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Establishing Day Care Centres in the Private Sector

Ministry of Labour, Jordan

The Jordanian Ministry of Labour seeks to promote female labour force participation by supporting the establishment of day care centres in the private sector. This brief discusses the design of a comprehensive, cost-effective and participatory monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system for a joint intervention between the Ministry of Labour and the National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA). It describes how to establish an M&E system supported by existing data sources in the context of limited available resources.

KEY MESSAGES

- **Strong partnerships:** During the implementation of interventions, having a strong partner that is well versed in the content and has expertise in its field of work ensures work progresses appropriately and steadily.
- **Dynamic M&E systems:** The M&E framework is best viewed as a dynamic tool that permits adjustments, especially when working with government entities where policies and procedures change frequently.
- **Ownership:** It is advisable to promote ownership of systems and instruments when working with organizations by building on their existing resources.
- **Cost-effective data collection tools:** Given scarce resources – of both finance and time – aim to develop the most cost-effective data collection instruments, especially when working with government entities.



Background

Jordan's National Employment Strategy

The Jordanian labour market faces a number of structural challenges, including a rapidly growing working-age population. In particular, young women face many barriers to finding gainful and productive employment. Even though women are on average highly educated, their labour force participation is low, while unemployment rates are high. In addition to skills and jobs mismatches, many women find it difficult to reconcile domestic responsibilities with employment and often leave the labour market once they get married. Lingering cultural barriers, negative employer perceptions and institutional labour rights weaknesses also constrain female labour force participation.

Against this backdrop, the National Employment Strategy (NES) was launched under the patronage of His Majesty King Abdullah II during the National Labour Forum held in 2012 in Jordan. The NES emphasizes that creating jobs of adequate quantity and quality is a top priority in Jordan. It envisions improving the living standards of Jordanians through increasing employment opportunities, promoting productivity and, as a result, raising wages. The strategy thus aims to improve market access for its beneficiaries, with a special focus on young people, women and rural areas.

Importantly, the NES also promotes gender equality, with a strategic objective of increasing female labour market participation rates. It recognizes that improved access to information on job opportunities, secured maternity benefits and affordable and dependable childcare would facilitate female entry into the labour market and encourage women who are already working to maintain their employment status without jeopardizing their reproductive role. NES interventions thus expand channels for women to enter the workforce through the elimination of obstacles, the provision of flexible options and a suitable working environment, and a reduction in the wage gap for jobs held by both men and women.

The Ministry of Labour was assigned responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the NES by all stakeholders. The NES was used as a programme framework for 54 projects being implemented by 22 government agencies. Implementation was initially coordinated by the NES Unit, whose role was (i) to assess the progress of NES interventions, (ii) to train NES points of contact and project coordinators, and (iii) to monitor and evaluate NES interventions and their impacts on labour market outcomes. Later in 2016, and in order to unify the efforts of the NES and the Employment, Technical and Vocational Education Training (E-TVET) Strategy, a restructuring was carried out that resulted in the creation of the National Strategies and E-TVET Council Affairs Unit, which is linked directly to the minister.

Establishing day care centres in the private sector

As one of the objectives of the NES is to design interventions that promote women's participation in the labour force, the Ministry of Labour designed a programme with the goal of establishing day care centres in private sector companies. A further aim was to improve adherence to Jordan's Labour Law, which stipulates in Article 72 that "the Employer who employs a minimum of twenty female married employees should provide a suitable place under the custody of a qualified governess to care for the employees' children of less than four years of age provided that the number is not less than ten children".



Source: Ministry of Labour, Jordan

To encourage and support employers to establish day care centres, the project, through the NCFA, provides technical and financial support and trained personnel to work in the centres. It also provides wage subsidies for these workers for a set period of time. The intervention was initially intended to start in remote and less advantaged areas of Jordan. However, due to a lack of demand and the concentration of companies in the major cities, it is now being implemented nationwide.

Taqeem support

The National Strategies and E-TVET Council Affairs Unit was assigned the role of liaising between stakeholders and monitoring and evaluating the expected results of projects run under the NES banner. Being aware of the various levels of skills and knowledge of its counterparts in partner organizations and entities, it was also tasked with establishing a robust M&E system. The Unit cited a number of challenges in this regard, including insufficient institutional capacity (which could slow progress in implementing M&E), lack of government cooperation and coordination, the existence of political risks, insufficient budget to build the M&E system, and maintenance of the system.

The International Labour Organization's (ILO) Taqeeem Initiative provided support to conceptualize a results chain and develop indicators to capture the intended outputs, outcomes and impacts of the programme. This was necessary since to date the systems employed only reported on activities. Furthermore, Taqeeem provided training on different approaches to data collection, introducing the National Strategies and E-TVET Council Affairs Unit to new techniques in qualitative data collection. Importantly, the Taqeeem support focused on just one out of the 54 NES projects – namely “the establishment of day care centres in the private sector” – to develop an M&E system that could then generate transferable learning for other interventions.

Ultimately, the Unit aims to replicate the M&E skills and knowledge acquired through working with Taqeeem in other interventions, and to manage the overall implementation of the NES under a homogeneous monitoring framework that is comprehensive and sustainable.

Monitoring and results measurement system

Setting out the logic

To implement the project to establish day care centres in the private sector, the Ministry of Labour partnered with the NCFA, a leading national entity in Jordan in matters of early childhood development and education. The NCFA would provide the technical and financial support to selected companies to establish day care centres and would train the centre staff in best early childhood care. Meanwhile, the Ministry would subsidize the salaries of the centre staff for the first few months. This financial support would be provided by the E-TVET Fund.

The goal of the intervention, as shown in figure 1, is to increase women’s participation in the labour force. This is done by employing women as day care facilitators, through building their skills and providing them with job openings in the day care centres established. Furthermore, improving working conditions for women by offering such centres will lead to higher job retention rates and will also encourage new women to join these female-friendly workplaces.

FIGURE 1. Results chain for the establishment of day care centres in the private sector

Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Awareness and inspection campaigns on Article 72 by the Ministry of Labour ■ Technical and financial assistance from the NCFA to companies to establish day care centres ■ Skills training in early childhood care ■ Subsidizing women’s employment in day care centres established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Companies are aware of the need to establish day care centres and apply for support ■ Day care centres are established ■ Women are trained in early childhood care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Trained female day care staff have improved knowledge and skills in early childhood care ■ Job-seeking women start taking up jobs in targeted companies ■ Working conditions in targeted companies help to retain women employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increased labour force participation by women in the private sector

Data collection instruments

When designing the data measurement tools for the M&E system, priority was given to cost-effective tools and instruments as very few resources could be allocated to the data collection process. ILO Taqem worked closely with the Ministry of Labour to build on the existing monitoring systems of the Ministry of Labour, the NCFA’s monitoring tools and existing data from the Department of Statistics. As a result, the project identified the specific areas of the M&E system that would require more data

in order to measure the defined indicators. Furthermore, the responsible unit in the Ministry of Labour developed guidelines for focus group discussions, in-depth interviews and key informant interviews to integrate a participatory approach in the M&E system.

TABLE 1. Short description of the data collection instruments

Instrument	Description	Main indicators
Focus group discussion guidelines	Qualitative exploratory tool for use with new and long-standing female employees who are using the day care centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent to which the availability of a day care centre encourages women to remain in or take up a job in a company, compared with other factors
In-depth interview guidelines	Questionnaires with open-ended questions to be conducted with women during monthly field visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quality of the day care centre's service as perceived by women using the service (score) Reported positive/negative changes created for women and their children
Key informant interview guidelines	Semi-structured interviews with key informants at companies with and without day care centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reported factors that influence the decision and ability to employ women Reported reasons why companies have not applied for support
Observation checklist	Checklist of standards agreed with the NCFA and companies to use during monthly field visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of day care centres' compliance with standards defined in contracts (score)
NCFA records	National Council for Family Affairs administrative records	<p>Indicators related to training enrolment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of women graduates employed in day care centres and other jobs in companies <p>Indicators related to employment status of women in supported companies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Net additional jobs created for women within the day care centres established
NCFA pre/post test	National Council for Family Affairs knowledge and competencies test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of trained women with improved knowledge of early childhood care
MoL records	Ministry of Labour administrative records	<p>Indicators related to compliance with the law</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of companies that comply with Article 72
Attendance sheets	Attendance at training in early childhood care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of enrolled women who successfully completed the training Reported reasons for dropping out of the training programme

Data management

The Ministry of Labour and its primary partner in this project, the NCFA, both have their own databases. They collect various data sets and information based on the types of activity they are involved in. More specifically, the Ministry collects work-related information and the NCFA compiles data sets related to

family activities. To make the best use of the available resources and time, the indicators were built around existing data sets and the information already collected. Some fine tuning was carried out and the required information was built into the databases to ensure all indicators were measured.

The data entry process was designed to feed directly into the database. Information collected in the field is entered during the visits that Ministry staff conduct to companies participating in the project. For non-participating companies, data can be collected during inspection visits or phone calls. Ministry staff conduct focus group discussions with women as per the guidelines developed.

The NCFA is responsible for collecting all the data sets and information for the activities it leads – the early childhood training, its outcomes, and follow-up with its direct beneficiaries. In some cases, both the Ministry and the NCFA collect similar data sets, which presents an opportunity for data triangulation and quality checks.

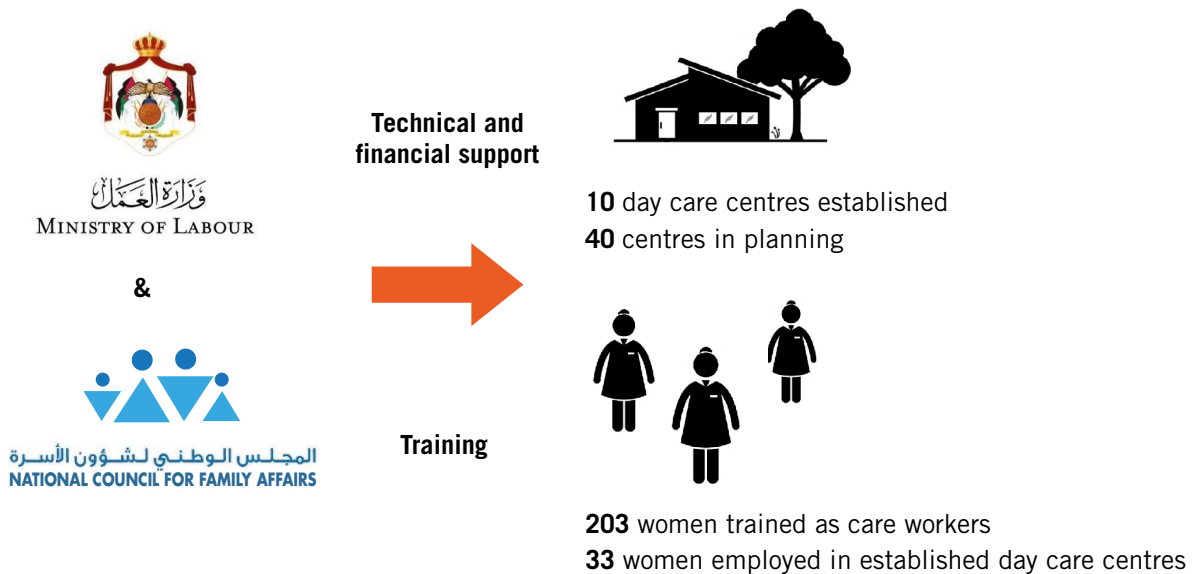
Achieving results and next steps

As shown in figure 2, since the start of the project ten nurseries have been established and are up and running, with another 40 nurseries at different phases of the planning process. A total of 203 women from the Civil Service Bureau have been trained, and 33 women have been employed in the new day care centres.



Source: Ministry of Labour, Jordan

FIGURE 2. Project results (2015–17)



However, the project also faces several challenges. These include a weak response from owners of private companies, the large number of requirements for licensing nurseries, and the lack of a one stop shop policy for licensing nurseries.

In 2017, the Ministry of Labour decided to expand the scope and coverage of the programme and to combine it with the existing work of the Women’s Directorate of the Ministry to establish day care centres in the public sector. Approval for this merging process was obtained, and accordingly the scope of the project will be expanded to include both the public and private sectors. The project will also be extended for another three years. This is expected to substantially increase the demand for day care centres and trained employees. Moreover, the Ministry of Labour recognizes the significance of this project and has therefore included it in its strategic plan, in alignment with other national plans.

The project is currently in the phase of assigning roles and responsibilities to the new parties involved. The Ministry of Labour will then revise the results chain and indicators. It is possible that more activities will be added, which will generate new outputs and outcomes to contribute to the achievement of the project’s ultimate goals. As such, the M&E framework developed in coordination with Taqem experts will be slightly adapted to include the work in the public sector.



Source: Ministry of Labour, Jordan

Lessons learned

Members of the Ministry of Labour who have worked directly with Taqeam have identified a number of lessons learned through this process.

- **Data measurement tools and instruments do not necessarily need to be designed from scratch with every new project.** The project team needs to revise what is already in place, and revisit and adapt it to capture the intended indicators as set by the results chain.
- **Partnering with entities that have their own systems in place, with tested tools and instruments – such as the NCFA – provides added value to the development of a relevant and useful M&E system.** As the new model for this project is completed, lessons from the integration of different M&E plans and their implementation will be documented and disseminated for the benefit of knowledge sharing and replication.

The Taqeam (“evaluation” in Arabic) Initiative: What Works in Youth Employment is a technical cooperation programme of the ILO.

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