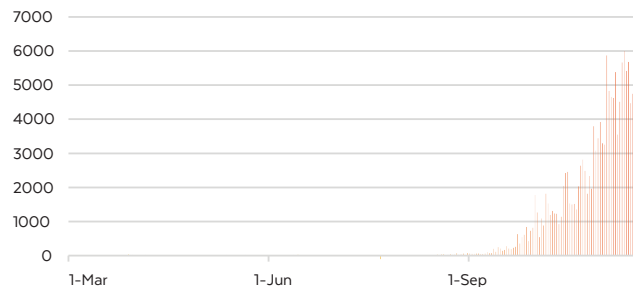


Covid-19 and the Jordanian Garment Sector

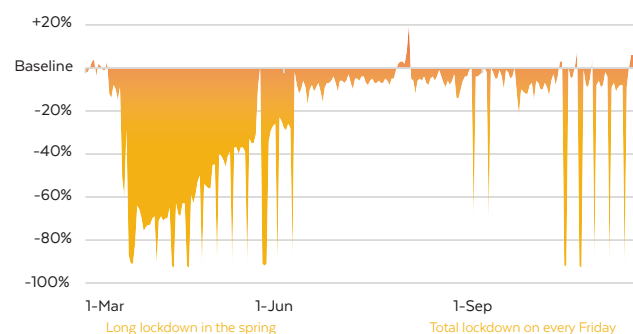
Covid-19 in Jordan

Confirmed cases of Covid-19 increased dramatically in Jordan this fall after virtually no cases throughout the spring and summer thanks to aggressive government policies such as complete lockdowns, restricted international travel, and closure of businesses. While these early government policies constrained the spread of the virus early-on, they also had a large impact on the economy – GDP contracted by 3.6 per cent in the second quarter of 2020, and the unemployment rate rose to 23 per cent.

Covid-19 cases are on the rise in Jordan



Lockdown measures reduced movement dramatically

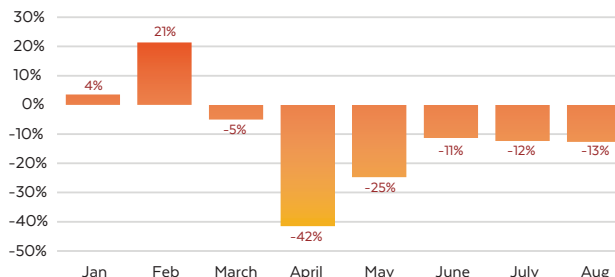


Garment sector

The garment sector has suffered from reduced demand for products, economic shutdowns impacting consistent business activity, and cases of Covid-19 in the workforce. Garment exports hit a low point in April, with a 42 per cent reduction, or a drop of 45 million USD, compared to April 2019.



Garment exports fell in the spring and partly rebounded in the summer



Factories

97 factories registered with BWJ at the beginning of the year

6 factories



closed permanently

16 factories



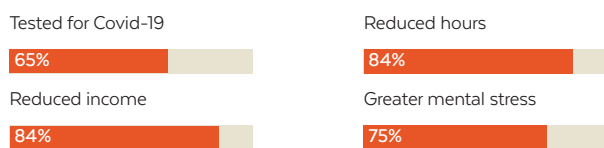
closed temporarily this fall due to surge in Covid-19 cases in the sector

4,964 confirmed Covid-19 cases in the sector as of 24 November

During this challenging time, Better Work Jordan stayed in contact with workers and managers

This fall, Better Work Jordan has been in contact with over 400 workers and managers from 76 different factories. These calls were used to monitor the Covid-19 situation in factories and formalized the ongoing communication that BWJ has with employers and workers. The sample of workers is not representative of the sector, and mostly reflects the experiences of Bangladeshi workers in the industrial zones.

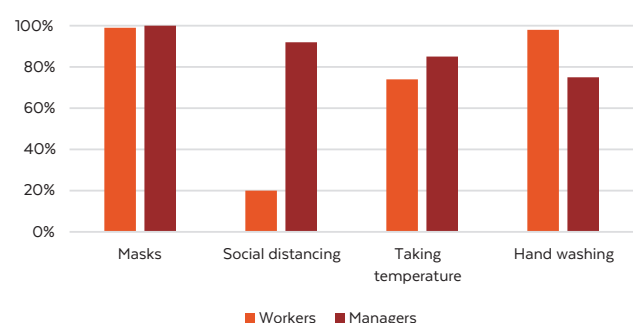
Most workers surveyed reported reduced hours and income and greater mental stress



Mask-wearing is widely adopted, but workers have found it difficult to maintain social distance

Managers and workers both state that mask wearing, hand washing, and taking temperatures happens regularly in the factories. However, while 92 per cent of managers say that workers in their factory practice social distancing, only 20 per cent of workers say that they can maintain social distance on a regular basis.

Preventative measures taken according to workers and managers



Managers have tried to reach workers through supervisors and organized meetings with representatives



Workers report learning about Covid-19 mostly from social media, family and friends, and less from their employers



Most factories have consistent engagement with the government and the union

Managers were asked if they had interacted with a representative from the Ministry of Health (MoH) the Ministry of Labour (MoL) and the union in the last two weeks. MoH officials conducted PCR tests in many factories, while MoL officials followed up to ensure that all OSH guidelines were being followed. Ten factories reported that the union convened worker-management committee meetings, while in other factories the union was in touch for factory updates.

The data gathered here is from publicly available sources and through Better Work interaction with workers and managers as of 15 November and subject to change. Data on Covid-19 cases in Jordan was downloaded from ourworldindata.org. Data on mobility in Jordan comes from the Google Covid-19 Community Mobility Reports. Data on garment exports comes from the Jordanian Department of Statistics. Information on worker and manager opinions was gathered during phone calls throughout the fall.