

Assets of Refugees in Zataari camp: A Profile of Skills



Introduction

In February 2016, during the London Donor Conference, Jordan took an unprecedented step among refugee hosting countries, and pledged to provide formal employment opportunities to Syrian refugees in tandem with concessionary rates on international loans, trade deals with the European Union, and investments from the international community to support the Jordanian economy.

In this context, the Ministry of Labour waived fees and some documentation requirements to ease access for Syrian refugees to formal employment opportunities in professions open to non-Jordanian workers. Moreover, humanitarian and development actors in Jordan started implementing projects as livelihoods for Syrian refugees became an area of focus.

Following the developments at the national level, in February 2017 the Ministry of Labour announced that Syrian refugees living in camps could obtain permits to work anywhere in the country. The Zaatari Employment Office (ZOE) was later established in August 2017 to operationalise this decision, which positively impacts the mobility and the possibility to access jobs of refugees in camps. Run jointly by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNHCR, the employment office offers job matching services for camp residents, information on training opportunities, and counselling – and most of all allows refugees to register work permits and leave the camp for up to one month at the time.

In this context, there is a need to assess the skills available among the refugee population in Zaatari, and their willingness to take over formal employment opportunities outside the camp.

Methodology

The RefuGIS team

As part of a community development initiative, in 2016 a group of 12 refugees from Zataari were trained in Geographic Information Systems (GIS), data collection and presentation, as well as data analysis. Spatial information (infrastructures, water points, mosques, etc.) was collected by the group for Zaatari camp and transferred to maps, which are now available. Through the initiative a GIS lab equipped with hardware and software was set up in district 6 IRD community Centre allowing the team to work and train. The lab was finally completed in June 2017; the team worked on a variety of Information Management (IM) projects with the objective of strengthening skills and developing products and data collection capacity. The team has sound technical knowledge, dedication and ability to survey the camp and its inhabitants. The team members also have the ability to use Kobo, Excel, Access, and GIS with ease. Throughout the survey, the RefuGIS members were able to collect data, survey households, and communicate both with communities and with officers of international organizations in a clear and competent manner, as well as give feedback on questionnaire design and on what evidence is needed from the point of view of the community. The RefuGIS team members were remunerated by International Relief and Development (IRD) through cash for Work for this research project.

UNHCR Kobo server

UNHCR Kobo server became the core element of the “community based information system” and two RefuGIS coordinators were trained on how to use it efficiently.

A questionnaire was designed for the purpose of skills mapping, and administered to groups of working-age (18-59) residents in Zaatari camp. Districts in the camp were found having similar percentages of persons in working age. Therefore a stratification by district was deemed not necessary, while stratification between female and male (18-59 years old) was applied.



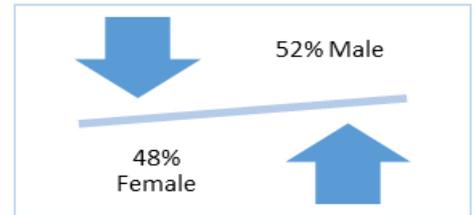
Sample Demographics

The number of refugees between 18 and 59 years registered as residents in Zaatari camp is 30,704 individuals, 14,847 of them are males and 15,857 of them females; the calculation of the samples with a confidence level of 95% and 5% margin of error will be applied as follows:

Strata	Number of individuals	Sample Size
Male	14,847	374
Female	15,857	375

Gender

A total of 372 males and 342 females were interviewed; the average age of the respondents was 36 years old.

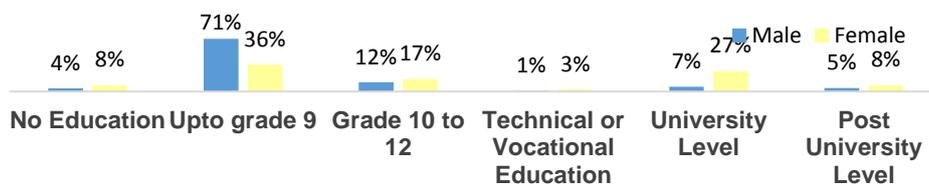


Marital status

88% of the respondents reported being married with three to six children. 93% of males involved in this assessment defined themselves as responsible for a household with an average of six family members. 36% of female respondents were heads of households, with a relatively smaller family size (average five family members).

Education

Most of respondents can read and write in Arabic but not in English, with slight differences between males and females. However, the level of education varied substantially between men and women in the sample.



Data Collection

The data was collected from the second to twenty seventh of July 2017 by the RefuGIS team using Kobocollect technology. The team was involved in both the design and the data collection in the field. In total, the team interviewed 714 individuals (372 male and 342 female), used as a representative sample of the population of Zaatari camp.

The Questionnaire

The skills mapping questionnaire was organized to explore important work-related questions such as previous experience, education level, previous trainings, knowledge of the Jordanian laws and regulations about work, technical/functional skills in the manufacturing sector, desired incentives needed to accept a job, garment sector skills and skills in other sectors.

Challenges in Data Collection

As many respondents were not home during the day, (indicating a considerable level of activity) the data collection took additional time than the anticipated two weeks. Data collection had to be conducted in the late hours of the afternoon and on weekends to reach all the individuals on the list of those to be interviewed. Changed or inaccurate addresses also delayed the end of the survey.

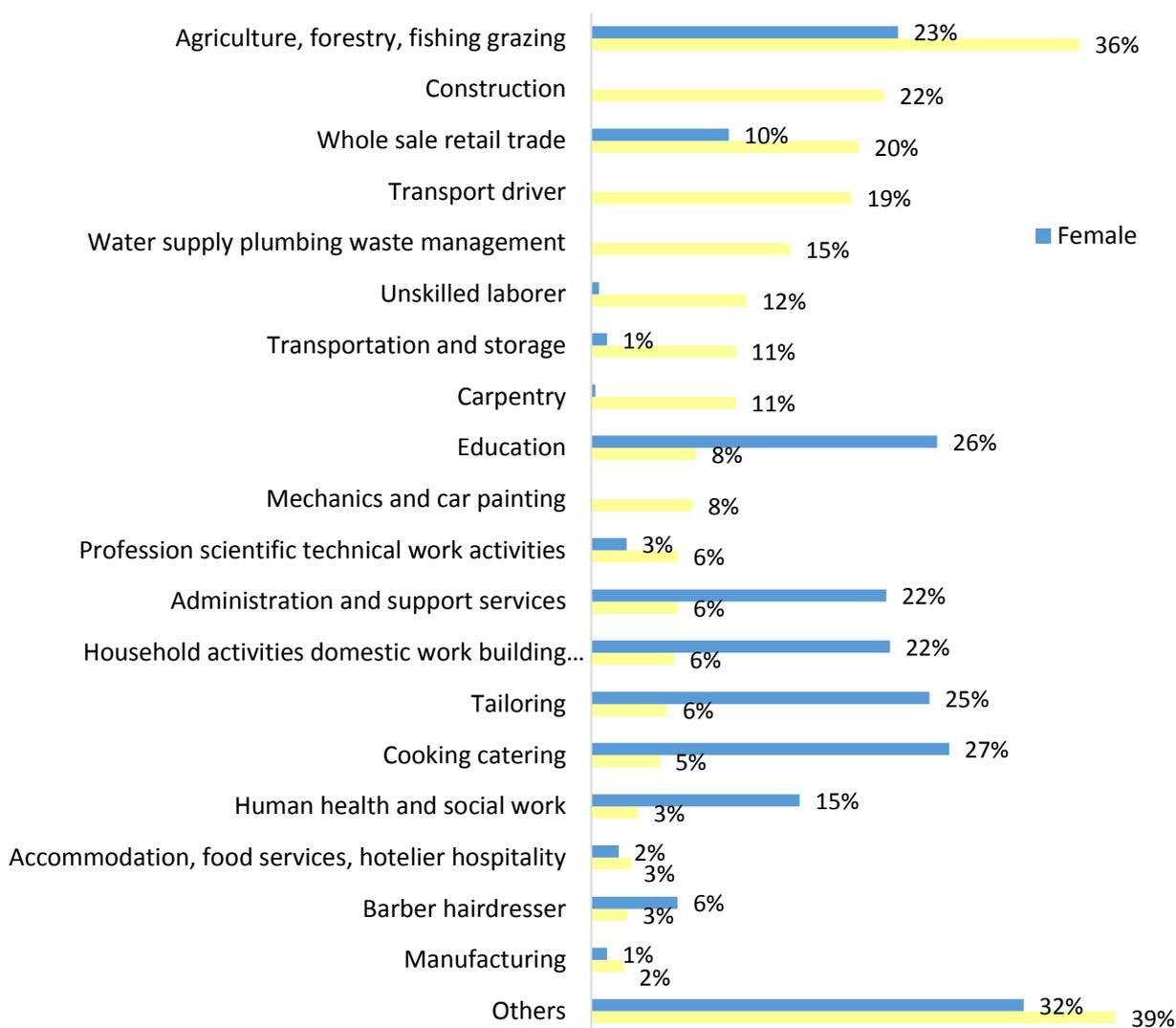
Outcomes and findings

Training: Overview

The majority of respondents went to school up to grade 9. One third (and more so women) reported having been trained in different subjects. 49% of the refugee women interviewed have attended at least one training course in their lives while only 18% of males had.

Some trainings were attended in Syria, but the majority of trainings specified by respondents happened while living in Zaatari Camp. Women mostly attended skills training in computer skills, English language classes, tailoring, and hair and beauty. Men were involved in English language courses, computer skills, barbering, tailoring, electricity, and other types of training courses provided by humanitarian agencies in the camp such as life skills training, nursing, communication skills, and project management.

Skills, work experience and interests



30% of men and women interviewed work inside Zaatari camp through cash for work schemes as Incentive Based Volunteers (IBV). Women are almost exclusively working through Cash for Work while 10% of men are involved in other types of work. 13% of the male respondents work outside the camp, while only 1% of the women do so. They work mainly without a work permits in agricultural occupations, followed by occasional work in construction.

The majority of men and women interviewed said they were willing to work in agriculture; however, men are more interested in construction work, transport or whole sale/retail trade. Women are interested in cooking/catering, education or tailoring.

The survey also shows a preference for team work and the importance of training: if training is offered, 54% of female and 75% of male respondents would be willing to take up a job outside the camp, and are also willing and interested in gaining any new skills that may open up avenues for employment.

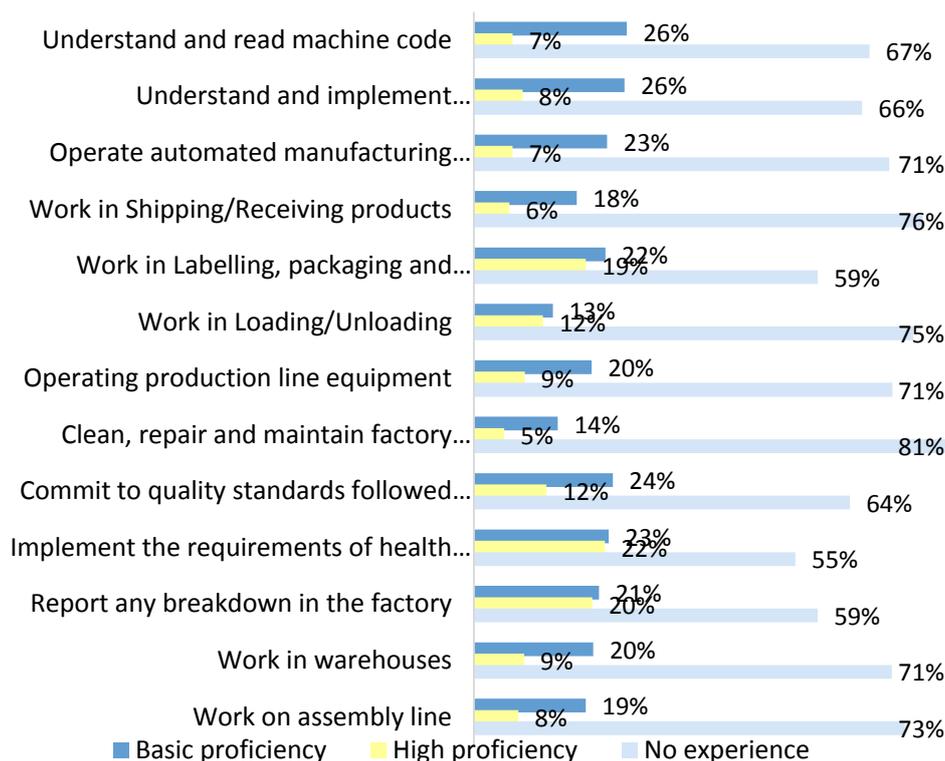
In general, men are willing to work in any sector. When asked in which type or factory or sector of work they would prefer, women tend to be more selective and prefer the garment and food processing industry, without a strong preference for companies that produce detergents, textile and carpets, pharmaceuticals, plastic, paper, steel or energy.

The assessment revealed that only 9% of the respondents know about workers' rights and 7% know about social security under Jordanian law. 7% know the procedures to get a work permit and how these contribute to their protection and ability to move freely. 8% know about the costs involved and who should pay for the work permit. 74% of the interviewees also did not know to whom they should complain in case of abuse or exploitation in the work place. 70% would like to have work permits, which are generally perceived as being useful and necessary; 48% consider it important for free movement and 49% would like to have it for protection reasons.

Functional and technical skills

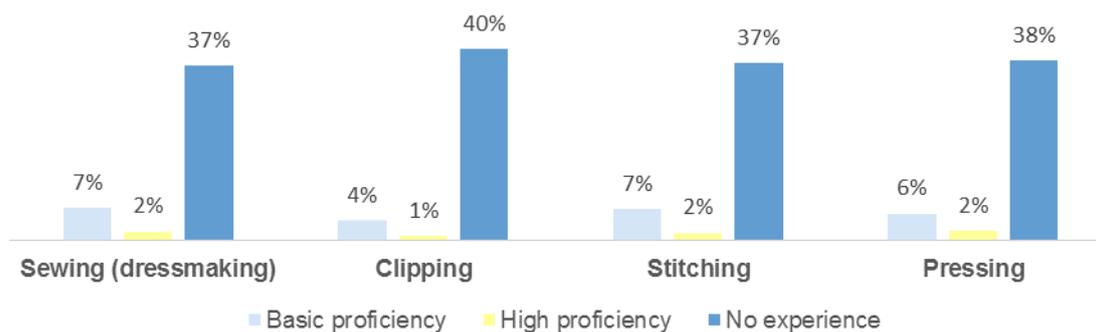
Skills in the Industrial Sector

When looking at the manufacturing sector specifically, refugees from Zaatari camp interviewed were asked about their ability and their confidence in performing specific tasks; these capacities were then divided on the basis of level of experience. While the vast majority have no experience in manufacturing, many feel confident of being able to perform tasks at basic level.



Functional and Technical Skills in Garment Sector

In the garment sector, interviewed refugees had little or no experience. However selected individuals with basic skills were identified. Out of the total sample size of 714, three persons who are “highly proficient” in all skills in the garment sector had received formal training in tailoring. Levels of skills in sewing, clipping, stitching, and pressing in particular were identified as below:

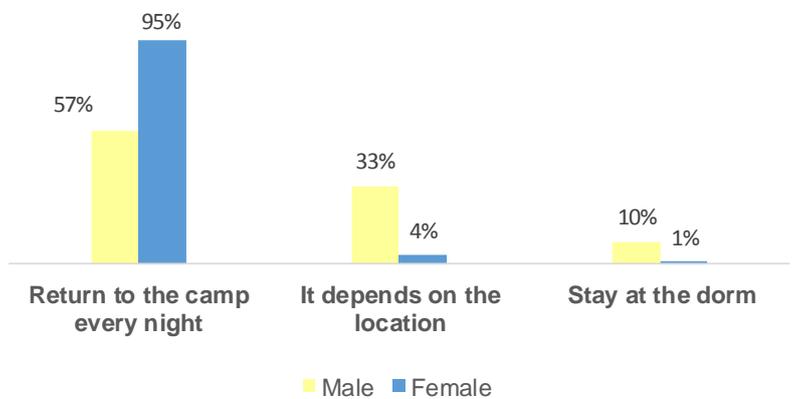


Workers Rights

The assessment indicates that very few respondents know about workers' rights and social security in the Jordanian law. As previously noted, only a few of the respondents know the procedures to get a work permit (how much would it cost, or who should pay for it), but they feel work permits are important either for protection purposes or to move freely. 70% of the interviewees would like to have a work permit. They generally do not know to whom they should complain in case of abuse or exploitation in the work place.

Working Conditions, Geographical Preference and Incentives

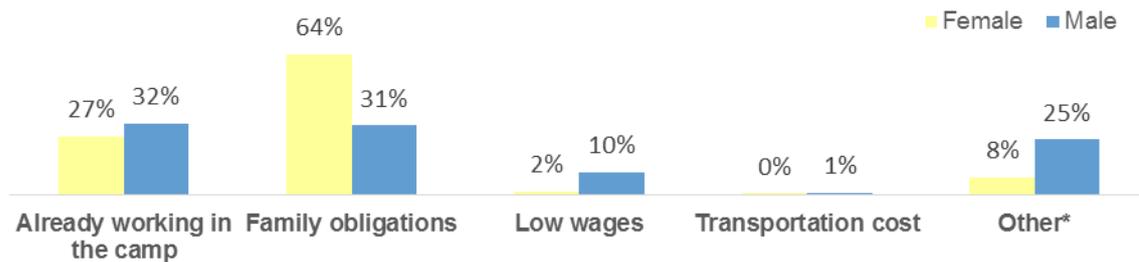
The men and women interviewed prefer to work in Governorates close to Zaatari (Mafraq, Irbid, Zarqa, Amman, or Jarash). Amman was considered as the place that could offer more job opportunities. Men were again less selective in determining where to work. Men are ready to work on a night shift while women are not. Percentages are very similar for both men and women (20-22%) when it comes to willingness to work in factories with minimum wage.



Both males and females are generally not willing to work in a place unless it provide buses for transportation on a daily basis for women; men would agree to come back to camp on a weekly, biweekly, or monthly basis. The provision of bus is a sine qua non condition for all to accept a job offer outside the camp. Women seem nevertheless even more concerned by this issue. An overwhelmingly proportion of females are not willing to stay in dorms, even if dorms were provided, while a small majority of males are. Apparently free meals are not an important motivation for refugees especially for males.

28% of males and 21% of females interviewed through the survey self-reported a medical condition or a disability that needs special working conditions. Those who wouldn't take job opportunities outside the camp clarified that it is because they don't want to change what they are familiar with, or because of some personal reasons (especially women), or simply because they don't want to work. More than half of the interviewees irrespective of gender find it acceptable to work in manufacturing.

Overall, the assessment indicated that 75% of men are considering applying for formal work in the industrial sector outside the camp, compared to 31% of women. Applying for formal work in the industrial sector outside the camp is not a viable options for many because of the reasons below:



*Other: Mostly highlighting health issues or family obligations (need to take care of family members with special needs)

Conclusions and Recommendations

- Although women are generally more educated than males in the camp, the majority is not willing to work outside the camp mainly for personal reasons or because they are working in the camp (cash for Work).
- When willing to work, females are more selective than men and seem to attach more importance to working conditions or working environment. The vast majority of men, on the other hand, is ready to take opportunities under more varied conditions.
- There is a strong need to better define the typology of trainings and employment since the category “other” was very important in the results (meaning categories were not properly defined).
- Training activities have to be properly mapped out in Zaatari Camp in order to start to work on a design of a specific plan for 2018 (training activities should match employment opportunities inside or outside the camp in the future) ; occupational license/certificates provided after each training would be better for both refugees and employers .
- Qualitative surveys (focus groups or in depth interviews) have to be organized to understand what are the motivations and barriers of the females willing to work or both males and females that needs special working conditions. . Discussions are ongoing with UN Women on how to decentralize counselling for employment in collaboration with the ILO; transport, child care, cultural/family constraints continue to be the most important barriers.
- Other surveys targeting Refugees with specific skills in other sectors such as construction, carpentry for men and tailoring for women might be organised
- The same skills mapping assessment should be repeated in Azraq camp.
- This skills mapping assessment should be done on regular basis according to new updates regarding open/closed sectors and other regulations from the Ministry of Labour (MoL).
- There is a need for more awareness about workers’ rights in Jordanian laws, social security work permits and MoL regulations in general.
- This test shows that refugees show interest to work even in sectors they don’t have experience in and that they are happy to do on the -job training.
- Refugees with special needs and injuries should be matched with jobs that match their needs.
- Most respondents have 3 to 6 children; there is a need for child care facilities and solutions in the camp to allow mothers to go and work.
- The RefuGIS team has proved to be an important resource in the camp, which with adequate guidance, can conduct research and data collection effectively.