

**POLICY CONFERENCE ON:****EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND HOUSING IN JORDAN: THE IMPACTS OF THE SYRIAN REFUGEE INFLUX****MAY 13, 2018****AL REEM BALL ROOM, KEMPINSKI HOTEL AMMAN****AMMAN, JORDAN****CONTEXT**

Since 2011, Jordan has been buffeted by powerful external forces related to the situation in neighboring countries. The deteriorating security situation in the region as a whole, and Syria in particular, resulted in large flows of refugees into Jordan, a reduction in tourism and foreign investment. The challenges facing Jordan have put serious strains on the Jordanian economy and its labor market. This was manifested in a substantial slowdown in economic growth, a decline in employment rates among Jordanians and an increase in their unemployment rates.

At the same time, Jordan has received generous assistance from the international community to help it to cope with the large inflow of Syrian refugees. The aim of the assistance has been to support Jordan and turn the challenges into opportunities, providing services to the refugee population as well as strengthening the resilience of Jordanian communities. Yet, the resources needed to host the large number of refugees undoubtedly outpaced the assistance received.

**CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES**

This conference aims to examine the impact of the Syrian refugee influx on various aspects of life for Jordanians, including their labor market outcomes, their access to education services and housing, and their demographic behavior in terms of marriage and fertility. The opportunity to carry out such an analysis by researchers affiliated with the Economic Research Forum (ERF) is made possible by the data that were recently collected as part of the second wave of the Jordan Labor Market Panel Survey (JLMPS) in 2016 and 2017 implemented by ERF in cooperation with the Jordanian Department of Statistics (DoS). The JLMPS is a major, nationally representative longitudinal household survey that was first carried out in Jordan by ERF and DoS in 2010 on a sample of 5,000 households. The second wave of 2016 followed all the households originally interviewed in 2010, as well as all the households that split from them. It also added a refresher sample of 3,000 households that oversampled neighborhoods with a high proportion of non-Jordanians as a way to obtain a representative sample of refugees and migrants.

Discerning the impact of one set of shocks among many is difficult at best. A before and after comparison ascertains the impact of the combined forces affecting the Jordanian society and economy during this six-year period. To isolate the specific effects of the refugee influx, a careful research strategy that compares areas differentially affected by the refugee influx before and after the shock is needed. The policy papers being presented at this conference are based on a series of carefully executed academic research papers that pursue state-of-the-art analytical methodologies to disentangle the effects of the refugee influx from those of the overall economic crisis Jordan has faced in the same period.

## CONFERENCE ORGANIZATION

The conference is organized jointly by ERF, the Economic and Social Council and DoS. The Economic and Social Council has been set up as the first official and institutionalized forum for the promotion of social dialogue and tripartite policy discussions in Jordan with the goal of reaching reasonable consensus on economic and social policies in Jordan. It works to promote coordination between stakeholders, accountability, and an inclusive policy making mechanism, a role that is essential in the process of discussing the research conducted. Other partners include Al-Yarmouk University and Al-Hussein University whose researchers participated in the analysis of the data. The conference will take place over two days. The first day is a policy-oriented conference examining the broad theme of the impact of the Syrian refugee crisis on Jordanians. The second day is a focused, academic seminar presenting the results of the JLMPS survey on specific aspects of the Jordanian labor market.

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**AGENDA**

- 09:00 – 10:30 **Opening Panel**  
**Moderator:** Dr. Ibrahim Elbadawi (Economic Research Forum)  
**Speakers:** H.E Mr. Imad Fakhoury (Minister of Planning and International Cooperation)  
H.E Dr. Omar Razzaz (Minister of Education)  
Mr. Hani Khuleifat (Ministry of Labor)  
Mr. Mohammad Nabulsi (Economic and Social Council)
- Open discussion**
- 10:30 – 10:45 Coffee Break
- 10:45 – 12:00 **Session 1: Launch of the JLMPS Dataset**  
**Moderator:** Dr. Qasem Alzoubi, (Director General of the Department of Statistics (DOS))  
**Speakers:** Dr. Ragui Assaad (University of Minnesota and ERF)
- Open discussion**
- 12:00 – 13:00 **Session 2: Situation Analysis of Syrian Refugee Influx**  
**Moderator:** H.E Dr. Taher Kanaan (Economics Specialist)  
**Speaker:** Dr. Caroline Krafft (St. Catherine University)  
**Panelists:** Ms. Sara Ferrer Olivella (UNDP)  
Ms. Fedaa Gharaibeh (MOPIC)  
Ms. Laura Buffoni (UNHCR)
- Open discussion**
- 13:00 – 14:00 Lunch
- 14:00 – 15:00 **Session 3: Impact of refugee influx on Jordanian labor market**  
**Moderator:** Mr. Hani Khuleifat (Secretary General, Ministry of Labor)  
**Speaker:** Dr. Jackline Wahba (University of Southampton)  
**Panelists:** Ms. Maha Qattai (International Labor Organization)  
Dr. Bashar Subuh (Economist)  
Mr. Ahmad Awad (Phenix Center for Economic & Informatics Studies)  
Dr. Susan Razzaz (Economist)

### Open discussion

15:00 – 16:00

#### **Session 4: Impact of refugee influx on education and housing outcomes for Jordanians**

**Moderator:** Dr. Abdullah Ababneh (National Center for Human Resources Development)

**Speaker:** Dr. Ragui Assaad (University of Minnesota & ERF)

**Panelists:** Mr. Yousef Qurneh (Contractor)  
Dr. Eman Awamleh (Expert)  
Dr. Rob Jenkins (UNICEF)  
Dr. Zainab Shawabkeh (Ministry of Education)

### Open discussion

16:00 – 16:15

Coffee Break

16:15 – 17:30

#### **Session 5: Family formation, marriage and fertility among Jordanians and refugees**

**Moderator:** Dr. Sawsan Al Majali (The Jordanian Senate)

**Speaker:** Dr. Maia Sieverding (American University of Beirut)

**Panelists:** Ms. Maysoon Al-Zoubi (Higher Population Council)  
Dr. Shereen Abbadi (Consultant)  
Dr. Mumen Hadidi (Consultant)  
Dr. Jack Sarkis (Consultant)

### Open discussion

17:30 – 17:45

**Closing Remarks**