green, blue, and circular economic activities”. All these livelihoods projects have in common that they aim to create “green jobs”, without specifying in which professional sector or in which specific roles.

I. 2.2 Agriculture: Refugee Livelihoods, Food Security, and Climate Resilience

Regarding “*Agriculture*”, although it is the one with the fewest projects, it constitutes a fundamental economic activity within the livelihood sector in Jordan for distinct reasons: Firstly, it is one of the few professional sectors opened to Syrian refugees, employing (formally and informally) 16% of

³³ Several projects did not only target one economic activity, but multiple.

employed Syrians - the second largest sector of employment for Syrian refugees.³⁴ Syrians who sought refuge in Jordan came mainly from rural governorates in Syria, such as Dar’a, Homs, and Aleppo,³⁵ where agriculture was one of the main economic activities. Therefore, livelihood actors working on livelihoods in Jordan leverage the pre-existing knowledge and skills of Syrians to foster their economic resilience.

Livelihood and economic empowerment projects targeting agriculture as an economic activity not only aim to tackle the high unemployment rates of the Kingdom, but also enhance food security among refugees and Jordanians, and mitigate climate change consequences. Additionally, even though it has been steadily decreasing for decades since the country's independence, agriculture still represents a considerable share of Jordan's GDP, currently amounting to 5.5% (Q1 2024).³⁶

Agricultural livelihood projects in Jordan are distributed over the country, with a certain prevalence in **Mafrq** and the **Jordanian Valley** (Irbid, Balqa, Jerash, Ajloun, and Madaba). The Jordan Valley is considered to be Jordan's "food basket" because it is the country's most productive area, benefiting from a favorable combination of temperature and rainfall conditions. Hence, agriculture in these regions becomes a suitable and sustainable livelihood for Jordanians and refugees. A significant number of agricultural projects were also mapped in **Ma'an** and **Karak**, areas situated in the Western Highlands where rainfed agriculture is predominantly practiced (in contrast with the previous areas where irrigated agriculture is the most common one).³⁷

Livelihood and Economic Empowerment Projects implemented in Jordan (2020 – 2030) – Economic Activities (Agriculture)



A good example of a livelihood project focusing on agriculture is the *Smart Development of Eco-Friendly Solutions and Economic Regional Agricultural Techniques* (Project #1). Funded by Agence Française de Développement, this initiative aimed to create long-term livelihood opportunities and improve working conditions among vulnerable Jordanians and Syrian refugees working in the agricultural sector, while enhancing food security, improving water use efficiency, and advancing sustainable farming practices in Jordan. In addition to effectively combining various economic interventions beyond mere training, this project stands out for establishing the "Smart DESERT Company", whose main objective is "economically empowering farmers and home-based business

³⁴ UNHCR, VAF, 73.

³⁵ UNHCR, "Syrian Refugees in Jordan by Origin" (As of 30 September 2024), <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/111583>

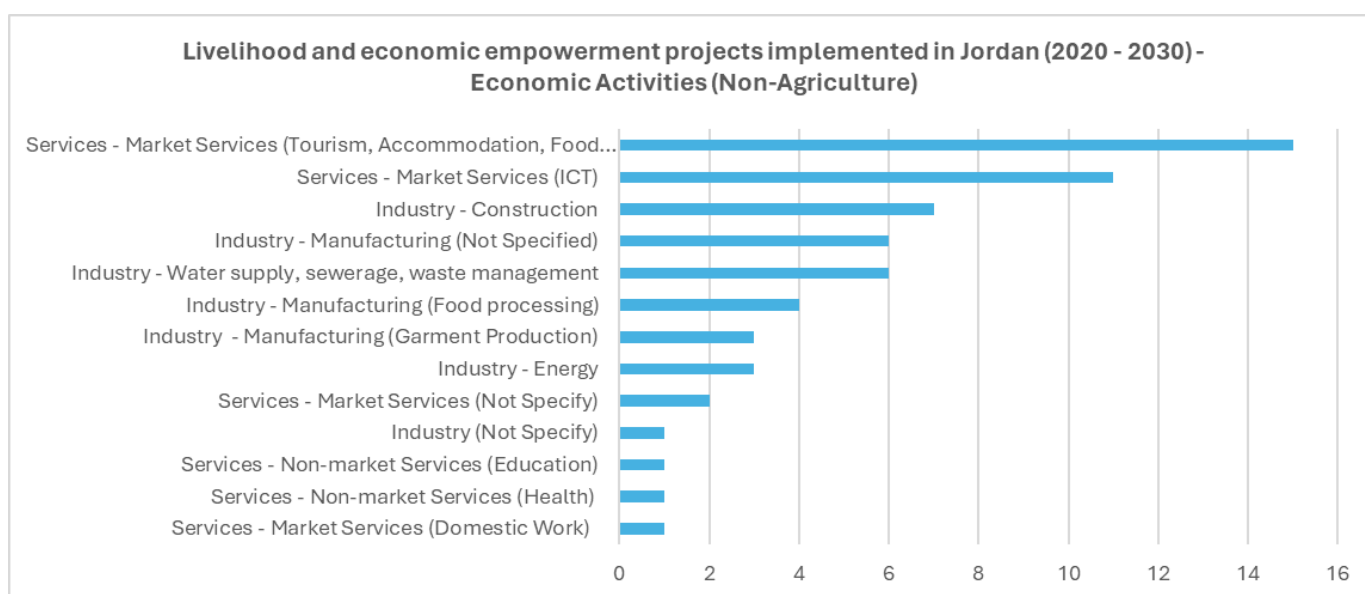
³⁶ DoS, "GDP growth of 2.0% in the first quarter of 2024" (9 July 2024), https://dosweb.dos.gov.jo/gdp_01_2024/

³⁷ Meddings, G., Desai, B.; Jaskolski, M.; Schapendonk, F., Läderach, P, *Barriers to developing social protection programs with adaptation considerations: The case of Jordan* (2023), 19.

owners by marketing their crops and agricultural products, linking them with local and global markets, and providing them with technical advice”.³⁸

1.2.3 Beyond Agriculture: Services, Manufacturing, and ICT

When it comes to “*Non-Agriculture*”, **services** take the lead in the graphic. 32 out of 49 livelihoods projects worked on the service sector, particularly, **market services**. The remaining 17 initiatives targeted specific **industrial sectors**, i.e., **energy, water, construction, and manufacturing**.



Concerning **services**, as illustrated in the graphic, **market services** represent the overwhelming majority of this sub-category, with 27 livelihood projects. Market services concentrate on two economic activities: **1) Tourism, Accommodation, and Food Services**, and **2) ICT**. For the past decades, Jordan’s economy has mainly relied on the service sector. In 2023, the services reached 60.6 % of Jordan’s GDP, with banking, insurance, and business services having the best performance.³⁹ Additionally, restaurants and hotels, and transportation and communications have played a key role in Jordan’s national economic growth.

Prior to Covid-19 and the current geopolitical instability in the region, Jordan had become an incredibly popular destination for international and regional tourism. Prior to the war on Gaza and its economic impact on the Middle East, Jordan’s tourism sector witnessed records in terms of inbound tourism and receipts generated in 2023: 5.35 million in international arrivals and USD 7.4 million in international tourism revenues.⁴⁰ Unfortunately, international tourism is unevenly distributed across different areas: The so-called “Golden Triangle”, consisting of Petra, Aqaba, and Wadi Rum, attracts the majority of inbound tourists. Humanitarian and development actors working on livelihoods realized this reality and, over the years, started to prioritize other locations. In fact,

³⁸ <https://www.smartdesertproject.com/about-the-company/>

³⁹ World Bank Group, 4.2 World Development Indicators: Structure of value added”, <https://wdi.worldbank.org/table/4.2>

⁴⁰ UN Tourism, Global and regional tourism performance”, <https://www.unwto.org/tourism-data/global-and-regional-tourism-performance>

only 2 out of 15 livelihood projects targeting tourism from 2020 – 2030 were implemented on these locations.⁴¹

Geographic diversification in the tourism sector has come hand in hand with **cultural heritage rehabilitation**. A third of the projects in tourism in Jordan aimed to create livelihood opportunities in and from cultural heritage rehabilitation. **Madaba, Jerash, Pella** (Irbid) or **Shobak** (Ma'an) are some of the locations that have benefited from cultural heritage rehabilitation-based interventions. For instance, *Sustainable Jerash: Enhancing cultural heritage for inclusive tourism* (Project #45). Ecotourism is also emerging as an alternative to the traditional tourism model.

ICT is another economic sector where the humanitarian and developmental actors have been active as per the mapping information, with 11 projects executed. Aligned with Jordan's Economic Modernization Vision and Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship-led National Digital Transformation Strategy (2021 - 2025), they have worked towards the digitalization of the national economy, specifically on developing **digital skills** of both Jordanian and refugee youth and women, like *Digital Skills for Better Future Program* (Project #81).

ICT projects are highly relevant for the refugee population, particularly for Syrian refugees living in Zaatari and Azraq Refugee Camps, given the existing mobility restrictions. By developing refugees' digital literacy and skills, aid organizations enhance their employability, granting them access to new markets, such as remote work opportunities and online freelancing. At the same time, this livelihood strategy contributes to advancing durable solutions for refugees and asylum seekers, especially resettlement and complementary pathways (e.g. labor mobility-based schemes).

Unlike market services, only one project targeting **non-market services** was mapped: *Women's Economic Linkages and Employment Development* (Project #79)⁴², which focused on education and healthcare services.

As shown in the graphic above, livelihood interventions in Jordan by aid actors have not solely worked in the service sector but have also extended to crucial **industrial sectors**.

Manufacturing is at the top of the targeted industrial sectors, with 9 livelihood projects implemented. Manufacturing constitutes the bulk of Jordan's industrial activities, with 17.3% of its GDP (2023)⁴³ and employing 9.5% of the workforce in Jordan.⁴⁴ Within the manufacturing industry, the creation of livelihood opportunities has concentrated in two sub-sectors: **food processing** and **garment production**. Similarly to agriculture, both economic activities are legally open for Syrian refugees. This, in addition to the economic weight of the sector, explains why humanitarian actors have decided to foster livelihood opportunities in these economic areas.

⁴¹ Projects #33 Local Communities and Sustainable Tourism in Petra and Wadi Rum, and #99 Youth JO – Level Up!.

⁴² Project #79.

⁴³ World Bank Group, "4.2 World Development Indicators: Structure of value added", <https://wdi.worldbank.org/table/4.2>

⁴⁴ DoS, "Table 4.4: Employed Persons Age 15+ Years by Sex, Main Current Economic Activity & Nationality (Percentage Distribution). First Round -2024", http://www.dos.gov.jo/owa-user/owa/emp_unemp.show_tables1?lang=E&year1=2024&round=1&t_no=27

Following manufacturing, **construction** ranks as the second most targeted industry according to the mapping information, with 7 livelihood projects carried out, such as the *Employment Intensive Investment Program and decent work in Jordan* (Project #43). Despite its modest GDP contribution, the sector's high labor demand coupled with the relatively low barriers to entry makes construction a suitable economic activity to generate employment, particularly for Syrian refugees. Indeed, it stands as the primary employment sector for Syrians, providing jobs to roughly a quarter of employed Syrians.⁴⁵ Construction does not only serve as a source of job creation, but it also contributes to the development of key infrastructures, including water and energy facilities. In fact, half of the livelihood project including water and energy interventions had a construction component.

Finally, in accordance with Jordan's Energy Strategy 2020 - 2030, the National Water Strategy 2023 – 2040, and other climate change and economic policies, livelihood actors have actively supported **water and energy sectors**. Water-related livelihoods project (6) encompassed solid waste management, development of human resources capacities, water management, and others, while livelihood projects focused on energy (3) aimed at fostering green and renewable energy sources, such as solar power.

1.3 Conclusion

The livelihood and economic interventions in Jordan demonstrate significant alignment with the country's economic landscape, targeting key sectors and addressing critical challenges. By focusing on agriculture, services, manufacturing, and emerging sectors like ICT and the green economy, livelihood projects leverage Jordan's economic strengths while seeking to integrate vulnerable populations, particularly refugees, into the economy.

The service sector, a cornerstone of Jordan's economy contributing over 60% of GDP, is prominently featured in these interventions. Projects targeting tourism, accommodation, and ICT align with the country's strengths in these areas, particularly tourism's pre-pandemic growth and ICT's alignment with Jordan's Digital Transformation Strategy. By focusing on digital skills development and cultural heritage rehabilitation, the projects not only foster job creation but also promote economic diversification and regional development. Geographic diversification within tourism, for example, has expanded opportunities in lesser-known areas, reducing reliance on traditional hotspots such as Petra and Aqaba.

Agriculture, while contributing a smaller share to GDP, remains a vital sector for employment, particularly for Syrian refugees who often possess pre-existing agricultural skills. Projects in this sector are strategically designed to address food security, climate resilience, and high unemployment rates. Initiatives like the Smart DESERT Project integrate modern agricultural techniques with sustainability goals, enhancing productivity and resource efficiency while supporting refugee livelihoods.

Manufacturing, another key economic sector, has seen targeted interventions in subfields like food processing and garment production, which are legally accessible to refugees. While these initiatives

⁴⁵ UNHCR, VAF, 73.

align with Jordan's industrial priorities, their limited scope highlights missed opportunities to diversify into higher-value manufacturing sectors. Similarly, construction projects address labor-intensive needs and infrastructure development, providing significant employment opportunities for both refugees and Jordanians.

Emerging sectors, such as ICT and the green economy, are critical for Jordan's future economic resilience. ICT initiatives, particularly those aimed at youth and women, open pathways to remote work and global markets, aligning with Jordan's modernization goals. Green economy projects appear to show considerable potential in addressing climate change and fostering sustainable job. Clearer focus and alignment with national energy and water strategies could enhance their contributions to sustainable development.

Despite these positive alignments, sectoral imbalances are evident. Overrepresentation of service-related projects and underrepresentation of sectors like advanced manufacturing and non-market services create gaps in economic diversification.

Data gaps also pose challenges, as evidenced by the high proportion of projects categorized under "Others / Not Specified." This lack of specificity hampers effective monitoring, evaluation, and scaling of successful interventions. Improved data transparency is essential for aligning projects more closely with Jordan's national priorities.

In conclusion, the interventions align well with Jordan's economic strengths and address critical labor market needs while fostering sustainability and resilience. However, optimizing their impact requires addressing sectoral imbalances and enhancing project design and data transparency. These steps are crucial for ensuring that interventions effectively support Jordan's economic development goals while creating inclusive opportunities for both refugees and host communities.

1.4. What Forms of Capital Are Being Strengthened?

Applying the United Nations Development Program (UNDP)'s sustainable livelihoods framework in development projects,⁴⁶ Livelihood projects were categorized into five capitals:⁴⁷

- 1. Human Capital:** It encompasses the skills, abilities, knowledge, and experiences that, combined, allow populations to pursue their livelihood.
- 2. Social Capital:** It refers to the social resources individuals rely on to achieve their livelihood objectives, including networks and connections, participation in formal groups, and relationships of trust, reciprocity, and exchange.
- 3. Natural Capital:** A set of natural resources (water, wood, land, carbon, etc.) that are used to create additional resources and services that may benefit livelihoods.
- 4. Physical Capital:** It includes basic infrastructure and producer goods needed to support livelihoods, such as access to transportation, clean and affordable energy, housing...

⁴⁶ UNDP, *Guidance Note: Application of the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework in Development Projects* (July 2017), <https://www.undp.org/latin-america/publications/guidance-note-application-sustainable-livelihoods-framework-development-projects>

⁴⁷ 5 projects were categorized under "General livelihoods" and not within the livelihood capital categories due to the lack of or insufficient information online.

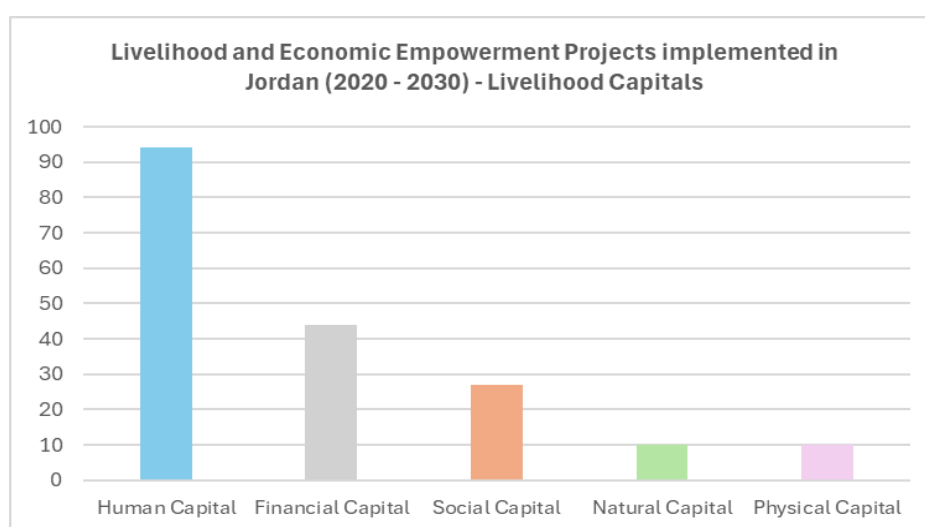
5. Financial Capital: It consists of the financial resources that people use to achieve their livelihood objectives.

In line with the findings of the sub-section 3.1 Education & Training, **human capital** emerges as the most targeted livelihood capital, with 94 livelihood projects, such as *Skills4Work II: Localizing Demand Driven Skills Development for the Empowerment of Jordanians and Refugee Host Communities* (Project #7).

Financial capital follows, with a difference of 50 livelihood projects. For instance, *Refugee Investment Facility* (Project #19), an impact-linked loan program to SMEs designed to generate tangible impact for refugees and vulnerable Jordanians.

With 27 livelihood projects, **social capital** is in the third position. A good example of a social capital-related livelihood project is *Enhancement of Jordanian SMEs' inclusiveness, competitiveness and sustainable innovation* (Project #36), which had as one of its objectives fostering the bilateral dialogue and partnership between the Jordanian agribusiness SMEs and the Italian private sector.

Closely related to agriculture, at the bottom of the table are **natural and physical capitals**, with 10 livelihood projects each. Concerning natural capital, *Smart Development of Eco-Friendly Solutions and Economic Regional Agricultural Techniques* (Project #1) is a great exemplification by providing Syrian and Jordanian farmers with seeds and other agricultural items. With regard to physical capital, we can identify livelihood projects like *Sustainable Production and Utilization of Agro-natural Resources* (Project #31) - aimed at enhancing the water irrigation infrastructure.



Generally, livelihood projects mapped are the result of integrating several livelihood capitals rather than relying on a single one. The most repeated patterns were **Human + Financial Capital** (19 livelihood projects), **Human + Social Capital** (11 livelihood projects), and **Human + Financial + Social Capital** (8 livelihood projects). Two exceptions were found: 40 livelihood projects focused solely on human capital, and 7 addressed exclusively financial capital-related issues.

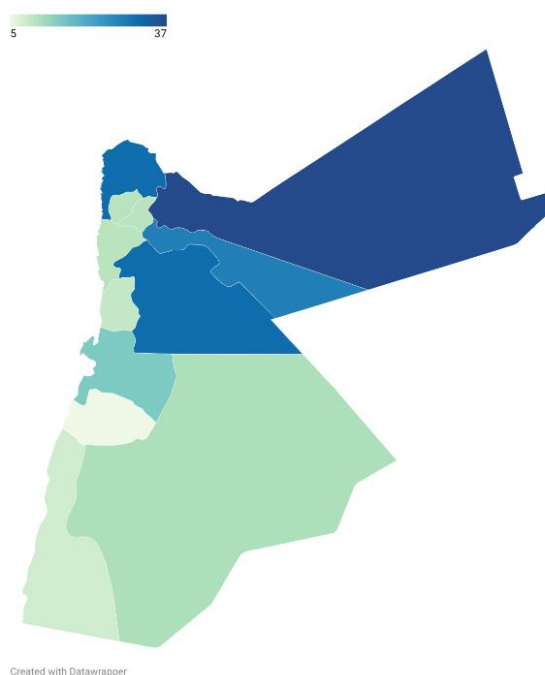
In short, livelihood projects in Jordan reflect a strong emphasis on human capital development, complemented by financial and social capital interventions. While these priorities align with immediate needs for skill-building and economic inclusion, the limited focus on natural and physical capital highlights an area for growth. The mapping suggests that projects integrating multiple forms of capital may offer greater potential for sustainable impact, advising that future efforts should prioritize holistic, multi-capital approaches to strengthen the livelihoods of both refugees and host communities.

I.5. Where Are Livelihood Projects Concentrated?

For the period 2020 - 2030, it was found that 108 livelihood projects were implemented across the twelve governorates of the Kingdom of Jordan, with a clear geographical focus on **Amman** and **northern governorates hosting large Syrian refugee population**: 37 livelihood projects in Mafrq (including those in Azraq Refugee Camp), 31 in Amman, 31 in Irbid, and 28 in Zarqa (including those in Zaatari Refugee Camp). To a lesser extent, **Karak** has also been a geographical priority for livelihood actors, with 15 livelihood projects implemented.

The geographical distribution of the livelihood projects mapped is shown in the map⁴⁸ below:

Livelihood and Economic Empowerment Projects implemented in Jordan
(2020 – 2030)



“Jordan Economic Monitor, Summer 2024: Strength Amidst Strain: Jordan’s Economic Resilience,” <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/jordan/publication/jordan-economic-monitor-summer-2024>.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ As per the information available online, 44 livelihood and economic empowerment projects were implemented “nationwide”, without specifically mentioning the governorates they were targeting. Hence, these 44 projects were not included in the map, ensuring a fair and accurate geographical representation.

a) Amman: The Center of the Livelihood Economy

The concentration of livelihood projects in **Amman** can be given for several reasons. From a **political perspective**, Amman is the capital of the country, hosting the government, ministries, parliament, and other public entities, as well as the headquarters of UN agencies, INGOs, and NNGOs. Therefore, all the decision-making processes related to livelihood should go through Amman.

From an **economic point of view**, Amman serves as the primary engine of growth, as the international and national private sector is largely concentrated there, offering a potential source of job creation. Amman benefits from a developed transportation network that connects the city to the rest of Jordan and abroad via Queen Alia International Airport, making it the country's primary tourism gateway. Additionally, Amman has some of the country's best public and private universities, such as the University of Jordan and the German Jordanian University. The proliferation of technological and industrial parks, and large commercial areas, for instance, King Hussein Business Park and Abdali Boulevard, also stimulate Jordan's economic activities. The combination of these economic factors may explain why livelihood actors have concentrated their efforts on Amman.

Furthermore, **demography** is another crucial variable in understanding Amman's livelihood focus. In 2023, Jordan's population reached 11,516,000,⁴⁹ with 4,834,500 residing in Amman - accounting for 42% of the country's population concentrated in the capital.⁵⁰ In addition to its high population density rate, according to UNHCR, Amman is home to 242,851 registered refugees from Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Somalia, Sudan, and other countries,⁵¹ and hosts some of the largest Palestinian refugee camps, such as Al Wehdat Refugee Camp. This makes Amman the largest governorate hosting refugees in Jordan.

In terms of economic interventions, the mapping data show a slight focus on **youth and women's economic empowerment**, with a third of the livelihood projects implemented in Amman addressing this. Regarding economic activities, **no clear pattern was identified**.

b) Northern Jordan: Refugees at the Core of Livelihood Programming

As mentioned above, jointly with Amman, **Mafraq**, and **Irbid** are the governorates where humanitarian and development organizations have predominantly implemented their livelihood projects. The main driver behind this focus is closely linked to the **influx of Syrian refugees** since 2011. After Amman, these two governorates host the largest number of Syrian refugees, with 159,962 in Mafraq, and 122, 220 in Irbid.⁵² Also, it should be noted that the Azraq Refugee Camp is

⁴⁹ DoS, "Table 2.1 Population of the Kingdom by Sex According to the 1952, 1961, 1979, 1994, 2015 Censuses, and Estimated Population for Some Selected Years" (2024).

⁵⁰ DoS, "Table 2.2 Estimated Population of the Kingdom by Governorate and Sex, at End-year 2023"(2024).

⁵¹ UNHCR, "Operational Data Portal - Jordan", <https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/jor>

⁵² *Idem*.

located in Mafraq. Furthermore, although poverty is a widespread phenomenon across Jordan, **poverty pockets** have been particularly present in the governorate of Mafraq.⁵³

On the other hand, compared to Mafraq and Irbid, **Jerash** and **Ajloun** have been sidelined, with only 10 livelihood projects in each governorate - primarily due to the fact that the number of Syrian refugees in these areas does not exceed 8,000.⁵⁴

Regarding economic interventions in the northern governorates, **Education & Training** dominates the scene, with livelihood projects paying particular attention to **skills development**. **Economic empowerment, Food Security and Green Transition, and Market Development and Strengthening** were found as emerging trends. Livelihood projects in these geographical areas encompassed agricultural and non-agricultural activities, with a marginal prevalence of **agriculture** and **manufacturing**.

c) Zarqa, Balqa and Madaba

Following Amman and the northern governorates of Mafraq and Irbid, **Zarqa, Madaba, and Balqa** are home to a significant number of Syrian refugees, including Zaatari Refugee Camp (Zarqa). Also, they also host highly populated Palestinian refugee camps, like Baqa'a camp (Balqa). Nevertheless, a significant imbalance between livelihood initiatives implemented in Zarqa vis-a-vis Balqa and Madaba can be found, with Zarqa nearly tripling the number of projects in Balqa and Madaba (28 - 10 - 9).

Aligned with the findings in the northern governorates, **Education & training**, and especially, **skills development**, is the most common economic intervention in Zarqa and Balqa. **No trend was observed concerning economic activities.**

d) Southern Jordan: Still Left Behind?

Unlike Amman and the North of Jordan, the southern governorates of **Tafilah, Aqaba, and Ma'an** have not been the recipients of many projects. Only **Karak** appears to have attracted the attention of humanitarian and development organizations working in livelihoods. In terms of interventions, **Education & Training**, and **Economic Empowerment** are the most popular economic interventions in these geographical areas. When it comes to economic activities, unlike the previous case, there is a clear **dominance of non-agricultural activities over agricultural** ones.

While this trend could be attributed to the relatively small Syrian refugee population living there, the reality is that southern governorates have been historically overlooked by livelihood governmental and developmental actors.⁵⁵

⁵³ DoS, *Report of Poverty Status in Jordan. Based on the Household Expenditures & Income Survey data 2008* (July 2010).

⁵⁴ UNHCR, "Operational Data Portal - Jordan", <https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/jor>

⁵⁵ For these disparities see Al-Zu bi, M. F., & Al-Khresha, A. H. (2023). Assessing the Regional Socio-Economic Disparities: Evidence from Jordan. *Dirasat: Human and Social Sciences*, 50(1), 1-15, and

I.6. Who Leads Livelihood Programming?

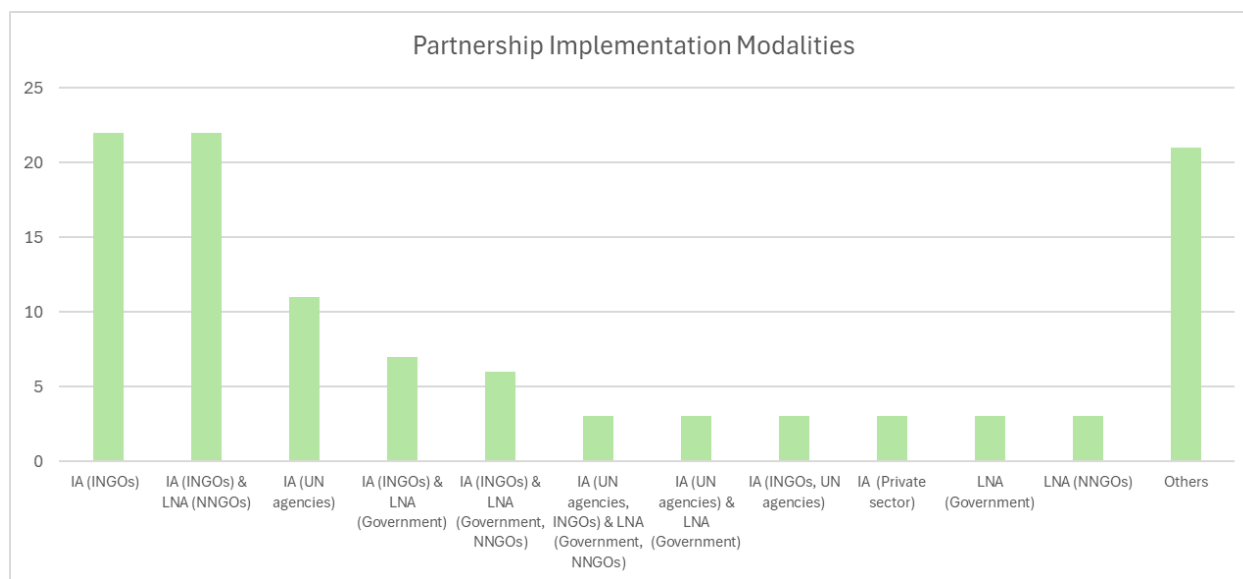
Partnership is a key dimension of localization. As such, projects were analyzed based on the partnership modalities for their implementation. This dimension offers insights into the collaboration dynamics between local, national, and international actors. It identifies the roles played by stakeholders such as government agencies, NGOs, and private sector entities, shedding light on the nature of partnerships and their alignment with localization principles. The following sections provide an in-depth qualitative analysis of partnerships through KII interviews.

Throughout the analysis of over 100 mapped projects, **25 different partnership implementation modalities** were identified.

The categorization was based on the distinction between **International Actors (IA)** and **Local and National Actors (LNA)**:

- **IA:** This analytical category included United Nations agencies, INGOs, and the private sector.
- **LNA:** This analytical category included governmental authorities, L/NNGOs, and the private sector.

The distribution of the projects according to the partnership implementation modalities is shown in the chart below:



Of the 25 partnership implementation modalities, over 50% of the projects were carried out under three of them:

- **22** projects were implemented exclusively by INGOs,⁵⁶ such as ACTED's *Support Economic Growth and Sustainable, Diversified Income Creation in Jordan* (Project #12);

⁵⁶ Projects #2, #4, #7, #11, #12, #13, #14, #21, #34, #36, #41, #42, #60, #62, #63, #64, #65, #67, #69, #83, #84, #85.

- **22** projects were executed by INGOs in partnership with L/NNGOs,⁵⁷ such as *Mubaderoon II* (Project #66), a project implemented by Plan International (INGO), Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature, JoWomenomics, Durrat Almanal for Development and Training (L/NNGOs).
- **11** projects were carried out by UN agencies,⁵⁸ such as ILO-led *Towards a More Inclusive Economy through Immediate Job Generation and Enterprise Development for Vulnerable Refugee and Host Communities in Jordan* (Project #37).

Other frequently used partnership implementation modalities were INGOs with governmental authorities, and INGOs with governmental authorities & L/NNGOs. The other 20 modalities consisted of only-IA, only-LNA, and distinct combinations of IA and/or LNA.⁵⁹ For instance, UN agencies (IA), governmental authorities and national private sector (LNA), or UN agencies and INGOs (IA).

According to the 108 initiatives identified, it can be concluded that **IA demonstrate a significant prevalence over LNA when it comes to the implementation of livelihood and economic empowerment projects in Jordan**, thereby undermining the localization agenda in this dimension. **38% of the projects mapped were implemented exclusively by IA**,⁶⁰ whether they were UN agencies, INGOs, the private sector or a combination of them, in comparison to **6% executed by only LNA** – L/NNGOs and government authorities –.⁶¹ The remaining **56% of the projects** were **jointly** carried out by **IA and LNA**. Although partnership relationships vary from one project to another, under this partnership modality, the general trend in the humanitarian / development sector, and Jordan being no exception, is that LNA are often relegated to the role of implementing partners, with limited involvement in the decision-making processes, and program design and planning.⁶²

These modalities represent the majority of partnerships, emphasizing the central role of INGOs in implementing livelihood projects. While this underscores their importance, it also points to a dependency on international actors, potentially limiting opportunities for locally driven

⁵⁷ Projects #6, #15, #18, #20, #22, #23, #24, #26, #27, #30, #35, #40, #45, #46, #48, #49, #53, #66, #82, #88, #95, #103.

⁵⁸ Projects #29, #31, #37, #43, #56, #57, #73, #74, #75, #76, #101.

⁵⁹ 1) IA (Private sector), 2) IA (INGOs, UN agencies), 3) IA (INGOs, Private sector), 4) LNA (Government), 5) LNA (L/NNGOs), 6) IA (INGOs, private sector) & LNA (L/NNGOs), 7) IA (INGOs) & LNA (private sector, L/NNGOs), 8) IA (INGOs, private sector) & LNA (private sector), 9) IA (private sector) & LNA (private sector), 10) IA (UN agencies) & LNA (Government, L/NNGOs), 11) IA (UN agencies) & LNA (Government, private sector), 12) IA (UN agencies, INGOs) & LNA (Government, L/NNGOs), 13) IA (UN agencies) & LNA (Government), 14) IA (INGOs) & LNA (Government, L/NNGOs, private sector), 15) IA (private sector) & LNA (Government), 16) International Actors (UN agencies, INGOs, private sector) & LNA (L/NNGOs, private sector), 17) IA (private sector) & LNA (private sector, L/NNGOs), 18) IA (private sector) & LNA (NNGOs), 19) IA (UN agencies) & LNA (L/NNGOs), and 20) IA (UN agencies) & LNA (Government, L/NNGOs, private sector).

⁶⁰ Projects #2, #4, #7, #9, #11, #12, #13, #14, #19, #21, #29, #31, #34, #36, #37, #41, #42, #43, #54, #56, #57, #59, #60, #62, #63, #64, #65, #67, #69, #73, #74, #75, #76, #77, #83, #84, #85, #89, #101, #102.

⁶¹ Projects #3, #5, #25, #68, #107, #108.

⁶² JONAF, JIF, Redr Australia, UN Women. Localisation Baseline report (2023). Amman: UN Women.

development and thus, requiring further and more active and meaningful involvement of LNA across the program cycle.

I.7. Key Takeaways

Livelihood initiatives in Jordan reflect a comprehensive effort to address the needs of diverse population groups while aligning with key national sectors and strategies. However, optimizing their impact requires addressing sectoral imbalances, geographic disparities, and inclusion gaps. Strengthening local capacities, fostering meaningful partnerships, and expanding innovative and sustainable approaches offer the possibility to ensure these interventions contribute more effectively to inclusive economic development, resilience, and social cohesion.

1. Inclusive Livelihood Approach:

- Livelihood projects in Jordan adopt an inclusive approach, addressing the needs of Jordanians and refugees while prioritizing marginalized groups such as women, youth, and persons with disabilities (PwDs).
- The majority of projects target both host and refugee communities, reflecting efforts to balance support and foster social cohesion. However, gaps remain in achieving a fully inclusive approach, particularly for non-Syrian refugees and PwD.

2. Focus on Economic Empowerment:

- Livelihood interventions emphasize economic empowerment, particularly for women, youth, and PwDs. Initiatives aim to address systemic barriers like high unemployment, gender-based violence, and the exclusion of vulnerable groups.
- Programs such as those targeting women's economic participation or fostering youth leadership demonstrate the importance of tailored interventions that address the unique needs of each social group.

3. Sectoral Focus and Skills Development:

- Education & Training emerges as the most prominent intervention, addressing Jordan's significant skills mismatch by promoting technical, vocational, and financial literacy. This aligns with national strategies like the National TVET Strategy.
- Efforts to bridge vertical and horizontal skills mismatches are critical, as over- and under-qualification and inadequate training remain major barriers to employment.

4. Economic Activities and Sectoral Alignment:

- Economic interventions largely align with Jordan's key sectors, such as services, agriculture, manufacturing, ICT, and green energy. However, there is an overrepresentation of service-oriented projects and an underrepresentation of advanced manufacturing or non-market services.
- Agriculture remains an important sector for refugee employment, while projects promoting green energy and climate-smart agriculture align with Jordan's sustainability goals.

5. Geographical Distribution and Imbalances:

- Livelihood projects are concentrated in Amman and northern governorates hosting large Syrian refugee populations, such as Mafraq and Irbid. Southern governorates like Karak, Ma'an, and Aqaba remain underserved despite high unemployment and economic challenges in these areas.

- This distribution highlights the need for equitable geographic focus to address regional disparities in development.

6. Livelihood Capitals Integration:

- Projects prioritize human capital development, followed by financial and social capitals. However, the limited focus on natural and physical capitals indicates room for growth, particularly in addressing environmental sustainability and infrastructure needs.

- Multi-capital approaches demonstrate the greatest promise for sustainable impact, fostering synergies across skills development, financial resources, and social networks.

7. Partnership Implementation Modalities:

- International actors (IA), particularly INGOs, dominate partnership implementation, with limited leadership roles for local and national actors (LNA). This reliance on INGOs underscores the need for more localized efforts to ensure sustainability.

- True localization requires a shift in partnership dynamics, with LNAs playing more meaningful roles in program design, decision-making, and implementation.

Enhanced data collection and transparency are crucial for evaluating project outcomes, scaling successful initiatives, and ensuring that interventions align more effectively with Jordan's development priorities. Currently, data is fragmented and limited to individual projects or organizational scopes, with insufficient insight into how these efforts are coordinated or aligned with national strategies.

SECTION II: How International Actors Approach Localization

Localization has become a defining principle in humanitarian and development reform, reflected in global commitments such as the Grand Bargain (2016), OCHA's localization guidelines, OECD-DAC recommendations, and donor-led frameworks by the EU, USAID, and GIZ. Although definitions differ, the concept converges around a core set of principles: the transfer of decision-making power, leadership, and resources to local and national actors (LNA); the strengthening of local systems; and the promotion of sustainable, community-anchored approaches.

In the context of Jordan's livelihood sector, localization requires more than adapting global frameworks. It demands a structural transformation of how livelihood initiatives are conceptualized, funded, governed, and evaluated. Given that livelihoods are deeply embedded in national economic

policies, social norms, and community networks, a localized approach is essential to achieve durable, equitable, and impactful outcomes.

This section analyzes how international actors (IAs), including UN agencies, INGOs, and donors, interpret and implement localization in their livelihood programming in Jordan. Drawing on Key Informant Interviews (KII) and the mapping findings from Section I, it explores five dimensions: partnership quality, participation and feedback mechanisms, funding structures, capacity strengthening, and coordination. It also outlines the role of civil society and intermediary organizations and provides a consolidated framework of key localization pillars that emerge across global and national policy commitments.

II.1 Conceptual Framework: What Localization Means in Livelihoods

International policy commitments highlight that localization is not simply about shifting funding channels but about transforming power relations within the aid system. OCHA emphasizes placing local actors “at the center of humanitarian response,” while OECD-DAC frames localization as shifting authority and resources to civil society, governments, and private sector actors in partner countries. The Grand Bargain calls for directing at least 25% of humanitarian funding to local and national responders and strengthening their institutional capacities. Donors such as USAID and the EU have also articulated commitments to “locally led development,” stressing the need for national ownership and inclusive governance.

In livelihoods programming—where economic agency, self-reliance, and structural inclusion are the primary goals—localization is particularly vital. Livelihoods interventions cannot be effective without a deep contextual understanding of labor markets, informal economies, social norms, and community dynamics. Local actors are often best positioned to interpret these dynamics and design interventions that are culturally appropriate, economically relevant, and sustainable.

Localization thus involves:

- shifting influence over strategic decisions to national and community actors;
- increasing direct funding to local organizations;
- strengthening local capacity in a way that supports autonomy, not dependency;
- promoting meaningful participation of marginalized groups;
- building equitable partnerships based on transparency and shared leadership.

The subsequent sections examine how these principles are reflected in current livelihood practices in Jordan.

A. The Role of Civil Society in Localized Livelihoods

Civil society organizations (CSOs)—including local NGOs, community-based organizations (CBOs), grassroots groups, and specialized service providers—are key actors in achieving localized livelihoods. Positioned at the intersection of communities, state institutions, and international actors, CSOs are critical for representing community needs, advocating for rights-based approaches, and ensuring that marginalized groups have a voice in decision-making processes.

Civil society actors bring distinct strengths:

- **Deep contextual knowledge** of local labor markets, social norms, and barriers to economic participation.
- **Physical accessibility and trust**, enabling them to reach communities often excluded from formal programs.
- **Responsiveness and adaptability**, particularly in rural or underserved areas.
- **Ability to challenge structural inequalities**, including those related to gender, disability, and refugee status.
- **Sustainability**, as they remain active long after project cycles end.

Despite these strengths, Section I findings show that CSOs in Jordan are frequently limited to the role of implementing partners for INGOs and UN agencies, with insufficient involvement in designing interventions or shaping sectoral strategies. Strengthening CSO leadership is therefore essential to meaningful localization.

B. Intermediary Organizations and Responsible Localization

International agencies and INGOs have long acted as intermediaries between donors and local actors⁶³, facilitating resource distribution, offering technical expertise, and fulfilling compliance requirements. While intermediaries can add value, their dominant role has constrained localization by concentrating decision-making power and limiting the autonomy of local actors.

A shift toward **responsible intermediation** is necessary. This approach requires international actors to:

- prioritize local leadership over organizational control;
- adopt partnership models that emphasize equitable, transparent roles;
- support LNAs to access funding, visibility, and decision-making platforms;
- reduce structural barriers such as language, jargon, and compliance burdens;
- invest in institutional capacity strengthening that enhances long-term autonomy;
- act as facilitators rather than gatekeepers of resources and information.

This redefined intermediary role aligns with commitments made under the Grand Bargain, Charter for Change, and recent regional contributions, including guidance developed by ARDD and the Global Mixed Migration Initiative (GMI) on enabling local leadership while safeguarding accountable systems.

C. Pillars of Localization in the Livelihoods Sector

Across global frameworks and donor policies, six pillars consistently define what effective localization entails. These pillars serve as benchmarks for analyzing current livelihood practices in Jordan:

1. Shift of Power and Decision-Making to Local Actors

Localization requires that local actors, not intermediaries, lead in identifying priorities, designing interventions, and steering program governance.

2. Direct Resource Allocation

Local organizations must have predictable and adequate funding, including coverage for overhead and operational needs, to ensure financial sustainability and independence.⁶³

3. Local Ownership and Leadership

LNAs should lead throughout the project cycle, from needs assessments and proposal development to monitoring, evaluation, and learning.

4. Long-Term Capacity Strengthening

Capacity building must focus on institutional and systemic resilience, not short-term training. It should aim at enabling local organizations to operate independently of external intermediaries.

5. Equitable Partnerships

Partnerships must be transparent, mutually supportive, and grounded in shared responsibility. International actors should adopt partnership models that promote reciprocity rather than hierarchy.

6. Participation and Inclusivity

Localization must ensure that communities—including women, youth, refugees, and persons with disabilities—are not merely consulted but are central participants in shaping livelihood responses.

These pillars guide the subsequent analysis of IA practices in Jordan. Building on the findings of Section I, which outlined the dominant role of international actors (IAs) in Jordan's livelihood projects and the limited leadership afforded to local and national actors (LNAs), the following section delves into how IAs perceive their interactions with local partners in the context of livelihood projects.

⁶³ "Time to Decolonise Aid - Peace Direct," <https://www.peacedirect.org/time-to-decolonise-aid>.

Drawing on interviews with IAs, this section examines key dimensions of these partnerships, including the quality of collaboration, mechanisms for community participation, funding structures, capacity-building efforts, and strategies for localization.

The insights reveal both progress and persistent challenges from the perspective of IAs. While some international organizations highlight success stories of empowering LNAs, such as capacity-building initiatives and equitable funding allocations, gaps remain in granting local actors co-leadership in decision-making and ensuring financial sustainability. Innovative practices, like digital tools for inclusive feedback, are offset by systemic barriers, including bureaucratic constraints and donor-imposed limitations. Additionally, localization strategies often focus on operational capacity rather than fostering full autonomy for LNAs.

By analyzing these dynamics, this section critically evaluates the extent to which IAs align their practices with localization principles. It underscores the need for structural changes to enhance equity and sustainability in partnerships, with a focus on empowering LNAs as co-leaders in Jordan's development landscape.

The findings are derived from a series of KII conducted with representatives from international organizations (See Annex II). While the ARDD research team sought to engage directly with individuals responsible for the implementation of the mapped livelihood projects, responses were often provided by alternate personnel responsible for livelihoods. Consequently, while the KII aimed to capture a comprehensive understanding of the implementation processes for the mapped projects, the resulting insights primarily reflect broader considerations regarding localization practices and principles within the context of livelihood projects, rather than project-specific details. This limitation should be considered when interpreting the findings.

II.2 Dimension of Analysis

A) Partnership Quality

Across international organizations, partnerships emphasize involving local actors at various stages, from needs assessments to project implementation. Most partnerships are described as equitable and aim to support local actors through capacity-building initiatives. Nevertheless, it is noticeable that the partnership aspect is mainly focused on the operational side of the projects without extending more deeply to the decision-making process.

Plan International shared success stories of local partners achieving independence, where former collaborators declined new partnerships due to their growth into self-sustained entities. 90 - 95% of Plan International's projects in Jordan are implemented through local and national partners.

The ILO explained that, due to its unique tripartite mandate within the UN system - encompassing governments, employers, and workers- it always tries to adopt the necessary measures to ensure that the interests and views of these LNA are represented and considered across the project cycle.

WFP stated that they have different types and levels of partnership with LNA. They acknowledged that the stronger its partnership relations with the local and national partners, the broader and more active role these partners play throughout the project phases.

International organizations report increasing efforts to involve local actors in needs assessments and implementation stages. However, **participation remains largely operational rather than strategic**, with limited LNA influence over program conception or design.

B) Participation and Feedback Mechanisms

Organizations increasingly prioritize feedback mechanisms, incorporating community input into project cycles. Needs assessments and focus groups are widely used to understand local needs. In this context, various types of mechanisms and instruments are used in measurement and follow-up depending on the size of the organization and its resources. Large NGOs have their own mechanisms to evaluate and follow up with participants, while small NGOs rely on means of communication such as WhatsApp or the phone.

Furthermore, many of the NGOs, both national and international, use the evaluation results during the design process of their future projects, which facilitates including the targeted communities' needs within the projects' design and activities.

A good practice identified during the interview stage is WFP's Refugee Advisory Committee, a consultative body composed of refugees from different backgrounds that provides feedback to the UN agency in a wide range of issues, including project design and implementation. Other examples of these participatory approaches include UNHCR's use of WhatsApp groups, helplines, and Facebook pages for real-time communication with refugees, ensuring inclusivity through digital channels; and DRC's implementation of satisfaction surveys as part of monitoring and evaluation, demonstrating a systematic approach to beneficiary feedback.

Some international organizations, however, do not engage with crisis-affected communities directly in the design phase, but follow the needs established in governmental and international studies and national strategies, such as the Jordanian Response Plan.

C) Funding and Financial Challenges

Funding challenges for local actors include limited budgets, high operational costs, high dependency on international donors, and long, complex, and unreliable bureaucratic processes. Budget preparation often involves consultations, but flexibility varies by organization. Some partners highlighted how donor-imposed budget constraints often limit allocations for indirect costs like salaries and office expenses, disproportionately affecting local NGOs. (ARCS)

Among the best practices, international actors highlighted: the allocation of up to 70% of project funding to local actors, emphasizing the importance of operational cost coverage to ensure

sustainability (MPDL); and even transitioning to full localization, with no international partners in certain livelihood projects, signaling a bold shift toward sustainability (UNHCR).

More modest contributions relate to the allocation of funding to local and national partners according to their capacities, i.e., some L/NNGOs cannot cope with large amounts of funding. (ARCS, WFP)

D) Capacity Building

Capacity building focuses on enhancing local actors' financial, technical, and operational skills at the institutional and individual levels. However, efforts aim to strengthen the capacity of national actors as project partners, not as autonomous actors.

Examples of capacity-building approaches include UNHCR capacity-building initiatives tailored to address real-time needs, such as training focal points in refugee protection and data handling, and Plan International's integration of gender-transformative training, focusing on "green" and digital skills to align with emerging economic trends. Other instances of effective capacity-building initiatives implemented by AI include DRC's gradual introduction of local partners to financial management standards, like anti-money laundering protocols, to align with international compliance, and the ILO's efforts to support and strengthen the work of the Technical and Vocational Skills Development Commission.

E) Coordination Mechanisms

Local actors' participation in coordination platforms is limited. The widespread use of English as a working language (rather than Arabic) and the use of "humanitarian/development jargon" are some of the factors that may explain why local and national actors are discouraged from participating in these mechanisms.

In order to mitigate this detrimental lack of engagement, organizations like MPDL conducts structured coordination meetings every three months, involving diverse actors to adjust project priorities dynamically. UNHCR hosts private sector roundtables, bridging gaps between government entities, NGOs, and the private sector to foster collaboration. Plan International leverages its regional Center of Excellence for cross-border knowledge sharing and coordination.

F) Sustainability and Localization Strategies

Localization strategies are often intertwined with sustainability goals. In this regard, the majority of international organizations focus on building local capacity as a way to ensure long-term impact of these projects. For instance, ARCS uses revolving fund mechanisms to equip SMEs, directly linking localization to economic growth. UNHCR emphasizes sustainability by embedding projects within national entities, such as chambers of commerce, to ensure continuity beyond funding periods. Plan International integrates localization into country strategies, making it a core principle rather than a standalone goal. The ILO, in close collaboration with workers and enterprises, support Jordanian

public authorities in the design and implementation medium and long-term livelihood and work-related policies and strategies. And WFP has generated critical evidence-based knowledge on livelihood, like the Skills Mapping for Syrian and Non-Syrian Refugees in Jordan.

II.2. Critical Analysis: Contrasting Practices to Principles of Localization

The findings reflect a sincere effort to align with localization principles, particularly in capacity building and funding allocation. However, the limited role of local actors in decision-making and dependency on external resources suggest a need for further structural changes to fully realize the localization agenda. International organizations should emphasize co-leadership, invest in operational costs, and address systemic barriers to expand the role of local actors as true leaders of development efforts.

1. Alignment with Localization Principles

Most organizations demonstrate a commitment to engaging local partners:

- **Equitable Partnerships:** Plan International and MPDL highlight their efforts to build equitable relationships, with MPDL allocating 70% of funding to local actors and Plan International showcasing local partners' growth into independent entities. These practices align with the principle of local empowerment.
- **Capacity Building:** All organizations invest in strengthening local actors' capabilities. UNHCR's training on refugee protection and Plan International's focus on gender-transformative programs reflect a commitment to fostering local ownership and capacity.
- **Sustainability:** UNHCR embeds projects within national entities, such as chambers of commerce, ensuring continuity beyond donor funding—a cornerstone of sustainable localization.

2. Gaps and Challenges

Localization, as a guiding principle, seeks to empower LNA and ensure their active leadership in development processes. However, the findings highlight that, despite positive strides, critical challenges that undermine the realization of this vision:

- **Decision-Making Power:** While LNAs are involved in project design, their roles are often limited to consultation rather than co-leadership. This indicates a hierarchical structure that contradicts the principle of equal partnership.
- **Funding Constraints:** Organizations like ARCS and MPDL report that donor-imposed restrictions often exclude indirect costs, such as salaries or operational expenses, limiting the financial sustainability of local partners.

- **Inclusivity in Feedback Mechanisms:** Although feedback is collected, beneficiaries, especially youth and marginalized groups, are more often treated as observers rather than active decision-makers. This challenges the localization principle of community-driven development.
- **Behavioral Change:** While INGOs and UN agencies frequently champion the localization narrative, their actions often fall short of meaningful transformation. To truly embody localization principles, these organizations must take tangible steps to shift power and resources to local entities, fostering leadership rather than perpetuating dependency. Similarly, some L/NNGOs, CBOs, and CSOs remain content with roles as implementing partners or subcontractors, prioritizing financial security over autonomy. This dynamic runs counter to the core tenets of localization, which emphasize the need for local actors to lead and shape development efforts.
- **Advocacy and Access:** A notable constraint for INGOs and UN agencies is their cautious approach to advocacy, often influenced by concerns over maintaining access to the country. This restraint contrasts with the more assertive advocacy roles played by L/NNGOs, which are less encumbered by diplomatic considerations. While the need for access is understandable, it highlights an imbalance in how advocacy efforts are distributed, with independent local organizations bearing the primary responsibility for pushing critical issues forward. Bridging this gap requires a recalibration of roles to ensure that localization does not come at the expense of broader systemic advocacy.

3. Innovative Approaches vs. Missed Opportunities

- **Innovations:** UNHCR's use of digital tools like WhatsApp groups and helplines enhances inclusivity and accessibility, embodying the spirit of localization by bridging gaps in communication.
- **Missed Opportunities:** Challenges like nepotism in fund allocation (as noted by ARCS) and bureaucratic hurdles highlighted by MPDL reveal areas where localization efforts could be reinforced with stronger accountability measures and streamlined processes.

4. Contradictions in Sustainability

While localization is often presented as a pathway to sustainability, reliance on external donors and limited autonomy in budgeting illustrate contradictions. Localization principles call for greater investment in local actors' operational independence, yet organizations still act as intermediaries for international funding.

SECTION III: How Local Actors Experience Localization

Building on the previous sections, this section provides an in-depth analysis of how LNAs perceive and experience localization. Drawing on insights from key informant interviews (KIIs) and narrative discussions with local actors, including members of the Jordanian NGO Forum (JONAF), this section explores their interactions with international agencies, donors, and government institutions.

The analysis highlights progress, challenges, and opportunities in advancing localization while refining insights from the Localization Baseline Report, developed in collaboration with JONAF, UN Women, the Jordanian INGO Forum, and other partners.⁶⁴ The Baseline Report identified key dimensions of localization—partnership quality, participation, funding, capacity, coordination, perceptions, and enabling environment—while highlighting systemic barriers such as limited funding access for local actors, insufficient participation in decision-making, and inequities in capacity-building. These findings provided a foundational benchmark for assessing the state of localization in Jordan.

This report, however, diverges from the Baseline Report in several critical ways:

- **Localized nuances:** It captures the lived experiences of local actors, including smaller and regionally focused NGOs, offering a granular view of challenges such as rigid funding frameworks and limited access to coordination mechanisms.
- **Progress indicators:** While the Baseline Report emphasized systemic barriers, this report identifies emerging successes, such as innovative practices by JONAF members in digital marketing and community-driven advocacy.
- **Organizational differentiation:** The report distinguishes between larger national NGOs (e.g., ARDD, JRF, EFE) and smaller, regionally focused organizations, shedding light on their unique challenges and opportunities.
- **Refined focus on sustainability:** This analysis expands on the sustainability dimension, exploring strategies local actors use to ensure long-term project resilience and continuity beyond funding cycles.

Structured around key dimensions of localization, including partnership quality, participation, funding, capacity, coordination, sustainability, and enabling environment, this section offers actionable insights into how LNAs engage with international actors. By centering the voices of local actors, it illuminates both successes and persistent barriers, contributing to a deeper understanding of how equitable and sustainable development practices can be advanced in Jordan.

III.1 Partnership Quality

The quality of partnerships is a key dimension of localization, shaping the dynamics between JONAF members, LNA, and IA. Interviews revealed that LNA valued collaborative relationships with IA,

⁶⁴ JONAF, JIF, Redr Australia, UN Women. Localisation Baseline report (2023). Amman: UN Women.

particularly when these partnerships enhanced their capacities, visibility, and organizational profiles. For instance, larger and more established organizations, such as ARDD or the Jordan River Foundation (JRF) and Education for Employment (EFE), highlighted their significant involvement in co-designing projects. These organizations utilized their deep understanding of local laws and community needs to influence project frameworks, ensuring alignment with local realities.

However, the analysis also underscored critical disparities in partnership quality. Smaller and less experienced local NGOs, such as Shuqira Association for Social Development and East Amman Charity, often found their roles restricted to project implementation phases. These organizations reported limited participation in decision-making, monitoring, and evaluation processes. While IA expressed a willingness to involve local actors in discussions, these contributions frequently lacked formal integration into project cycles, reflecting an imbalance in power dynamics. As one organization remarked, informal meetings and consultations were common, but they did not translate into substantial influence over strategic decisions.

Structural barriers further hindered equitable partnerships. Funding frameworks imposed by donors often constrained the flexibility of local actors to adjust project designs to better address community needs. For example, budget items predefined by IA were difficult to modify, even when local NGOs identified misalignments with ground realities during implementation, as Durrat Al Manal for Development and Training highlighted. This rigidity discouraged many local actors from proposing changes, thereby reinforcing existing power imbalances.

In addition, smaller organizations noted the lack of capacity-building support to enable them to engage meaningfully as equal partners. Some IA prioritized technical expertise, often sidelining local actors in strategic planning phases due to perceived capacity gaps. This perpetuated a cycle where smaller NGOs, such as the Shuqira Association for Social Development and East Amman Charity, felt relegated to executing pre-determined activities with little input on broader project goals.

The overall picture indicates that while strides are being made toward equitable partnerships, systemic barriers and entrenched hierarchies continue to limit the full realization of localization principles.

III.2 Participation

Meaningful participation of LNA and beneficiaries is a cornerstone of effective localization. KII revealed that while local NGOs excel in maintaining strong networks with beneficiaries and employing feedback mechanisms, gaps remain in ensuring their voices are adequately represented during the initial design phases of projects.

Local NGOs demonstrated various approaches to gathering feedback, including using WhatsApp groups, phone calls, and social media platforms. These tools facilitated real-time communication and enabled beneficiaries to provide input on project outcomes, challenges, and potential improvements. Larger organizations, such as ARDD, JRF and EFE, established more formal feedback systems, which were inclusive and well-integrated into their operations. Conversely, smaller organizations, such as the East Amman Charity and the Shuqira Association for Social Development, often relied on informal mechanisms due to resource constraints.

While these feedback mechanisms were effective in collecting beneficiary perspectives during project implementation and evaluation, interviews highlighted a critical gap in their application to project design. Beneficiary voices were largely absent during the pre-assessment and planning phases. Instead, project designs often reflected the priorities and frameworks of international donors and actors, with limited input from local NGOs or the communities they serve. This disconnect was particularly evident in smaller organizations, which lacked the capacity or opportunity to influence upstream decision-making processes.

In many cases, the feedback provided by beneficiaries post-implementation was used retroactively to inform subsequent projects rather than shaping the initial design in the work of the majority of the NNGOs such as Tamkeen for Legal Aid and Human Rights, Be Positive, and EFF. For instance, one local actor noted that “the more a project continues, the closer it aligns with community needs,” but the first iteration of livelihood projects often struggled to address the realities on the ground. This iterative approach, while valuable, underscores the missed opportunity for more proactive and inclusive participation during project inception.

Furthermore, interviews revealed a lack of differentiated feedback mechanisms tailored to the diverse needs of beneficiaries, including considerations of gender, age, and disability. Projects often applied a one-size-fits-all approach, limiting their ability to address specific vulnerabilities and priorities within the community.

Despite these challenges, local NGOs maintained strong relationships with beneficiaries, often continuing engagement even after projects concluded. This ongoing connection not only strengthened community trust but also allowed local actors to adapt and refine their initiatives based on evolving needs. However, realizing the full potential of localization will require integrating these voices more deliberately into project design processes, ensuring that beneficiary feedback informs not just implementation but also the strategic direction of humanitarian and development efforts.

III.3 Funding Challenges

Access to sustainable and equitable funding remains one of the most significant challenges for LNA in advancing the localization agenda. Interviews with JONAF members and other local NGOs revealed a consistent struggle to secure direct, multi-year funding from international donors, who often prioritize partnerships with international organizations. This preference not only limits local actors’ financial independence but also reinforces systemic inequalities in funding structures.

Accessibility to Funding

Local NGOs frequently reported difficulty in competing for funding opportunities. Donor priorities and selection processes often favor international actors, sidelining local organizations despite their closer proximity to communities and better understanding of local needs. For example, several NGOs noted that donors imposed restrictive eligibility criteria, such as requiring a large number of full-time staff, which smaller organizations relying on volunteers could not meet. This disproportionately affects grassroots organizations operating in remote areas, further exacerbating the urban-rural funding divide.

Rigid and Inflexible Budgets

Funding frameworks imposed by international donors were described as overly rigid, with predefined budget items that leave little room for adjustments during project implementation. Local actors noted that while they are often able to highlight misalignments between budget allocations and on-the-ground realities, attempts to make changes are met with lengthy bureaucratic processes and technical difficulties. As one interviewee stated, “Even though international actors realize that the project design is not aligned with local needs, they are reluctant to negotiate changes with donors.”

The inflexibility of budget structures discourages local NGOs from requesting modifications, leading to activities being implemented with minimal consideration of quality or relevance, simply to fulfill donor requirements. This issue was compounded by delays in fund disbursement, which significantly disrupted project timelines and operations.

Limited Capacity for Financial Management

Many local NGOs highlighted their need for capacity-building support to enhance financial management and proposal-writing skills. Smaller organizations, in particular, struggled to navigate complex funding applications and lacked the technical expertise required to meet donor expectations. For example, while donors often prioritize highly detailed proposals, local organizations emphasized the importance of focusing on project content and impact rather than bureaucratic formalities.

Dependency on International Funding

A significant proportion of local NGOs remain heavily reliant on international funding, which undermines their ability to lead projects independently. For instance, JONAF organizations reported that despite their extensive experience in implementing livelihood initiatives, their dependence on donor funding left them vulnerable to shifting donor priorities. This dependency also limited their ability to innovate, as they prioritized securing funding for existing activities over exploring new, riskier approaches.

Promising Practices and Recommendations, but Limited in Nature

Despite these challenges, some progress has been made in addressing funding inequalities. More established Organizations such as ARDD, JRF and EFE have successfully leveraged their reputations and networks to access diverse funding sources, including private sector partnerships. Additionally, some international actors have incorporated capacity-building components into their funding agreements, helping local actors strengthen their financial management systems and access quality funding. However, these advancements remain limited in scope, as smaller NGOs often do not benefit from these initiatives. Lacking the visibility, resources, and connections of their larger counterparts, grassroots organizations struggle to secure similar opportunities.

III.4 Capacity Building

Capacity-building initiatives were positively received by local actors, particularly those that included tailored training programs addressing their specific needs and challenges. These initiatives were widely acknowledged as vital to enhancing organizational sustainability and effectiveness. Topics such as financial management, human resource development, and gender-based violence were frequently cited as critical areas of focus.

Tailored Training Programs

Larger organizations, such as ARDD, JRF, EFE, and JOHUD, reported highly successful capacity-building programs. For example, EFE detailed how its training sessions on labor laws and compliance enabled the organization to align its projects with national regulations, thereby improving both operational efficiency and beneficiary outcomes. Similarly, JRF emphasized the importance of structured training on financial management and monitoring systems, which strengthened their ability to handle large-scale, multi-donor projects.

These organizations often extended their training programs beyond staff to include volunteers and junior personnel, fostering a culture of inclusivity and skill development across their teams. Such practices not only enhanced individual competencies but also contributed to the long-term sustainability of the organizations by creating a more resilient and skilled workforce.

Challenges for Smaller NGOs

In contrast, smaller organizations such as the East Amman Charity and the Shuqira Association for Social Development faced significant barriers to accessing capacity-building opportunities. Furthermore, many of these NGOs still require capacity building in various areas, which is why many of the programs they pursue focus on key issues essential for NGOs and team development, such as administrative matters and human resources. Consequently, there is a shift from specialized, in-depth training programs toward broader, more comprehensive capacity-building initiatives. Hence, these limited resources and restricted access to tailored training meant these NGOs were often unable to benefit from comprehensive programs. For example, while larger organizations had the means to participate in workshops focused on advanced financial systems or digital marketing, smaller NGOs reported a lack of similar opportunities that aligned with their immediate needs and operational capacities.

Impact of Capacity Building

Despite these challenges, the capacity-building initiatives that smaller NGOs could access often had a transformative impact. For instance, training sessions provided by international actors, such as those on gender-based violence and community engagement, were instrumental in equipping local staff with the tools to address complex social issues within their communities. These efforts also helped smaller organizations build credibility with beneficiaries and donors alike, strengthening their roles within the localization agenda.

NNGOs such as East Amman Charity, the Shuqira Association, and Be Positive stated that these capacity-building programs have effectively contributed to building their capacities radically in a way that has effectively contributed to increasing their ability to manage their internal affairs and manage the programs in which they participate.

Gaps and Recommendations

Interviews revealed that capacity-building efforts tended to focus on short-term training rather than holistic, long-term strategies. Moreover, while larger NGOs often benefitted from sustained partnerships with donors that included capacity-building components, smaller NGOs expressed frustration at the lack of ongoing support to build institutional resilience.

Promising Practices

Some international actors have taken steps to address these gaps. For example, a partnership involving JONAF members included a pilot initiative to train smaller NGOs in digital marketing strategies, enabling them to expand their reach and improve the sustainability of income-generating activities. This practice was noted as an example of how targeted, context-specific capacity-building can level the playing field for smaller organizations.

III.5 Coordination

Coordination between local and international actors is another critical dimension of localization, emphasizing the importance of collaboration in advancing shared objectives. The analysis revealed that while communication and informal cooperation between local and international actors are often effective, significant gaps remain in formal mechanisms, such as leadership in working groups, which are traditionally dominated by international organizations.

Informal and Formal Coordination Mechanisms

National NGOs reported that informal coordination mechanisms were generally smooth and effective. In this regard, the majority of local NGOs, both the bigger and smaller ones, such as EFE, JRF, Be Positive, East Amman Charity, and Tamkeen for Legal Aid and Human Rights highlighted how initial face-to-face meetings or phone discussions with international actors often resolved operational issues efficiently. These informal interactions frequently laid the groundwork for more structured collaborations. However, the reliance on informal channels also reflected a lack of institutionalized processes for local actors to participate in decision-making within formal coordination systems.

While larger organizations such as ARDD, JRF and JOHUD participated in some formal coordination platforms, smaller NGOs reported limited involvement. For example, grassroots organizations like Be Positive and the Shuqira Association for Social Development noted that they were rarely included in cluster meetings or other formal forums. This exclusion limited their ability to influence broader policy or programmatic decisions at the national or regional level.

Coordination with Government and Private Sector

The analysis also highlighted the importance of local actors' coordination with government agencies and the private sector. Organizations like ARDD, JRF and EFE described successful collaborations with ministries such as the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, which helped align livelihood projects with national development priorities. These partnerships often enhanced project credibility and impact. Similarly, partnerships with private sector entities, such as the Amman Chamber of Commerce, provided local NGOs with additional resources and opportunities for innovation.

However, smaller organizations reported challenges in accessing these networks due to limited visibility and resources. Bureaucratic hurdles and the profit-driven priorities of private sector partners were also cited as barriers to effective collaboration. For instance, the East Amman Charity and Shuqira Association pointed out that although many government institutions welcomed cooperation with them in some informal meetings, this needed to be effectively translated on the ground due to the lack of necessary funding and the ability to hold various activities.

Leadership and Influence in Coordination Mechanisms

Interviews revealed that most local NGOs lacked the capacity or opportunity to lead clusters or working groups, which are predominantly guided by international agencies. This lack of representation hindered local actors from influencing high-level decision-making and advocating for their priorities.

Nevertheless, some progress was observed in fostering localized coordination. For example, EFE, JRF, ARDD and Tamkeen for Legal Aid and Human Rights were able to lead targeted initiatives within their areas of expertise, such as skills training and livelihood development. These examples illustrate the potential for greater leadership by local actors when adequate support and recognition are provided.

Promising Practices

One notable initiative involved a pilot collaboration between JONAF members and international actors to establish a localized coordination framework for addressing transportation challenges in rural areas. This initiative demonstrated how targeted, context-specific coordination could amplify local actors' voices and enhance their influence over project design and implementation.

III.6 Sustainability

Sustainability is a cornerstone of the localization agenda, emphasizing the importance of creating long-lasting impacts and resilient systems within local and national organizations. The analysis revealed a significant disparity in the ability of organizations to sustain projects and infrastructure post-funding, with larger NGOs demonstrating more robust mechanisms for sustainability compared to smaller, resource-constrained organizations.

Successful Sustainability Practices

Once again, organizations such as ARDD, EFE, and JRF serve as examples of effective sustainability practices. EFE highlighted its successful management of two training centers originally established with funding from the European Bank. Through strategic partnerships with the private sector and continuous donor engagement, EFE ensured that these centers remain operational, offering skills development programs aligned with market demands. Similarly, JRF has sustained projects by leveraging its extensive networks and diversifying its funding sources, reducing dependency on any single donor.

These practices underscore the importance of long-term planning and collaboration with diverse stakeholders, including the private sector, government, and international donors, in achieving sustainability.

Challenges for Smaller Organizations

Smaller NGOs, such as the East Amman Charity, the Shuqira Association for Social Development, and Be Positive, often struggle to sustain their activities once external funding ends. These organizations cited several barriers, including limited access to diverse funding streams, high operational costs, and insufficient technical expertise in areas such as financial management and strategic planning. For instance, many grassroots organizations noted that they lacked the capacity to maintain infrastructure or continue delivering services without donor support, leaving communities vulnerable to disruptions.

The Role of Innovation in Sustainability

Innovation emerged as a critical factor in ensuring sustainability. One JONAF organization adopted digital marketing training for beneficiaries, enabling them to sell their products online and reach international markets. This approach reduced dependency on external funding and increased the financial independence of both the organization and its beneficiaries. Similarly, some organizations integrated climate-smart and health-conscious practices into their production chains, aligning with global trends and attracting niche markets.

However, interviews revealed that many organizations were hesitant to embrace innovative approaches due to funding uncertainties. Smaller NGOs, in particular, preferred to prioritize activities with guaranteed financial support, limiting their ability to explore and invest in novel solutions.

Local Communities and Long-term Impact

Sustainability also depends on the active involvement of local communities in project design and implementation. Organizations that maintained strong relationships with their beneficiaries, such as JRF, reported greater success in sustaining initiatives. These relationships not only fostered trust but also empowered communities to take ownership of projects, enhancing their long-term viability. For instance, some organizations involved community members in maintaining infrastructure or managing cooperative businesses, ensuring continuity even after the project officially ended.

Promising Practices

One example of a promising sustainability initiative is a partnership between a JONAF member and the private sector to establish a cooperative business model for rural women. By providing seed funding and ongoing technical support, the initiative ensured that women could generate income independently while contributing to the local economy. This model highlights how targeted interventions can create lasting impacts and foster resilience within communities.

III.7 Enabling Environment

The enabling environment dimension focuses on the systemic and contextual factors that support or hinder the effectiveness of localization efforts. This includes legal frameworks, advocacy mechanisms, and the overall operating space for local and national actors. The analysis highlights a mix of progress and ongoing challenges in creating a conducive environment for localization in Jordan.

Progress in Advocacy and Collaboration

Some progress has been made in strengthening the enabling environment through advocacy initiatives. For instance, larger organizations like ARDD, JRF, EFE, and JOHUD have successfully collaborated with government agencies, including the Ministry of Labor, the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, and other governmental entities and non-governmental entities within the private sector to align projects with national priorities. These collaborations enhanced the credibility and scalability of projects, allowing local actors to secure support from multiple stakeholders.

Moreover, international actors have occasionally included advocacy-strengthening components in their funding agreements, providing local NGOs with tools and resources to amplify their voices in policy discussions. For example, some JONAF members reported receiving technical support for engaging in collective advocacy on issues such as women's empowerment and access to markets.

Barriers to an Enabling Environment

Despite these advances, local actors continue to face significant barriers in advocating for their priorities and operating effectively. Key challenges include:

1. **Restrictive Legal and Bureaucratic Frameworks:** Government-imposed regulations, such as those restricting access to foreign funding or imposing lengthy approval processes for projects, hinder the operational efficiency of local NGOs. Smaller organizations, in particular, struggle to navigate these bureaucratic hurdles, which disproportionately affect their capacity to scale up or innovate.
2. **Limited Access to Dialogue Spaces:** While larger organizations may have access to national and international platforms for advocacy, smaller NGOs often lack the visibility and resources needed to participate in these spaces. This exclusion limits their ability to influence policies or secure funding tailored to their needs.

3. **Profit-Driven Private Sector Engagement:** Although partnerships with the private sector hold promise, local actors often encounter challenges in aligning their social missions with the profit-driven priorities of private companies. Smaller NGOs, especially those in rural areas, reported difficulty in establishing meaningful collaborations with businesses that prioritize commercial interests over community impact.

Importance of Language and Communication

Language emerged as a critical factor in enabling effective collaboration. Local actors noted that their ability to communicate with international agencies often depended on proficiency in English, which smaller NGOs and grassroots organizations frequently lacked. This language barrier created inequities in accessing information, negotiating partnerships, and advocating for their priorities.

Promising Practices

One promising initiative involved a partnership between JONAF members and an international donor to advocate for streamlined licensing processes for women-led businesses in rural areas. This advocacy effort, supported by data collected from local communities, successfully influenced government regulations, allowing women entrepreneurs to access markets more easily. Such initiatives highlight the potential of localized advocacy to create systemic change.

III.8 Key Takeaways

Localization in Jordan has made progress in areas such as partnership quality, advocacy, and sustainability for larger organizations. However, smaller NGOs continue to face systemic challenges, including limited access to funding, capacity-building, and formal coordination mechanisms. Addressing these disparities requires targeted efforts to create an enabling environment that supports the inclusion, empowerment, and long-term sustainability of all local actors.

The analysis of localization across its dimensions provides critical insights into the progress, challenges, and opportunities for LNA in Jordan. The following key takeaways summarize the findings:

1. Insights into Partnership Quality:

- Larger organizations, like ARDD, JRF and EFE, have successfully engaged in co-designing and influencing projects, leveraging their capacities and networks.
- Smaller NGOs often remain confined to implementation roles with minimal input in decision-making due to capacity gaps and structural power imbalances.
- Rigid funding frameworks imposed by donors hinder local actors' ability to adapt projects to community needs, reinforcing inequities in partnerships.

2. Participation

- Local NGOs maintain strong networks with beneficiaries, utilizing tools such as WhatsApp and social media for feedback collection.
- Beneficiaries' voices are more integrated into project evaluations than the initial design phase, limiting the alignment of projects with community priorities.
- Feedback mechanisms often lack differentiation by gender, age, and diversity, reducing inclusivity in addressing specific vulnerabilities.

3. Funding Challenges

- Local actors, especially smaller NGOs, face significant barriers to accessing direct and multi-year funding. On the positive side, larger organizations like ARDD, JRF and EFE have diversified funding streams and established private sector partnerships, offering a model for financial sustainability.
- Rigid budget structures limit local actors' flexibility in addressing real-time needs during project implementation.
- Payment delays and insufficient funding for operational costs hinder project effectiveness and sustainability.

4. Capacity Building

- Tailored training programs, such as those provided by ARDD, JRF and EFE, have strengthened financial management, human resource development, and operational capacities for larger organizations.
- Smaller NGOs often lack access to such programs due to resource constraints, exacerbating disparities in capacity levels.
- Successful capacity-building initiatives are integral to sustainability, but they often prioritize technical skills over holistic, long-term strategies.

5. Coordination

- Informal coordination between local and international actors is generally effective, but formal mechanisms, such as cluster leadership, are dominated by international agencies.
- Smaller organizations lack visibility and resources to participate in national and international coordination platforms, limiting their influence on high-level decision-making.
- Collaboration with government agencies and private sector entities enhances project credibility and scalability but requires stronger alignment of priorities.

6. Sustainability

- Larger NGOs have implemented innovative practices, such as digital marketing and climate-smart production, to ensure project continuity beyond donor funding.
- Smaller organizations face challenges in maintaining infrastructure and services after funding ends due to limited resources and technical expertise.
- Community-driven approaches, where beneficiaries take ownership of projects, have proven effective in sustaining long-term impacts.

7. Enabling Environment

- Advocacy initiatives by larger organizations have influenced policies, such as streamlined licensing processes for rural women entrepreneurs.
- Smaller NGOs face barriers such as restrictive legal frameworks, limited access to advocacy platforms, and language challenges in engaging with international actors.
- The enabling environment remains uneven, with smaller actors disproportionately affected by bureaucratic hurdles and a lack of capacity for effective advocacy.

SECTION IV: A Roadmap for More Localized Livelihoods

This recommendations section builds on the findings and analysis and findings for this study, offering actionable steps for key stakeholders to advance the localization of livelihoods in Jordan. The dynamics of power in localization efforts reveal significant imbalances between International Actors (IAs) and Local and National Actors (LNAs), with LNAs often relegated to roles as implementers rather than strategic decision-makers. Despite progress in fostering partnerships and capacity-building, the structural inequalities in decision-making processes undermine the core principles of localization, which emphasize equitable and inclusive participation.

By addressing the systemic barriers identified in the study, the recommendations aim to foster equitable partnerships, empower local actors, and promote sustainable development in line with national and community priorities.

Each set of recommendations targets specific actors—donors, international organizations, local and national NGOs, and government institutions—recognizing their unique roles in shaping the livelihoods landscape. The guidance emphasizes collaborative approaches that leverage local expertise, enhance capacity, and integrate innovative and inclusive practices into livelihood initiatives.

By adopting strategies such as “Do-Not-Regret”⁶⁵ for donors, “Empower-Through-Trust” for international organizations, “Lift-and-Lead” for local and national NGOs, and “Facilitate-to-Empower” for the government, these recommendations provide a roadmap for advancing local livelihood initiatives in Jordan.

Through enhanced coordination, flexible funding, and sustainable practices, these measures aim to build resilience, strengthen community trust, and ensure the long-term success of livelihood programs.

1. Donors: Adopting a “Do-Not-Regret” Policy for Localized Livelihoods

To foster trust and resilience in local actors, donors should prioritize **flexibility** and **adaptability** in livelihood funding. A “Do-Not-Regret” policy acknowledges that experimentation and occasional missteps are part of innovation and growth, particularly in complex livelihood initiatives.

- **Shifting Mindsets:** Move away from punitive approaches when projects face challenges, treating setbacks as opportunities for learning and capacity building in localized livelihood programs.
- **Providing Supportive Oversight:** Offer mentorship and constructive feedback during project cycles, ensuring local actors feel supported and empowered rather than penalized.
- **Encouraging Risk-Taking:** Create funding structures that enable smaller organizations to explore innovative solutions without fear of failure, such as market-driven projects or climate-resilient livelihoods.
- **Prioritizing Trust:** Build long-term relationships with local actors, recognizing their expertise and capacity to adapt livelihood initiatives to community-specific needs.

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- **Facilitate Flexible and Equitable Funding:** Adjust funding mechanisms to allow LNAs to address real-time challenges during livelihood project implementation, such as reallocating resources to respond to beneficiary needs.
- **Promote Innovation and Sustainability:** Support projects that integrate digital tools, renewable energy solutions, and eco-friendly practices into livelihood models, fostering economic and environmental sustainability, and encourage innovative financing mechanisms, such as social impact bonds or blended finance, to attract additional investment in livelihood projects.

By embedding these principles in funding frameworks, donors can signal their commitment to empowering local actors to lead in developing sustainable livelihoods.

2. International Organizations (INGOs and UN Agencies): Adopting an “Empower-Through-Trust” policy to enhance localization in the livelihoods sector

- **Empowering Local Livelihood Leaders:** This approach emphasizes equitable partnerships and supports local actors as leaders in creating and managing livelihood programs.

⁶⁵ “States of Fragility 2022 | OECD,” https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/states-of-fragility-2022_c7fedf5e-en.html.

- **Institutionalize Co-Leadership:** Develop formal mechanisms that grant LNAs co-leadership roles in project planning, funding decisions, and evaluation processes. This could include representation in donor discussions, joint leadership in cluster meetings, and shared oversight of project outcomes.
- **Promote Equitable Partnerships:**
 - Ensure local actors co-design and co-lead livelihood projects, moving beyond token consultation roles to genuine decision-making authority.
 - Develop collaborative mechanisms that support local actors to adapt project designs to address evolving livelihood priorities.
 - Transition from a predominantly operational role for LNAs to co-leadership in livelihood project design and strategic decision-making. For example, involve local actors in identifying target sectors for interventions, such as agriculture, ICT, or manufacturing.
- **Provide Capacity-Enhancing Support:**
 - Offer long-term, tailored capacity-building programs that develop local actors' abilities on livelihood-specific areas, such as climate-smart agriculture, green jobs, and digital transformation, to align with emerging economic trends in Jordan. Provide mentorship to smaller organizations, enabling them to align with national livelihood strategies and international compliance and quality frameworks requirements.
 - Strengthen the ability of LNAs to access international markets, such as through support for e-commerce and digital marketing.
- **Ensure Risk-Sharing:** Acknowledge that local actors need flexibility to innovate livelihood solutions and address risks collaboratively rather than unilaterally imposing donor requirements.
- **Enable Flexible Funding:**
 - Advocate for adaptable budgets that allow for real-time adjustments based on changing community and market conditions.
 - Support multi-year funding to promote financial stability in livelihood programs, enabling local actors to plan strategically.
- **Foster Trust and Respect:**
 - Value local actors' contextual expertise in designing programs tailored to rural, urban, and refugee community needs.
 - Streamline reporting requirements to reduce administrative burdens on local livelihood implementers.

- **Encourage Long-Term Sustainability**

- Embed sustainability measures, such as revolving funds for SMEs and cooperative models, into project frameworks to ensure the continuation of livelihood initiatives beyond the funding period.

- **Advocate for Systemic Change:**

- Collaborate with donors, governments, and private sector partners to address barriers in accessing markets, funding, and technical expertise.
- Create platforms for local actors to contribute to regional and global livelihood policy discussions.

By embedding these practices, INGOs and UN agencies can transition from implementers to enablers of localized livelihood development.

3. Local and National NGOs: Adopting a “Lift-and-Lead” Approach

Strong L/NNGOs should adopt a “Lift-and-Lead” strategy to support grassroots organizations and drive locally led livelihoods. This approach focuses on mentorship, resource-sharing, and collaborative leadership.

- **Mentorship and Capacity Building:**

- Train smaller organizations in proposal writing, market research, and project implementation, particularly for livelihood initiatives in underserved areas.
- Share knowledge and best practices in managing cooperative enterprises, digital marketing, and climate-resilient livelihoods.

- **Promote Visibility:**

- Advocate for smaller NGOs by highlighting their successes in market linkages and community-driven livelihood programs.
- Elevate grassroots initiatives during donor meetings, national forums, and international events.
- Encourage the inclusion of LNAs from underserved areas in national and regional forums, ensuring equitable representation of marginalized communities in decision-making.

- **Facilitate Networking and Partnerships:**

- Connect grassroots organizations with donors, private sector stakeholders, and government agencies to create robust networks for funding and project support.
- Include LINGOs as co-implementers in larger livelihood projects to expand their operational reach.

- **Encourage Innovation and Risk-Taking:**
 - Enable smaller organizations to pilot innovative livelihood models, such as e-commerce platforms for rural producers or microfinance initiatives tailored for refugee entrepreneurs.
 - Allocate flexible funding within national-level projects to encourage experimentation and localized adaptations.
- **Establish Peer-Learning Platforms:** Create regular forums for knowledge exchange among NGOs, focusing on successful livelihood practices and challenges.

This approach promotes equity and solidarity within the civil society sector, ensuring that all organizations contribute meaningfully to sustainable livelihoods.

4. Government (Ministries and Regulatory Bodies): Facilitating Livelihood Localization

The Government of Jordan should implement a “Facilitate-to-Empower” policy to enhance the effectiveness of local and national livelihood initiatives. By creating an enabling environment, the government can support localized programs that align with national priorities and community needs.

- **Simplify Legal Frameworks:** Streamline regulations for project approvals and reduce barriers to foreign funding, ensuring local organizations can operate efficiently in the livelihoods sector.
- **Strengthen Collaboration and Coordination:** Establish and support coordination platforms that include LNAs and IAs, with a focus on aligning livelihood interventions with national priorities, such as the Economic Modernization Vision and National Employment Strategy.⁶⁶
- **Engage the Private Sector:** Incentivize corporate social responsibility initiatives focused on skills training, market access, and supply chain integration for small enterprises.
- **Support Geographic and Sectoral Diversification:** Address regional disparities by prioritizing investments in livelihood initiatives in underdeveloped areas, such as southern Jordan, and expanding support for high-growth sectors like renewable energy and ICT.
- **Enhance Advocacy Support:** Provide local actors with tools and platforms to advocate for policies that promote inclusive market systems and sustainable livelihoods, ensuring community needs are represented.

By fostering a conducive environment for localized livelihoods, the government can support economic resilience and social cohesion across Jordan.

These rephrased recommendations align directly with the localization of livelihoods, emphasizing actionable steps to support local actors and foster sustainable development.

ARDD's Role in Advancing Localization in Jordan

The Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARDD) has played a central and strategic role in advancing the localization agenda at national, regional, and international levels. Through its leadership, convening power, and policy influence, ARDD has contributed significantly to structural reforms in aid governance and the empowerment of Jordanian civil society.

1. Founding and Leading JONAF

In 2016, ARDD established the **Jordan National NGO Forum (JONAF)**—a coalition of Jordanian CSOs, community-based organizations, experts, and media actors advocating for the localization of humanitarian and development efforts. JONAF integrates the principles of the Charter for Change and Grand Bargain into its agenda and supports collective action to enhance the roles of national actors across sectors.

2. Establishing the Jordan International Cooperation Forum (JICoF)

Under JONAF's umbrella, ARDD played a foundational role in establishing the **Jordan International Cooperation Forum (JICoF)**, a platform bringing together local CSOs, INGOs, and donors. JICoF advances dialogue on critical policy issues, fosters coordination, and supports shared approaches to localization across humanitarian and development sectors.

3. Co-Chairing the Localization Task Force

ARDD co-chairs the **Localization Task Force** alongside UN Women, the Jordanian International Forum, and the Swiss Embassy. This body strengthens inclusive participation, facilitates policy engagement, and sets national benchmarks for localization, with a strong emphasis on gender-responsive and locally led approaches.

4. Shaping Policy Through Research and Advocacy

ARDD contributes high-quality, evidence-based research on localization, civil society strengthening, and governance of aid systems, including analyses produced under the Future Forward project. These knowledge products inform national dialogue and provide technical input into donor strategies and UN frameworks.

5. Convening and Bridging Actors

Through its networks, ARDD acts as a bridge between communities, civil society, government entities, and international partners. Its convening platforms strengthen trust, improve coordination, and amplify local voices in national and international forums.

6. Supporting Locally Led Livelihoods

ARDD's direct programming in economic empowerment, labor inclusion, community resilience, and protection contributes to developing sustainable livelihood pathways that embody the principles of localization. It also strengthens the capacities of local partners to lead in program design and implementation.

Conclusion

Localization is not an abstract principle but a necessary condition for sustainable, equitable, and context-sensitive livelihoods in Jordan. Advancing localization requires structural transformation in funding, partnerships, governance, and coordination. Jordanian civil society—supported by entities such as ARDD, JONAF, and JICoF, stands at the forefront of this transformation.

International actors, donors, and national institutions must commit to long-term, locally led reform that strengthens community resilience and enhances economic agency for all: Jordanians, Syrian refugees, and non-Syrian refugee groups alike. A localized approach to livelihoods is not only more effective but also more just, ensuring that the people closest to challenges are the ones empowered to shape their own futures.

Annex I – List of Livelihood Projects implemented in Jordan (2020 - 2030)

Livelihoods and Economic Empowerment initiatives within the Humanitarian and Development sectors in Jordan (2020 - 2030)			
Num.	Livelihood initiatives	Duration	Donor
#1	Smart Development of Eco-Friendly Solutions and Economic Regional Agricultural Techniques (Smart DESERT)	2020 - 2024	Agence Française de Développement
#2	Improving Livelihoods and Maximizing Economic Empowerment (ILHAMEE)	2023 - 2028	Agence Française de Développement
#3	Design and Determine: Building Resilience of Vulnerable Jordanians and Refugees through Livelihoods Support and Protection	2020 - 2022	European Regional Development and Protection Program
#4	Improving Resilience of Refugee and Host Population in Jordan through Development of Livelihood Skills and Opportunities	2020 - 2022	European Regional Development and Protection Program
#5	Livelihood Support for Syrian Refugees and Local Host Communities	2019 - 2022	European Regional Development and Protection Program
#6	SANABEL: Protection and Economic Development for Syrian refugees and Jordanian women	2019 - 2022	European Regional Development and Protection Program
#7	Skills4Work II: Localising Demand Driven Skills Development for the Empowerment of Jordanians and Refugee Host Communities	2023 - 2026	European Regional Development and Protection Program
#8	Informal Livelihoods Advancement Activity (IQLAA)	2022 - 2027	US AID
#9	Business Growth Activity	2021 - 2026	US AID
#10	Women Economic Empowerment and Leadership Activity (WEELA)	2021 - 2026	US AID
#11	Reducing the Vulnerability of Iraqi Refugees in Jordan	2021	U.S. Department of State - Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration
#12	Support Economic Growth and Sustainable, Diversified Income Creation in Jordan	2021 - 2023	U.S. Department of State - Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration
#13	Improving the Well-Being of Refugees and Vulnerable Jordanians Through Tenure Security, Access to Services, and Provision of Decent Work	2020 - 2021	U.S. Department of State - Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration

#14	Protecting Jordan's Most Vulnerable Populations with Resiliency and Livelihoods	2020 - 2021	U.S. Department of State - Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration
#15	Reinforcing Self-Reliance and Resilience in Displacement Affected Communities in Jordan	2020 - 2023	U.S. Department of State - Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration
#16	Women Do Business (Phase II)	2020 - 2021	U.S. Department of State - Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration
#17	Najahna: Increasing access to employment for Syrian refugees in Jordan through partnerships with the private sector	2022 - 2026	Novo Nordisk Foundation
#18	RYSE: Resilient Youth, Socially and Economically Empowered	2020 - 2022	Novo Nordisk Foundation
#19	Refugee Investment Facility	2024	N/A

Livelihoods and Economic Empowerment initiatives within the Humanitarian and Development sectors in Jordan (2020 - 2030)			
Num.	Livelihood initiatives	Duration	Donor
#20	Livelihoods and Environmental Actions for Development (LEAD)	2022 - 2024	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
#21	Digital livelihoods in the Azraq refugee camp	N/A	N/A
#22	Jordanian women and youth resilient in the face of poverty and multidimensional crisis promote an economic recovery free of violence	2024 - 2026	Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation
#23	Women in Jordan contribute to resilience, economic recovery and the fight against poverty in response to COVID-19	2022 - 2023	Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation
#24	Strengthened the active participation of women (Jordanians, Refugees, Youth and Women with Disabilities) with a comprehensive approach to rights in Jordan	2023 - 2027	Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation

#25	Women Economic Empowerment in the Governorate of Ma'an	N/A	Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation
#26	IDMAJ: Contributing to peace building and violence prevention in Jordan	2022 - 2024	Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation
#27	Improving socio-economic opportunities for people with disabilities in Amman, Mafraq and Zarqa in the post-COVID-19 period	2021 - 2023	Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation
#28	Enhance the self-reliance and inclusion prospects of displaced-affected communities in Amman	2020 - 2022	Italian Agency for Development Cooperation
#29	Strengthening the livelihood capacities and food security of Syrian refugees and Jordanian host communities through the improvement of agri-food production chains and access to markets	2023 - N/A	Italian Agency for Development Cooperation
#30	No woman left behind. Gender-based violence and disability: turning vulnerability into ability	2023 - 2024	Italian Agency for Development Cooperation
#31	SPUAR: Sustainable Production and Utilization of Agro-natural Resources	2022 - 2024	Italian Agency for Development Cooperation
#32	Strengthening Livelihood & Food Security of Host Communities & Syrian Refugees Through The Development of Sustainable Agricultural Practices	2022 - N/A	Italian Agency for Development Cooperation
#33	Local Communities and Sustainable Tourism in Petra and Wadi Rum	2023 - 2025	Italian Agency for Development Cooperation
#34	AMER: Agriculture Management to Enable Resilience	2023 - 2025	Italian Agency for Development Cooperation
#35	SAQEL: Professional growth paths to foster inclusive economic development in the Governorates of Zarqa and Irbid	2022 - 2023	Italian Agency for Development Cooperation
#36	Enhancement of Jordanian SMEs inclusiveness, competitiveness and sustainable innovation	2021 - 2023	Italian Agency for Development Cooperation

Livelihoods and Economic Empowerment initiatives within the Humanitarian and Development sectors in Jordan (2020 - 2030)			
#	Livelihood initiatives	Duration	Donor
#37	Towards a More Inclusive Economy through Immediate Job Generation and Enterprise Development for Vulnerable Refugee and Host Communities in Jordan	2020 - 2022	Italian Agency for Development Cooperation
#38	Socio-economic recovery post-Covid in the protected area of Shobak castle	N/A	Italian Agency for Development Cooperation
#39	Discovering Madaba: a sustainable tourism project	2020 - 2022	Italian Agency for Development Cooperation
#40	SAWIAN – Strengthening social protection services for vulnerable adolescents and their families among refugees and host communities in Amman, Irbid and Russeifeh	2020 - 2021	Italian Agency for Development Cooperation
#41	Natafaa: Counteract the effects of the COVID-19 emergency through an integrated system of social safety nets in the governorate of Mafrq	2021	Italian Agency for Development Cooperation
#42	Meeting the basic needs of the most vulnerable families in the Karak Governorate through economic support activities	N/A	Italian Agency for Development Cooperation
#43	Employment Intensive Investment Program and decent work in Jordan	2023 - 2024	Italian Agency for Development Cooperation
#44	BORO'OM – Supporting the creation and strengthening of self-employment and entrepreneurial activities, promoting social integration and contributing to local development in the agricultural and sustainable tourism supply chains	2024 - 2025	Italian Agency for Development Cooperation
#45	Sustainable Jerash: enhancing cultural heritage for inclusive tourism	2024 - 2026	Italian Agency for Development Cooperation

#46	JODHOUR: Support for employment and entrepreneurship in the cultural, agricultural and tourism heritage chain in the governorates of Ma'raq, Ma'an and Aqaba	2022-2023	Italian Agency for Development Cooperation
#47	Women Economic Empowerment	N/A	European Union
#48	Employment and Livelihood Program - Supporting vulnerable youth, Syrian refugees, and women to create new micro businesses or to develop their existing businesses	2023 - 2027	European Union
#49	Employment and Livelihood Program - Equipping Youth, Syrian refugees, and women in Jordan with demand-driven skills to access inclusive and decent employment opportunities	2023 - 2027	European Union
#50	Enhancing resilient livelihoods and food security of host communities and Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon through the promotion of sustainable agricultural development	2020 - 2024	European Union
#51	Entrepreneurship Champions: Boosting Entrepreneurial Perceptions, Intentions and Motivations in Jordan	2023 - 2024	European Union
#52	Innovation Support Project	2021 - N/A	European Union
#53	Towards stronger economic participation of women in Jordan	2021 - 2024	European Union

Livelihoods and Economic Empowerment initiatives within the Humanitarian and Development sectors in Jordan (2020 - 2030)			
#	Livelihood initiatives	Duration	Donor
#54	Support to livelihoods through cultural heritage development	2020 - 2024	European Union
#55	Resilience and Empowerment of Vulnerable Women: The Future of Jordan's Growth and Stability	2021 - 2023	European Union
#56	Providing social protection assistance for refugees in Jordan	2020 - 2023	European Union
#57	Strengthening the resilience of Palestine refugees from Syria in Jordan and Lebanon (Phase III)	2020 - 2022	European Union
#58	Support to higher education for Syrian refugees and vulnerable host youths (EDU-SYRIA III)	2020 - 2023	European Union
#59	From Innovation to Creation	N/A	European Union
#60	Green forward: Enhancing business networks in the Mediterranean	2024 - 2028	European Union
#61	CLUSTER – Advancing youth and women social inclusion in the Mediteranean	2021 - 2023	European Union
#62	Access to Education for Employment	N/A	Islamic Development Bank, Sheikh Abdullah Al Nouri Charity Society
#63	Economic Resilience through COVID-19	N/A	Qatar Fund for Development
#64	Maharat for Tourism	N/A	Google.org
#65	Skills Training Education Program (STEP)	2022 - 2024	Islamic Development Bank, Abdul Aziz Al Ghurair Foundation

#66	Mubaderoon II	2021 - 2023	Private Funds
#67	Ready for Tomorrow	2022 - 2027	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark
#68	Strengthening Social Protection in Jordan	2020-2021	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, US AID, Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation , Foreign, Commonwealth Development Office
#69	Social protection program towards improving resilience of refugees and vulnerable Jordanians	2023-2025	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
#70	Decent work for Migrants in the Middle East	2023 - 2027	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
#71	Technical and Vocational Education and Training in the Hospitality Sector	2023 - 2025	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
#72	Creating Sustainable Green Jobs for Refugees and Host Communities through the Green Economy in Jordan	2023-2026	Korea International Cooperation Agency
#73	Strengthening Societal and Economic Resilience in Jordan (SSERJ) - Delivering cash assistance to refugees through UNHCR's cash program in Jordan	2023 -2027	Foreign, Commonwealth Development Office

Livelihoods and Economic Empowerment initiatives within the Humanitarian and Development sectors in Jordan (2020 - 2030)

#	Livelihood initiatives	Duration	Donor
#74	<u>Strengthening Societal and Economic Resilience in Jordan (SSERJ) - Delivering cash assistance to refugees through WFP's food assistance program in Jordan</u>	2023 -2027	Foreign, Commonwealth Development Office
#75	<u>Green Growth and Jobs Accelerator</u>	2023 - 2027	Danish-Arab Partnership Program
#76	<u>Mitigating Climate Change through Solid Waste Management in southern Jordan</u>	2022 - 2025	Global Affairs Canada
#77	<u>Jordan Jumpstart Program & Fund: Growth Capital to Create Jobs and Catalyze SMEs in Jordan</u>	2022 - N/A	Global Affairs Canada
#78	<u>SEED II: Sustainable Energy and Economic Development Project in Jordan – Phase II</u>	2025 - 2028	Global Affairs Canada
#79	<u>Women's Economic Linkages and Employment Development</u>	2022 - 2023	Global Affairs Canada
#80	<u>Municipal Services and Social Resilience Project (MSSRP)</u>	2022 - 2024	Global Affairs Canada, FCDO, USAID, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands
#81	<u>Digital Skills for Better Future Program</u>	2020 - 2022	Global Affairs Canada
#82	<u>Investing in the Future: Improved educational, social and economic integration of Somali, Sudanese and Yemeni minorities in Jordan</u>	2022 - 2024	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
#83	<u>Increase Economic Self-reliance of Azraq Camp Refugees Through Environmentally Responsible Solid Waste Management Incentive-Based Volunteer Activities</u>	2020 - 2024	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

#84	Community members including persons with disabilities and women improve their social participation through economic inclusion activities	2023 - 2024	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
#85	IBTIKAR	2021 - 2024	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
#86	Innovative Approaches for the Financial Inclusion of Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) in Jordan (I-FIN)	2021 - 2025	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
#87	Promoting resource-efficient production for green jobs in Jordan	2020 - 2026	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
#88	Orange Digital Centers: Digital Skills for Employment	2020 - 2022	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
#89	Improving the living conditions of Palestinian refugees	2021 - 2024	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
#90	Developing human resources capacities in the water sector	2020 - 2024	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
#91	Labor Market Oriented Vocational Education, Higher Education and Training (MOVE-HET) Phase II	2023 - 2026	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
#92	Livelihoods Planning & Guidance for Youth in Jordan	2020 - 2022	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

Livelihoods and Economic Empowerment initiatives within the Humanitarian and Development sectors in Jordan (2020 - 2030)			
#	Livelihood initiatives	Duration	Donor
#93	Transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agro-food systems	2022 - 2024	Embassy of the Kingdom of Norway in Jordan
#94	Scaling up water innovation for climate security in northern Jordan	2021 - 2023	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
#95	Curated Experience: Developing Innovative and Diversified Touristic Products Across Jordan	2020 - 2023	Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Jordan
#96	AZEM Program	2020 - 2024	Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Jordan
#97	Youth Innovation in Food Security	2021 - N/A	Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Jordan
#98	Challenge Fund for Youth Employment	2020 - 2026	Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs
#99	Youth JO – Level Up!	2022 - 2025	Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Jordan
#100	COOL YA: Creating Attractive Opportunities for Livelihood of Youth in Agriculture	2022 - 2024	Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Jordan
#101	Economic Empowerment and Resilience Program for Refugees	2020 - N/A	Government of Kuwait
#102	Remote working	2021 - N/A	N/A
#103	Rooftop planting in Marka Refugee Camp	2020 - 2021	N/A
#104	PROSPECTS Partnership	2024 - 2027	Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Jordan

#105	Orange Corners Program Jordan	2024	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands
#106	Make Horticultural Knowledge Work	2021 - 2022	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands
#107	Jordan: Modernizing Education, Skills, and Administrative Reforms (MASAR) Operation	2024 - 2029	World Bank
#108	Enhancing Women Economic Opportunities in Jordan Operation	2024 - 2028	World Bank

Annex II– List of KII International Organizations

International Organizations				
Name	Position	Name of Organization	Type of Organization	Date
Dana Hijazeen	SOYEE Specialist	Plan International Jordan	INGO	11/11/2024
Ala’a Adas	Economic Recovery Manager	Danish Refugee Council	INGO	17/11/2024
Rania Bakeer	Associate Livelihoods & Economic Inclusion Officer	UNHCR	UN agency	18/11/2024
Paula Bravo	Head of Mission	Movement for Peace	INGO	19/11/2024
Lina Hajo	Project Coordinator			
Ibtihal Ibrahim Al Safi	Project Coordinator	ARCS Culture Solidali	INGO	19/11/2024
Taqi Wahsh	Livelihood Coordinator			

Roaa Alkhudari	Private Sector Engagement Specialist	World Vision International	INGO	21/11/2024
Bashar Badran	Self-Reliance & Livelihood Program Manager	WFP	UN agency	27/11/2024
Dahlia Roque	PROSPECTS Manager	ILO	UN agency	27/11/2024

Annex III- List of KII L/NGO

L/NGOs				
Name	Position	Name of Organization	JONAF member	Date
Amal Hasan	President	Al-Amal Association for Social Development	Yes	03/09/2024
Abdelelah Al Hunaiti	President	Abu Alanda Society for Social Development	Yes	03/09/2024
Khawla Al-Kalaldehy	President	Al - Hima Charity Association	Yes	03/09/2024
Zina al-Daghimat	President	Ghour Almazra'aa and Al-Haditha Society for Social Development	Yes	04/09/2024
Qatnah al-Huwaitat	President	Disi Women Cooperative Association	Yes	12/09/2024
Linda Al Kalash	CEO	Tamkeen for Legal Aid and Human Rights	Yes	18/09/2024

Sima Jaafara	Project Coordinator	Shuqira Association for Social Development	No	22/09/2024
Emman Al-Titeh	President	East Amman Charity	No	26/09/2024
Manal Wazni	CEO	Durrat Al Manal	Yes	29/09/2024
Siham Kwar	President	Jordanian Women's Village Association	Yes	02/10/2024
Asia Yaghi	President	I am a Human Society for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	Yes	06/10/2024
Asma Alzabin	Project Coordinator	Be Positive	No	09/10/2024
Dr. Abdulkarim Rabih Al-Khazaileh	President	Qudrat for Community Development	Yes	09/10/2024
Laila Juma	Programs Reporting and Communication Specialist	Jordan River Foundation	No	15/10/2024
Odai AlKhaldi	Project Officer	JOHUD	No	17/10/2024
Rama Al-Dabas	Partnership and Business Development Manager	Education for Employment	No	29/10/2024
Sabah Al-Dardour	President	Al-Ramtha Ladies Society for Social Development	Yes	29/10/2024

