

## 2018, a year in review

### Dear Friends,

Nine years ago, Better Work Jordan established its operations in the country, extending its mandate to the garment industry in cooperation with national and international stakeholders.

Since then, research proved it: Better Work works. After joining forces with all levels of the garment industry, the programme and its partners delivered its promises: improving working conditions and industry respect for labour rights, while boosting the competitiveness of apparel businesses.

The industry now gives work to over 70.000 people, including an ever-increasing number of Jordanian women, with exports reaching some 1,309 billion USD in 2018 according to the department of statistics.

As we move our services beyond the garment sector, our ambition is to partner with you in order to make quality jobs a reality for all. After customizing our training, assessments and guidance tools to each of the plastics, chemical, and engineering sector, we are currently strategizing how to support stakeholders in improving working conditions in these industries.

BWJ strives and campaigns for a Jordanian manufacturing sector that lifts local, migrant and refugee workers out of poverty by providing decent work, empowering women, driving business competitiveness and supporting inclusive economic growth. This vision is not only ours. It is shared by all our social partners particularly the tripartite constituents. In the past years, we have closely collaborated with you to achieve these goals and now we hope to support your more in promoting SDG 8, namely decent work and economic growth.

As we joined efforts, 2018 has been a rich and promising year for all: Together, we multiplied initiatives towards empowering women in the garment sector. Better Work Jordan's forthcoming gender strategy will engage all our stakeholders in maximizing women's untapped potential and increasing decent economic opportunities for women in Jordan, by leveraging on the potential of satellite units. We have taken concrete steps towards the improvement of living and housing conditions for workers in the manufacturing sectors.

We have started addressing workers' wellbeing with factories championing initiatives promoting workers' health.

Buyers have reminded us of their commitment to the decent work agenda and their wish to do more.

And, yes, there is much more to be done, but success is only achievable if we continue working together.

Thank you, and happy new year!

**The BWJ team**

Better Work is a partnership between the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) in collaboration with local and international stakeholders. It unites the expertise of the ILO in labour standards with that of the IFC in private sector development

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## A new phase of the Jordan, EU, and ILO partnership

2018 saw the implementation of the first phase of a project of the Ministry of Labour (MoL), the European Union and the ILO to take advantage of new, simplified EU rules of origin (RoO) and advance business and decent work opportunities for Syrian refugees and Jordanians.

With the support of the EU, BWJ collaborated with MOL to gradually expand its (Better Work<sup>®</sup>) model beyond the garment industry and help Jordanian companies abide by the country's labour law and meet international labour standards. This will allow them better opportunities to export under the new trade agreement.

Under this collaboration, BWJ tailored its compliance tool to each of the plastics, chemical and engineering sector.

Scaling up work done in the first phase, the partnership will roll up its sleeves for phase II, starting 2019. BWJ, in collaboration with the MoL, will start monitoring the RoO authorized enterprises in new sectors using the customized assessment model. The programme will also build on the ongoing initiatives, such as the annual Multi stakeholders Forum, to raise awareness on working conditions and enhance communication with buyers and investors from the new sectors.

As part of the scheme, the ILO will also continue to operate five EU funded Employment Centres across Jordan and facilitate more efficient job matching through the introduction of the E-Counselling platform.





## Buyer Engagement

### In New York and Amman, Better Work mobilizes buyers on decent working conditions

In December 2018, Better Work Jordan (BWJ) met with three buyers in New York to share updates on the industry's latest developments. PVH, Ralph Lauren and ANN INC. are prominent buyers in Jordan and partners of Better work in the promotion of the decent work agenda. Discussions with them centered on the private sector's role in improving working conditions and increasing buyers' engagement beyond influencing their own suppliers.

Earlier this year, BWJ gathered buyers and key players from the industry along with representatives from the EU and the US government to examine recent developments in the sector and

canvas options for future policy priorities.

Among other subjects, the meetings highlighted the importance of raising the living standards within dormitories, especially in industrial zones. In a common statement, buyers committed to strengthening efforts towards gender equality and improved living conditions in dorms. The forum also brought special attention to workers' well-being, addressing the need to introduce viable mental health awareness and support to the industry.

Reflecting on the importance of mobilizing all stakeholders towards the improvement of working conditions in the garment sector, Tareq Abu Qaoud, programme manager of BWJ said: "Research has shown it. Everyone can play a crucial role in creating better work for all and improve industrial competitiveness in Jordan."

[Read more on the multi stakeholder forum](#)

### BWJ and GAP Inc.'s P.A.C.E programme empowering women across Jordan's garment industry

In November 2018, three of BWJ staff received training on how to implement Gap Inc.'s Personal Advancement & Career Enhancement (P.A.C.E.) programme. The team will now support GAP in upscaling the P.A.C.E programme and reach out to workers in BWJ satellite factories.

BWJ joined the P.A.C.E. programme, an initiative led by GAP aiming to provide female garment workers with the knowledge and confidence needed to advance in their career and their role within their communities. Uniting partners from the public and private sector to uplift the potential of women in supply chains is a core element of Better Work's gender strategy.

"We appreciate our continued partnership with ILO and BWJ," said Elvis Francis, director of the P.A.C.E initiative. "We look forward to providing foundational life skills and support that

will help Jordanian women advance in the workplace and in their personal lives," he added.

Under this collaboration, training on digital payment and financial literacy has been customized with the support of the Better than Cash Alliance. Guy Stuart, a Better than Cash Alliance consultant described this elements of the training: "(we) develop an awareness and educate on digital financial services to help prepare factory workers to take advantage of those services and help protect them from common mistakes such as giving other people access to their digital account".

Underlining the importance of soft skills in workers' life, Enas Rassas, trainer at BWJ noted: "What is interesting about this training is that the tools provided to women workers are not only needed for the workplace. They are crucial for their self-fulfillment as women in the household and in the communities."

In the initial phase which began on December 2018, BWJ will reach to 120 Jordanian women, but there are plans to include migrant workers in the future as they make up most of the industry's working force in Jordan.



## BWJ/IFC Productivity Project: A success story

In 2017, BWJ and the International Financial Center (IFC) piloted a project to increase productivity of the satellite garment factories. The pilot aims to support the industry in transitioning satellite units to productive entities offering long-term, sustainable, and decent work opportunities to rural Jordanian women. As the project concluded its first phase in September 2018, a policy brief produced by BWJ highlighted the potential of these models to create decent employment for women in Jordan.

The rationale of satellite units derives from the government's wish to increase women's employment in Jordan. Located near population centres, such units mostly employ women from surrounding areas. While more jobs for rural Jordanian women became more available, the quality and sustainability of these positions remained critical issues for the future of these models.

Through tailored hard and soft skills training courses, the BWJ IFC productivity project addressed these challenges and delivered promising results to both employees and business

owners. Between January and June 2018, the program has delivered 31 sessions on technical training in addition to 46 sessions in soft skills training to workers and supervisors.

Additionally, six Productivity Project technical training modules were developed to match the specific needs of participating satellite factory units. "The best way to improve a factory's productivity, culture and morale is by carefully assessing their needs and delivering soft skills and technical skills training as needed," commented Soledad Requejo, operations officer with the IFC.

Hussam Saleh, Chairperson of Jordan Garments, Accessories & Textiles Exporters' Association (JGATE) noted that "...results of Productivity Project have been very positive. Better Work's programs effectively impact participants, both Jordanians and migrants. These encouraging results should motivate more investors to establish satellite factories in Jordan."

[Policy Brief: Advancing Jordan's Satellite Units](#)





## The JCI and BWJ promote decent work in SMEs

In an effort to boost industrial competitiveness among SMEs and improve working conditions, Jordan Garments, Accessories & Textiles Exporters' Association (JGATE) and the Jordan Chamber of Industry (JCI) requested from BWJ to pilot 30 assessment visits for non-exporting small and middle sized garment factories. The initiative comes following the signature of an MOU between JCI and BWJ to strengthen areas of collaboration.

"SMEs in Jordan have the potential to contribute to the social and economic progress for workers and their communities," said Ehab AL Qadiri, Representative of the Leather and Garments sector at the Jordanian Chamber of Industry. His sentiments were echoed by JGATE and Garment Union representatives.

Better Work adjusted its tools and services to benefit SMEs and 13 factories were assessed between October 2018 and December 2018. 15 more factories will be assessed in the beginning of 2019.

The 2 hour, announced assessments were a first step in engaging with SME's and identifying areas of improvements on

compliance related issues.

Jiries Majrouh, General Manager of Hadayana Factory expressed his enthusiasm about the initiative: "The assessments were such an eye opener for us. Now we realize the importance of working on OSH related issues if we want to integrate export-oriented value chains."

ILO research shows that by improving working conditions, safety and skills in SMEs, productivity and profitability can also be improved: a win-win scenario that is good for workers, enterprise owners, communities and economies. Tareq Abu Qaoud, programme manager for BWJ believes the initiative holds promise: "Better Work has proven that decent work goes hand in hand with productivity. And we are eager to support stakeholders in promoting this vision for SMEs."

While BWJ is finalizing a report on the assessments, the programme will continue working with JCI and JGATE to provide guidance to SMEs through training and advisory services on OSH and legal related issues.

## Strengthening dorm inspection: A priority for all

The need to ensure decent living conditions for migrant workers in Jordan's garment sector was highlighted as a priority among stakeholders of the industry during Better Work's most recent multi-stakeholder forum. Key actors of the industry formed a committee on September 2018 to inspect dorms in industrial zones. BWJ is a member of this initiative, along with Jordan Garments, Accessories, & Textiles Exporters' Association (JGATE), the Garment Union, and the Ministry of Labour.

Minwar Abu Al-ghanam, Head of inspection at the MOL applauded this collective effort and emphasized the ministry's role in monitoring the working and living conditions of workers especially those in QIZ dorms. In 2016, Jordan's Ministries of Health and Labour signed a Memorandum of Understanding that entrusts labour inspectors to inspect the housing units where garment migrant workers reside.

Jordan's apparel industry employs some 49,000 migrant

workers, the majority of whom originate from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and India. Factories are required to provide them with food and accommodation as in-kind payment throughout their working residency in the country.

Fathallah Omrani, president of the garment union emphasized the importance of decent living conditions to workers' wellbeing "Raising standards on living conditions in Jordan has been the union's priority since its inception. And most dorms already comply with OSH regulations."

Between September and December 2018, the joint committee conducted 2 visits in 13 dorms located in Al Hassan and Sahab industrial zones. While verbal warnings were issued to 12 factories, a follow up visit was scheduled by committee members. General guidance on addressing OSH related issues in dorms will also be delivered.

Dina Khayatt, Vice-Chairman of JGATE, recalled how financial resources, although not a justification, clearly impact the situation of the dorms for such sub-contracting factories: "The purpose is not to close down factories, rather it is to implement changes and improve the situation in dorms."



## Collaboration

### Rethinking the inspection model: Strategic compliance planning

As part of Better Work's long standing collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, the programme is gearing up to guide the ministry's efforts in achieving effective enforcement and sustained compliance with national and international labour norms through strategic compliance planning.

Strategic compliance planning looks beyond traditional enforcement regimes to a targeted mix of deterrents, incentives, awareness-raising, and guidance to influence decision makers in supply chains to improve compliance on labour standards.

Facilitated by Better Work Jordan, the ILO branch on Labour Administration, Labour Inspection and Occupational Safety and Health worked with the Ministry of Labour to design a strategic compliance programme. The objective of the intervention is to assist labour inspectors in the implementation of effective compliance in light of limited resources and a need to adjust to the ever-evolving world of work.

Between May and November 2018, the programme facilitated two Strategic Compliance Planning Refinement Workshops

attended by 37 labour inspectors. An outcome of these sessions was the definition of an inspection plan for each of the car mechanics, chemical, construction and garment sectors. Eman Abdullat, head of work injury section at the OSH department of the MOL attending the workshop, said of the programme: "Planning is important. We benefit from understanding how to efficiently respond to the growing needs of all sectors in compliance improvements".

BWJ has contributed to the workshop by sharing insights on the practices to assess wage and working hours.

Reflecting on the importance of strategic planning, Valkyrie Hanson, technical specialist for strategic compliance at the ILO shared "Strategic compliance planning helps labour inspectorates to resourcefully and inventively identify stakeholders and tailored interventions to influence compliance. This novel methodology is anticipated to enable them to achieve sustainable and measurable compliance outcomes".

In the future, increased collaboration between the ILO's LABADMIN department and the Ministry of Labour will be in place to follow up on the current plan and respond to specific needs of the Ministry.





## Sharing knowledge: Guides to Jordan's Labour Law

In collaboration with the MOL, BWJ has published an updated version of the 'Guide to Jordanian Labour Law for the Garment Industry' and introduced guides for each of the plastics, chemical and engineering sectors. Published in December 2018, each manual integrates major sources of the Jordanian Law into one easy-to-use book and serves as a practical and useful tool for employers, employees, international buyers, and other stakeholders to better understand their rights and obligations.

The second edition of the guide on the garment sector includes updates following recent changes in Jordanian laws pertaining to collective bargaining agreements, as reflected in newly-adopted documents and circulars.

Signing the guidebook, Samir Murad, Minister of Labour restated the Ministry's commitment towards guaranteeing an effective labour market with qualified and productive workers in a safe and stable work environment.

Abed Al Jawad Alnatsha, seconded to Better Work from the MOL and a member of the team who developed the guides, highlighted the importance of promoting legal knowledge: "We hope that these guides will simplify labour law, and reach out

to all individuals. The goal to create an appropriate working environment for workers and employers. And this starts by the understanding of rights and obligations."

The programme is currently expanding its core services beyond the garment sector to include plastics chemicals and engineering. The guides on non-garment sectors contribute to raising awareness on compliance in these sectors and support Better Work's role in monitoring decent work conditions for sectors benefitting from the relaxed rules of origin (RoO) with the EU.

The guides on non-garment sectors are funded by and part of the ongoing collaboration with the European Union.

In the future, BWJ will launch a Labour Law Guide application for smartphones. The app will be available in several languages and reach out to Indian, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan and Nepalese migrant workers in the country.

[Guide to Jordanian Labour Law for Plastic Industry](#)

[Guide to Jordanian Labour Law for Chemical Industry](#)

[Guide to Jordanian Labour Law for Garment Industry](#)

[Guide to Jordanian Labour Law for Engineering Industry](#)





## Better Work Jordan and the Ministry of Labour: Increasing learning opportunities

**B**etter Work has expanded its successful programme of seconding MOL inspectors to enhance experience sharing and knowledge transfer on compliance mechanisms. In 2018, it provided additional options for labour inspectors to take short term placement opportunities in Better Work's offices.

The placements are for six weeks, in which each inspector learns about Better Work's methodologies for assessment, advisory and training. Better Work advisors and inspectors jointly conduct field visits and provide guidance to factories on compliance related issues.

While the programme has already seconded six inspectors in that past four months, 12 inspectors are expected to ultimately

benefit from this experience.

Ahmad Abu Fielat, labour inspector at the MOL, said of the programme: "It has been great to be exposed to Better Work's approach. As a labour inspector, I greatly benefited from learning about the interviewing techniques of BWJ during assessment visits."

Muna Ali, long term secondee from the MOL, spoke about the relevance of this initiative to the programme "By strengthening ties with labour inspectors, BWJ is taking a crucial step towards transferring knowledge and ensuring the sustainability of the programme as well as increased compliance in the garment sector."

## Labour inspectors trained on mediation and problem solving

In December 2018, the Federal Mediation and Conciliation service provided a training to inspectors on labour-management disputes.

Funded by the US department of Labour, the purpose of the workshop was to enhance the role of labour inspectors as mediators through joint problem-solving and facilitation techniques.

Ryan Carrington, Senior International Labor Advisor for Trade Policy at the US department of Labour reflected on importance of this ongoing collaboration between the MOL and the US department of labour "Under the US-Jordan Free Trade Agreement, we are thrilled to support Jordan with mediation and conciliation experts and share best practices to improve the capacity of all stakeholders to more effectively communicate and reduce conflict. As workers and employers come together, good jobs are created, supported by better equipped Ministry of Labour mediators when needed."

The focus was also on clarifying and promoting the role of the MOL as facilitators during the collective bargaining process.

Fathallah Omrani, President of the garment union



complimented the initiative "We believe that mediation is crucial to social dialogue and we are happy to continue working on enhancing our skills in collective bargaining."

BWJ secondees from the MOL were also present putting in practice their combined experience and partaking in the discussion on mediation and problem solving in the workplace.

Better Work Jordan is supported by the following key development partners: Jordan (Ministry of Labour) and United States (US Department of Labor, USDOL).





## Gender

### Gender awareness: First steps towards reducing inequalities in the workplace

In an effort to raise awareness of the importance of gender equality in the garment sector, BWJ facilitated a gender awareness session to key actors in the industry on the 3rd of September 2018.

Attended by representatives of the garment union, JGATE and the MOL as well as ILO project managers working on the garment sector, the workshop was an opportunity to increase the reflection on gender in the practice of social dialogue.

Although women represent about 80 per cent of the workforce in the garment sector worldwide, they are concentrated in the lowest-paying, lowest-skilled occupations. Gender-based discrimination during recruitment processes and sexual

harassment in the workplace remain widespread.

Led by Maureen Gilbert an external gender expert, the aim of the session was to think and dialogue on what gender is as well as the attitudes towards roles in the society. As explained by the trainer: “Communities are made up of people with a wide range of ideas and orientations, even about issues as fundamental as gender. Among these ideas, differing ideas about gender can be very challenging. The aim of the seminar is to reflect on everyone’s role in society.”

The union representatives particularly lauded the training, highlighting the importance of multiplying initiatives to promote the empowerment of women workers through the trade union.

Employers’ organizations also hold a crucial role to play in advocating the business case for gender equality to their member companies and in providing advice, tools and good practices on why and how to promote women in management.

### Better Work Jordan hosts an industrial seminar on sexual harassment prevention

On the 27th of September 2018, BWJ hosted an industry seminar on sexual harassment prevention in factories. Reducing harassment is a key element of the broader aim to eliminate gender discrimination in Jordan’s factories.

The training was delivered in a workshop with 47 participants including representatives from the MOL., the Union and JGATE as well as quality and compliance managers from Better Work factories.

Reflecting on the workshop, managers emphasized that the legal insights provided during the training were extremely helpful in framing the issue.

Zainab Yang, team leader at BWJ reflected on the importance of strengthening mechanisms in place to tackle sexual harassment: “At the core service of Better Work is the advisory and guidance to factories. As part of the programme’s gender strategy, we will support all factories in developing strong



policies and promoting them to workers.”

Unions can play a key role in the fight against sexual harassment. As ILO research shows, unions who have also included clauses on sexual harassment in collective agreements and deal with complaints through established grievance and disciplinary procedures have successfully reduced sexual harassment cases.

International donors are particularly focused on gender issues. Earlier this year, the Ambassador of the Netherlands has highlighted the importance of this topic to the agenda of her government during the multi stakeholder forum, saying: “Promoting women’s empowerment is essential for sustainable economic development, and very important for The Kingdom of the Netherlands.”



## Mental Health

### Joint action between Better Work Jordan, Caritas and the Union to address mental health issues for garment workers in Jordan

On 10th September 2018, a collaboration between BWJ, Caritas and the Garment Union. The pilot aims to equip the committees with the awareness needed to identify workers who may be experiencing a mental health issue and to provide a humane response to those suffering from any discomfort in the workplace.

Although it is increasingly recognized that workers' mental wellbeing is a crucial determinant of their overall health; social stigma, the lack of support system and language barriers have prevented migrant garment workers from receiving adequate support in the past.

Caritas psychologist and counsellor, Lana Snobar, spoke of the importance of breaking down these barriers: "We know that the best way to tackle mental health issues is to raise awareness collectively and to jointly fight loneliness by creating a supportive environment."

Identifying the root causes of mental health problems in workers is challenging as they cannot be isolated from domestic issues or other struggles emerging from outside the workplace. The General Trade Union of Workers in Textile Garment and Clothing therefore can play a crucial role in addressing this multifaceted issue, given its close ties with workers and its mandate lobbying for both better living and working conditions. Union officer Emen Nasrallah commented on the training "It was extremely enlightening for us," she said, "As union representatives, our role is to ensure that all elements of occupational health and safety are accounted for, including mental health. "

[Read more on this here](#)

### Better Work increases research on mental health: The SIPA capstone project

As Better Work Jordan is currently designing an intervention that will holistically address workers' wellbeing, the programme is renewing collaboration with Columbia School of International Public Affairs to increase research on the topic of mental health.

The overall objective of the Capstone project is to inform Better Work Jordan's understanding of the status and awareness on mental health among stakeholders in Jordan's garment industry.

The students will also analyse and screen the existing mechanisms as well as the gaps in psychological support for migrant workers in the country.

SIPA students will be visiting Jordan in March 2019.





## Voices from the Factory:

### Raeda, the first woman mechanic in Jordan's garment industry

Raeda Abu Halawa, walks down the factory floor, takes in the production line and smiles at colleagues.

"Planned maintenance is key to increase productivity," she says, while carefully looking at the factory's maintenance schedule. Surrounded by machine drivers and tools, Raeda looks in her element.

"I am a curious person. My brain thrives on logic and puzzles," the 50-year-old from Amman says. "I always loved getting things fixed."

In a country where unemployment runs high and opportunities for women are limited, Raeda sets a precedent.

She began her job as a maintenance technician in a Jordanian garment satellite unit in 2017. Though the garment sector is

traditionally dominated by female machine operators, Raeda has become the first female mechanic across the country's industry.

"My name means leader in Arabic," she says. "This is how I see myself, a leader who is not afraid of trying."

Though more women than men attend university in the Kingdom, several obstacles prevent them from joining the local workforce. Limited access to transportation, family responsibilities, lack of childcare facilities, and conservative traditions still heavily affect Jordanian women's career paths today.

*This, too, was Raeda's case...*





## Better Work Jordan in numbers

- Exports exceeded **1,309 USD billion** in 2018 according to the department of statistics.
- There are currently **23 international buyers and partners** with BWJ.
- In 2018, there were **67465 Jordanian and migrant workers in the garment sector**.
- In 2018, BWJ conducted **80 assessments** and **380 advisory visits**.
- Since 2015, Better Work Jordan has signed **4 MOUs** to strengthen ties with national stakeholders and ensure the sustainability of the programme. Our social partners are the Ministry of Labour, Social Security Corporation, the Jordanian Chamber of Industry and the Garment Union.
- In 2018, it conducted some **198 training sessions to workers and managers**.
- In 2018, BWJ organized **4 industrial seminars**. Topics covered Gender, Occupational safety and health as well as HR systems.
- **85 factories**, including their subcontractors, employing **95 percent of the industry's workforce** and accounting for **95 percent of Jordan's apparel exports**, participate in Better Work Jordan's programme.

Save the date for Better Work Jordan's 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Multi-Stakeholders' Forum" on the first week of July, 2019

Better Work Jordan is supported by the following key donor partners:

