

Migration in third countries: the Jordanian case

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"This background document has been realized in the framework of the project, to spread data and information based on a scientific analysis. If you want to know more about this project and be part of its activities, please feel free to contact the leading partner Diaconia in Czech Republic (email: nozinova@diakoniespolu.cz), as well as Focsiv in Italy (email: f.novella@focsiv.it)."

¹ This background paper has been realised in the framework of the "Faces of Migration" project (Migrant and SDGs, contract number CSO-LA/2018/401-798), co-financed by the European Union. The paper has been elaborated by Aurora Ianni and Mattia Giampaolo, researchers at the Centro Studi Politica Internazionale (CeSPI), with the coordination of Andrea Stocchiero (Focsiv). This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

1. JORDAN: LAND OF MIGRATION

Over the last **70 years**, Jordan has faced a lot of challenges related to its neighbourhood instability. From the first Arab-Israeli conflict to the most recent Iraqi and Syrian crises, Jordan has become home to a massive number of refugees who lost both home and means to survive in their home countries.

The Palestinian presence in Jordan dates back to the late '40s –the birth of the State of Israel- and has increased after the '67 war against Israel. Today, there are almost 2 million Palestinians in Jordan, but not all of them have full citizenship. More than 18% of Palestinians live in refugee camps spread all over the country. According to UNRWA² figures, there are 89 refugees per 1,000 inhabitants³.

However, to date, most refugees living in Jordan come from Syria.

The Syrian crisis, almost entered in its ninth year, has generated more than **5 million refugees**. To date, **Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt** host most **Syrian refugees**, given their territorial proximity to the areas of conflict. Since the beginning of the Syrian civil war (2011), flows of Syrian refugees started to move to Jordan. According to the 2015 Census, the number of Syrians in Jordan reached 1.3⁴ million and, since 2018, Jordan has become the second country in the world per number of refugees as a proportion of its population⁵.



Ph. UNHCR.

² United Nation Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees.

³ Syrian Regional Crisis, UNRWA report: https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/2019_syria_ea_final.pdf

⁴ See http://www.dos.gov.jo/dos_home_a/main/population/census2015/Non-Jordanians/Non-jordanian_8.1.pdf

⁵ Dina Mansour-Ille, Simone Haysom et al. Jordan between the making of a nation and the politics of living, ODI 2018. See <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/12541.pdf>

The reception system in Jordan is managed by the Government and by UNHCR, in a collaborative effort between the donor community, UN agencies, international and national NGOs, community-based organizations, refugees and host communities.

The main activities of such organizations, especially UNHCR, cover the sectors of protection, basic needs, health, education, community empowerment, durable solutions and access to energy, among others.

In order to protect and provide basic services (particularly health and education) the SDGs and the international cooperation are at the core of refugees' protection.

Goal 17 of the SDGs aims to mobilize finance and technologies for international cooperation and partnership that are also needed to protect refugees.

The SDGs related to refugees' protection, in particular Goals 3 and 4 (health and education), but also 8 (decent work) and 10 (reduced inequalities) are also relevant in order to guarantee basic services, economic local integration and safe pathways such as resettlements.



Ph. Global Goals for Sustainable Development



2. LEGAL STATUS OF SYRIAN REFUGEES IN JORDAN

Since 2011, the Kingdom of Jordan has welcomed a consistent number of Syrian refugees who are now living in the country with or without a valid registration. As soon as they enter the country, the Jordanian authorities ask the Syrians to register with the Ministry of the Interior and issue a biometric service card (**Mol card**) that entitles the holder to move freely throughout Jordan. In the district in which the Mol card is issued, it also allows the holder to access public services, such as health and education. In addition, Syrians should register with UNHCR and receive either a 'proof of registration in formal camps' or an 'asylum seeker certificate' if they reside in host communities.

Without a valid registration, Syrian refugees face barriers to legally stay in their current place of residence, access public services and humanitarian assistance or register births, deaths and marriages.

Hundreds of thousands of unregistered Syrian refugees in Jordan lose their humanitarian aid rights and risk deportation because they either left official refugee camps or failed to register with UNCHR or Jordanian authorities⁷.

It has to be noted that **Jordan is not a State party to the 1951 Geneva Convention** (which asserts that a refugee should not be returned to a country where they face persecution) or its 1967 Protocol, nor is there any national legislation for the protection of asylum seekers and refugees. In the absence of any specific legislation, the **Law on the Residence of Foreigners**⁸ remains applicable to asylum seekers and refugees⁹.

Refugees can receive temporary protection from UNHCR under the framework of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in 1998 with the Jordanian Ministry of Interior¹⁰. The MoU outlines the major principles of international protection, including the definition of a refugee and the principle of **non-refoulement**¹¹.



Ph. UNHCR.

⁷ Jordan INGO Forum, January 2018, Syrian refugees in Jordan, A protection overview. <http://testsite.jordaningoforum.org/wp-content/uploads/JIF-ProtectionBrief-2017-Final.pdf>; Haiden, S., Feb. 2017, 'Forced back to Syria? Jordan's unregistered refugees fear deportation', Reuters, Amman, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-jordan-refugees/forced-back-to-syria-jordans-unregistered-refugees-fear-deportation-idUSKBN16100I>

⁸ To learn more, see <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b4ed4c.html>

⁹ UNHCR, Submission by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees For the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' Compilation Report - Universal Periodic Review: JORDAN, See <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/513d90172.pdf>

¹⁰ Luigi Achilli, Migration Policy Centre, EUI, Syrian Refugees in Jordan: a reality check https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/25e6/a549282ad940f2d14888c0ee77ddae13d53e.pdf?_ga=2.150535989.2057588253.1579528793-1293208224.1579528793

¹¹ UNHCR, Submission by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees For the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' Compilation Report - Universal Periodic Review: JORDAN, See <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/513d90172.pdf>

3. POPULATION OF JORDAN AND SYRIAN REFUGEES: SOME DATA

According to the Jordan Population and Housing Census 2015¹², the total population of Jordan is around **9.5 million** people.

Of these, around **1.3 million** are **Syrians**. Only half of them are registered with UNHCR. **As of January 2020**, the **number of registered Syrians** in Jordan reached **654,692**.

Most Syrian refugees (531,432 people) live out of camps in the **urban areas of the Northern Jordan**. Due to their proximity to the Syrian border, the four governorates of Amman, Irbid, Mafrqa and Zarqa host the highest number of Syrian refugees.

As of UNHCR data, in January 2020 the number of **in-camp refugees** was **123,260**.

The population of **Zataari**, the largest refugee camp located in the Mafrqa Governorate, is home to 76,365 people. It has to be noted that the camp first opened in 2012, less than 10 miles from the Syrian border, and has since become Jordan's 4th largest "city"¹⁷.

The governorate of Zarqa hosts two official camps, Azraq (with 40,403 refugees) and Mreijeib el Fhood, which is administered by the United Arab Emirates and the Jordanian government (with 6,492 people). In addition, a smaller number of refugees reside in informal tented settlements (ITS) spread through the country.

Table 1. Population of Jordan as of 2015¹³

Total population	9,531,712 (Female: 47%; Males: 53%)	
Jordanian citizens:	6,613,587	
Non-Jordanians	Syrians	1,265,514
	Palestinians ¹⁴	634,182
	Egyptians	636,270
	Iraqis	130,911
	Yemenis	31,163
	Libyans	22,700
	Bangladeshis	19,390
	Filipinos	17,810

¹² To learn more, see http://www.dos.gov.jo/dos_home_a/main/population/census2015/Non-Jordanians/Non-jordanian_8.1.pdf

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Without a national ID number. More than 2 million registered Palestinian refugees live in Jordan. Most Palestinian refugees, but not all of them, have full citizenship. To learn more, see <https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/jordan>; <http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/population-stands-around-95-million-including-29-million-guests>

¹⁵ See <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/36>

¹⁷ WFP USA, 10 Facts About the Syrian Refugee Crisis in Jordan, November 2019. See <https://www.wfpusa.org/stories/10-facts-about-the-syrian-refugee-crisis-in-jordan/>

Almost half of the Syrian refugees come from Dara'a, one of the governorates that borders Jordan followed by Homs, rural areas around Damascus, Aleppo, Hama and Raqqa.

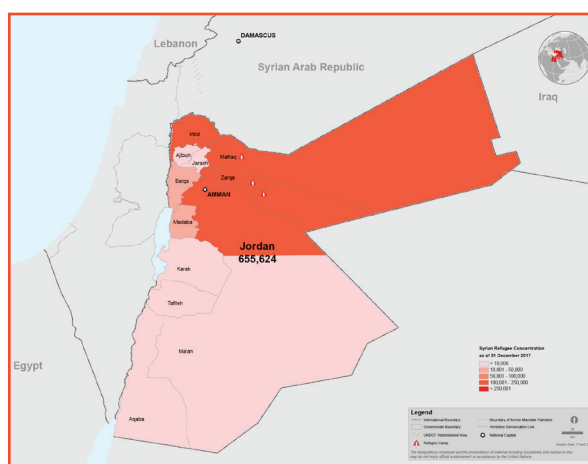
Table 2. Syrian refugees per origin¹⁹



Source: FAFO 2019 *

* Åge A. Tiltne, Huafeng Zhang and Jon Pedersen, The living conditions of Syrian refugees in Jordan. Results from the 2017-2018 survey of Syrian refugees inside and outside camps, FAFO 2019. See <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/67914.pdf>

Table 3. Syrian refugee distribution in Jordan²⁰



Source: 3RP 2017 Annual Report**

** 3RP Regional Refugee & Resilience plan 2017-2018 in response to the Syria crisis. 2017 Annual Report. See <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/63530>

¹⁹ FAFO 2019, Åge A. Tiltne, Huafeng Zhang and Jon Pedersen, The living conditions of Syrian refugees in Jordan. Results from the 2017-2018 survey of Syrian refugees inside and outside camps, See <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/67914.pdf>

²⁰ <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/64862>

4. CHALLENGES TO BE FACED

The presence of Syrian refugees in Jordan has generated the need for a concrete response both from the Government of Jordan and from the International community, in particular in terms of Healthcare and Education.

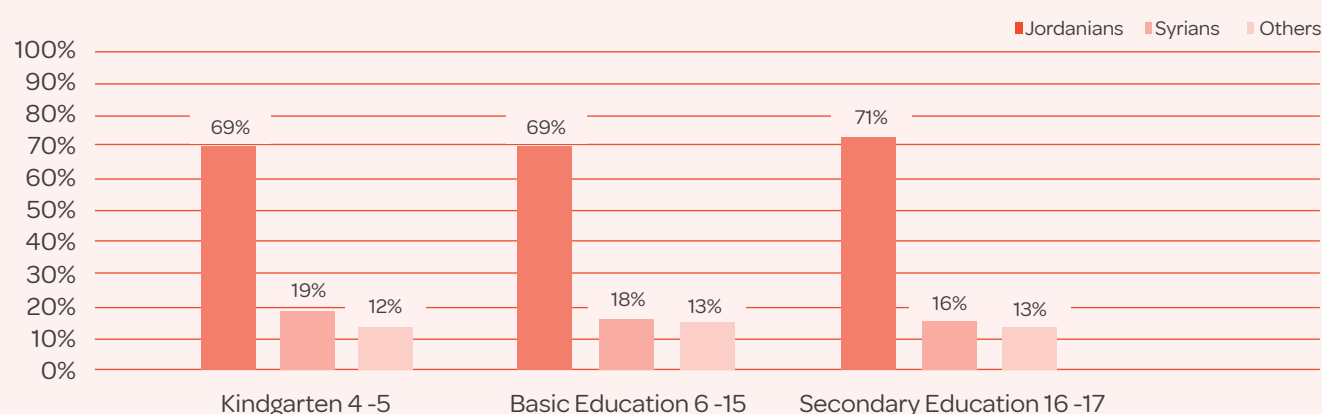
According to UNHCR figures²¹, 223,585 (30%) Syrian refugees are aged between 18 and 35, while 359,945 (48%) are between 0 and 17 years old. This led the Jordanian government and international organizations to develop policies in order to guarantee education for all. The **Education Strategic Plan 2018-2022**²² of the Jordan Government is one of the main programs which aim to provide **basic education** to refugee children. The plan is part of a broader Jordanian project, the **National Strategy for**

Human Resource Development (2016-2025), the Jordan Vision 2025 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development –with a focus on quality education–.

According to the Jordanian Ministry of Education, more than 140,000 Syrian refugee students are enrolled in Jordanian schools. Syrian students represent 25.1% of the student population in Amman, 25.1% in Mafrq, 22.2% in Irbid and 17.4% in Zarqa²³.

In addition, international organizations such as UNHCR, UNESCO and UNICEF, constituted, together with the Jordanian Ministry of Education, the Education Sector Working Group, in order to develop a board of policies provided directly to the refugee communities on the ground²⁴.

Table 4. Percentage of school-aged children by nationality 2016



Source: Jordan MoE EMIS, 2016

²¹ <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/70537.pdf>

²² http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/Amman/pdf/ESP_English.pdf

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/70537.pdf>

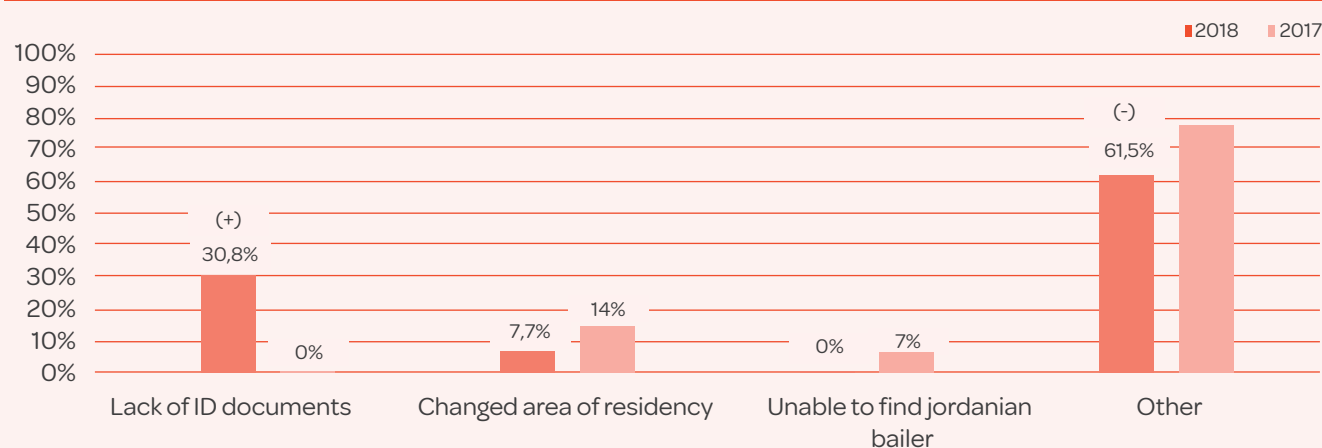
Another key challenge for Syrians in Jordan is the access to **Healthcare services**. Healthcare for refugees, since 2014, has become the main issue to be handled by the government. Since then, the cost of the services has increased, while the Jordanian government, according to UNHCR²⁵, has cut free healthcare and, as a response, about 21% of refugees have access to the free services of NGOs.

In addition, refugees from Syria come from a dramatic war background and their access to healthcare services often requires more. According to UNHCR figures, 8% of Syrian refugees in Jordan were registered as disabled and needed the assistance of others to perform daily acti-

vities. In addition, 15% of Syrian refugees have a chronic disease and 17% of women are pregnant. These specific needs require to be followed more than once and, despite international organization services, the system is not supporting all the needs.

As UNHCR outlined, the services provided do not benefit from the funds required. In this respect, the international organizations can only step up the emergency. As for public healthcare services, the Jordanian government introduced, since 2012, the 'service card' or security card. However, most Syrians have no passports or ID documents, and this prevents them from requesting the card and having access to the services.

Table 5. Reasons for not having security card (n=13)*



Source: Jordan MoE EMIS, 2016

(+) Revaluation by more than 10%
 (-) Devaluation by more than 10%
 (*) Insufficient base for analysis

²⁵ See <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNHCR-HealthAccess%26UtilizationSurveyinJordan2017-Other-Nationalities.pdf>

Accessing the labour market is another key challenge for Syrian Refugees in Jordan. To this regard, whereas concerns over Syrian refugees displacing Jordanians in the labour market have been tempered by different skill profiles between host and refugee communities, broader trends have resulted in growing socio-political tension and mounting discrimination towards refugees. According to a nationally representative public opinion poll conducted by the International Republican Institute in March 2015, Jordanians identified the rising cost of living, unemployment, and refugee influx as the top three biggest problems facing Jordan²⁸.

The economic landscape in Jordan (economy stagnation and unemployment) has amplified these sentiments. In this sense, policies are aiming to support employment both for refugees and the local hosting population, while more resettlements to Europe, Canada and USA are requested.

5. NATIONAL EFFORTS TO FACE THE EFFECTS OF THE SYRIAN CRISIS IN JORDAN

In February 2016, as part of the **London conference** on 'Supporting Syria and the Region', the Jordanian government, development partners and international and non-governmental organizations came together to explore ways to

create jobs and investment opportunities for countries most affected by the Syrian refugee crisis. In return for billions of dollars in grants and loans and preferential trade agreements with the European Union (EU), Jordan committed to improve access to education and legal employment for its Syrian refugees²⁹. The **Jordan Compact** represents one of the first significant efforts to extend labour market access to refugees as part of a new response to protracted displacement focused on inclusive growth for refugees and hosts. However, while constituting a unique opportunity to improve livelihoods of Syrian refugees in Jordan, the Compact was the subject of several criticisms about the efficiency of its implementation. Refugees' voices and perspectives were not integrated into livelihoods interventions from the start³⁰ and critical sectors of employment remained closed to Syrian refugees, even though progress has been made in the number of work permits issued³¹.

A special mention deserves a pioneering initiative to address the needs of both refugees and host communities in the country: **the Jordan Response Plan to the Syria Crisis**. The plan was formulated by governmental and international donor agencies and seeks to compensate Jordan for 'the burden it has shouldered due to regional crises. The **JRP** is a three-year rolling **Plan** developed with a resilience-based approach. It aims to secure sufficient grants and concessional financing to address general budget needs over a period of **three years**'³².

²⁸ Solving the refugee employment problem in Jordan: A Survey of Syrian refugees. AIRBEL Centre-International rescue committee (IRC). See <https://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/document/1527/irc-syrianrefugeeemployment-72dpi-041117.pdf>

²⁹ V. Barbelet et al. The Jordan Compact, lessons learnt and implications for future refugee compacts, Overseas Development Institute, February 2018. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/62095>

³⁰ For more information, see Katharina Lenner and Lewis Turner, Learning from the Jordan Compact, Forced Migration Review; <https://www.fmreview.org/syria2018/lenner-turner>

³¹ For more information, see V. Barbelet et al., The Jordan Compact: lessons learnt and implications for future refugee compacts; <https://www.odi.org/publications/11045-jordan-compact-lessons-learnt-and-implications-future-refugee-compacts>

³² JT, 31/12/2018, 'Only 38% of aid required for Jordan Response Plan received this year', The Jordan Times, Amman <http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/only-38-aid-required-jordan-response-plan-received-year>

The JRP is composed of 12 sectors of response built upon a Comprehensive Vulnerability Assessment (CVA) which aims to clarify vulnerabilities of both refugees and host communities, as well as of each sector of response. Challenges on the implementation of the JRP are also reported, especially by local media, in particular for the lack of sufficient funding to the Plan from the international community³³.

6. THE EUROPEAN AND ITALIAN RESPONSE TO THE SYRIAN CRISIS IN JORDAN

The European Union is at the frontline of the international response to the Syrian crisis. Since 2014, an increasing share of the EU's non-humanitarian aid for Syrian refugees and their host countries has been provided through the **EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis**, the 'Madad' Fund. With contributions from 22 EU Member States and Turkey, amounting to more than €180 million, the Fund has reached a total volume of more than €1.7 billion to date³⁴. The EU has decided to extend the mandate of the Trust Fund which will allow its projects to run until the end of 2023³⁵. Within the framework of the Madad Fund, the German Academic Exchange Service, together

with British Council, Campus France and Nuffic, implemented from April 2016 to November 2019 the **HOPES project** (Higher and Further Education Opportunities and Perspectives for Syrians). The project aims to provide better access to quality higher education opportunities for refugees of post-secondary-age from Syria, as well as young people in the host communities (educational offers, academic counselling, language courses, full academic scholarships, higher education short courses) affected by the high influx of refugees in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey³⁶.

At the Italian level, it is worth mentioning the action of the **Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS)** which is a key-actor in the response to the Syrian crisis in the region. Since 2012 to date, the Italian cooperation has allocated almost **192 million** both to Syria and to neighbouring countries (Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Turkey)³⁷. In Jordan, the Italian Cooperation has supported resilience-based intervention in the sectors of health, child protection, women empowerment and livelihood, addressed to both the refugee and the host community³⁸.

In **2017**, the Governments of Italy and Jordan signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** aimed to enhance the existing bilateral cooperation between the two countries and achieve the main objectives of both the JRP and the EDP³⁹.

³³ For more information, see JT, 2020 Jordan Response Plan to be announced this month – Planning Ministry, the Jordan Times, 5 February 2020. <https://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/2020-jordan-response-plan-be-announced-mon-th-%E2%80%94-planning-ministry>

³⁴ For more information, see European neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement, European Commission. See https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/neighbourhood/countries/jordan_en

³⁵ The Jordan Times, Only 21% of funding required under 2019 JRP received, 7 December 2019. See <https://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/only-21-funding-required-under-2019-jrp-received>

³⁶ For more information see <http://www.hopes-madad.org/about-us/>.

³⁷ See Agenzia Italiana per la cooperazione allo Sviluppo, Crisi Siriana; <https://amman.aics.gov.it/home-ita/paesi/giordania/crisi-siriana/>

³⁸ See Agenzia Italiana per la cooperazione allo Sviluppo, <https://amman.aics.gov.it/home-ita/paesi/iniziative/giordania-contesto/>

³⁹ Executive Development Program 2017-2019.

In particular, priorities have been identified in: sustainable growth through the efficient use of local resources, good governance and social cohesion (by sustaining, among others, living conditions of refugees and by strengthening the resilience of the local community)⁴⁰.

Many projects have been implemented or funded by AICS since the beginning of the Syrian crisis. Here we mention three of them in the sectors of good governance and education. The '**Monitoring and evaluation training**' program was addressed to the Jordan municipalities that hosted a high number of Syrian refugees.

The project, which involved AICS and the Minister of Municipalities Affairs of Jordan (MOMA), consisted in providing municipalities with project management tools to develop a stronger

local governance in order to improve life quality of both Jordanian and Syrian refugees⁴¹.

In addition, the **Ibtisam**⁴² (I phase-2016) and **Madrasati Ahla** (II phase-2017) projects led by Un Ponte Per and funded by AICS, aimed to enhance access to education for Syrian refugees and vulnerable Jordanians, as well as to improve quality education in the public system by rehabilitating a total of five schools in the northern governorates of Jordan.

Since we do not have the possibility of being more exhaustive, here we mention the reference (<https://amman.aics.gov.it/home-ita/opportunita/bandi/>) to the section of the AICS Amman's website in which you can find the proposals approved by the Agency in Jordan until 2019.



Ph. Associazione Carta di Roma

⁴⁰ See <http://amman.aics.gov.it/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Memorandum-of-Understanding-2017-2019.pdf>

⁴¹ <https://www.aics.gov.it/tag/giordania/>

⁴² For more information, see <https://www.unponteper.it/it/projects/ibtisam-bambini-siriani-giordania/>; <https://www.unponteper.it/it/projects/madrasati-ahla-la-mia-scuola-piu-bella-giordania/>

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5. NATIONAL EFFORTS TO FACE THE EFFECTS OF THE SYRIAN CRISIS IN JORDAN

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