

Effects of refugee work permits in Jordan

Evidence from UNHCR's engagement in humanitarian-development cooperation

Syrian refugees who have received work permits under the Jordan Compact...

+\$62

Monthly income

...have a monthly household income of 62 USD higher than those who have not (matched data median monthly income of 211 USD).

-80%

Protection needs

...are 80 per cent less likely to indicate specific legal or physical protection needs.

-30%

Risky, illegal or degrading job

...are 30 per cent less likely to have accepted a risky, illegal or socially degrading job.

-10%

Food on credit

...are 10 per cent less likely to buy food on credit.

As part of the 2016 Jordan Compact, the Jordanian Government agreed to issue 200,000 work permits to Syrian refugees, primarily in the agriculture and construction sectors. A multi-year evaluation analyzed* home-visit data on non-camp refugees collected by UNHCR and its partners to understand what effects the work permits had on refugees.

Key Findings

Income: Having a work permit increases total monthly income by about JOD 44 (median total monthly income of JOD 150). This increase is mostly driven by income from work (JOD 45).

Income from other sources diminishes slightly when a household has a work permit: donations by JOD 1, remittances by JOD 4 and other income by JOD 2. Having a work permit, however, does not have an effect on the likelihood of receiving assistance from UNHCR, UNICEF or WFP.

Protection and employment: Having a work permit has positive effects on refugee protection and security. Possessing a work permit considerably decreases the probabilities of having specific legal or physical protection needs; of having accepted a risky, illegal or socially degrading job; and of all case members being unemployed.

Food security: Work permit possession decreases the probabilities of having to buy food on credit and of having to reduce essential non-food expenditures (such as on education or health). The former is not solely driven by the income-increasing effects of work permits. Instead, work permit possession also seems to increase the likelihood of permit holders changing location to meet basic needs.

Child Labor: Having a work permit decreases the likelihood of a household having sent children to work to meet basic food needs.

***Methods:** We use UNHCR's home-visit data sets, comprising survey data that was collected through interviews with Syrian refugee households in Jordan. The data sets contain data on a large proportion of all registered refugees in Jordan. We conduct descriptive and inferential statistical analysis on a range of relevant outcome variables. For more information on these methods, as well as data limitations, see www.unhcr.org/61af7be94.