



Feminist Research Report

**Women's Voice and Leadership:
The Impact of the Changes to the
Labor Law on Women's Rights
in the Workplace in Jordan**

Presented by JoWomenomics

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About JoWomenomics

JoWomenomics (JW) is an independent, non-profit organization that was founded as an initiative in 2014 and registered in 2017, based on research conducted at the Brookings Institute to better understand women's low labor market participation and socio-economic inequalities in Jordan. JW's mission is to realize an ecofeminist economy in Jordan and the Middle East North Africa (MENA) region. Its main pillars include ensuring safe and equitable work environments, working towards mindset and behavior changes in communities, providing an enabling environment for the private sector, and leading employment and skills-building programs for women. JW has employed more than 600 women in 10 governorates, reached 4000 community members, developed 18 community champion networks, and was successful in advocating for amendments to the labor law and social security law in Jordan. JW set up a Feminist Integral Center for Research and Innovation (FICRI), which is a think tank to counter structural gender disparity and inequitable policies. This local center is dedicated to comprehensive, evidence-based approaches to gender inequality in Jordan. The center uses feminist and participatory approaches, aiming to build a pool of local talent of thought leaders, who are committed to a holistic, evidence-based approach in research to build feminist realities in Jordan.

Introduction

Over the last four years, from 2019 to 2023, JoWomenomics (JW) and its partners advocated for significant changes to the Labor Law in Jordan to counter sexual harassment and protect women's rights in the workplace. Following these advocacy efforts, in March 2023, important changes were made to the Labor Law, which effectively opened opportunities for women in the workplace and added protections to ensure safe workplaces for all. Namely, the amendments in the Labor Law resulted in defining sexual harassment and repealing restrictions on working hours and sectors for women in Jordan. According to local media sources, these amendments mark "the first time that Jordanian legislation has specifically referred to sexual harassment" (The National News, 2023).

Firstly, Article 29, was amended to define sexual harassment and impose penalties for employers who engage in any form of sexual assault or harassment against their employees. The Ministry of Labour is responsible for imposing these penalties upon employers, which double if the incidents are repeated. Regarding Article 69, the principle of equal opportunity was highlighted, as the article now states that there should be no discrimination between employees based on gender which would affect equal opportunity. Thus, previous restrictions on certain economic sectors and working hours for women were lifted. The amendments also specified that the Minister has the power to issue necessary instructions to protect pregnant and breastfeeding women as well as people with disabilities in the workplace, in addition to defining protection mechanisms for those who perform night work. Despite these significant changes which work towards increasing women's economic participation

and ensuring safe work environments, challenges remain to ensure the application of these laws in workplaces in Jordan as well as their alignment with the International Labour Organization's (ILO) standards.

The goal of this research is to document the impacts of these amendments to the Labor law on women's rights in the workplace in Jordan. The research will also help to better understand the experiences of key actors in Jordan in promoting equitable and safe work environment regulations in their context and region. This research is part of the project JW is leading on the "Elimination of Harmful Gender Norms, Attitudes, Practices and Policies", within Oxfam's Women Voices and Leadership program funded by the Government of Canada. This report is the culmination of activities led from September to December 2023 in three communities as part of JW's project, specifically Irbid, Shouneh, and East Amman. Prior to these activities, a desk review and a stakeholder analysis were conducted to identify the major issues and key players in addressing sexual harassment in the workplace in Jordan, contextualized within the global framework of the protection of worker's rights. The data collection activities included focus groups discussions (FGDs) and key information interviews (KIIs) with community-based organizations (CBOs), influencers, tribal leaders, and public and private sector actors, which allowed for diverse perspectives to be gathered on the topic. Following the analysis of the collected data, recommendations were formulated and are detailed in this report for the development of a social media and advocacy campaign to promote women's employment and safe workplaces in Jordan. The data collection process also facilitated the identification of select champions who will contribute to raising awareness about the changes in the law in their respective communities and networks.

Background

Documenting women's economic participation in Jordan

Although progress has been made in recent years, gender equality in the workplace remains a concern in Jordan. Women continue to face barriers accessing employment opportunities, having to navigate societal norms, economic constraints, and safety issues, for example regarding transportation and sexual harassment. Despite the country's high female literacy rate, women's economic participation in the labor market remains very low. The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report indicated that Jordan ranked 144th out of 146 countries in women's participation in the labor force in 2023, rising only one spot from its ranking in 2022 (World Economic Forum, 2023 & Jordan Times, 2022). The country is facing high unemployment rates, and employment statistics demonstrate that there is a significant underrepresentation of women in the labor market, despite their high educational achievements. The unemployment rate was 22.3% in Q3-2023, with the rate reaching 31.7% for females as compared to 19.8% for males (Department of Statistics, 2023, 1). The Department of Statistics also noted in their quarterly report that 73.2% of women in the labor force hold a bachelor's degree level of education or higher, compared to 25.1% of men (Ibid,

3). Thus, although women who participate in the labor market in Jordan are highly qualified, their overall economic participation remains low and unemployment rates demonstrate their underrepresentation in the labor market.

Traditional gender roles and expectations persist in Jordan, affecting women's career opportunities (Abu Jaber, 2022). Historically, women have faced societal and structural limitations to participate in and access the workforce, leading to the significant gender gap in employment. Belief systems that prescribe specific roles for men and women influence their ability to choose their career path, and these beliefs particularly restrict women to certain fields (Abu Jaber, 2018). The result is a workforce in which certain sectors and positions are predominantly occupied by men, while women take on roles that are considered societally acceptable for them to occupy, specifically in the education, health, and public sectors. These gender roles and expectations limit equal opportunity for women in the workforce. As detailed in the desk review, equal opportunity has been defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO) as the principle and practice of ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their personal characteristics have fair and unbiased access to employment, training, and other opportunities in society (ILO, 2024). Putting it into practice requires understanding the societal and economic barriers which limit the realization of equal opportunities for women, particularly in accessing their chosen career paths.

Tackling the barriers to create safe workplaces

Although incidents of sexual harassment can occur in all workplaces to both women and men, women are more likely to be subject to discrimination and harassment. The ILO defines sexual harassment as “a sex-based behavior that is unwelcome and offensive to its recipient” and this behavior can be physical, verbal or non-verbal (2007). Sexual harassment may take the form of: 1) “a job benefit - such as a pay rise, a promotion, or even continued employment - is made conditional on the victim acceding to demands to engage in some form of sexual behavior”; or can consist of 2) “a hostile working environment in which the conduct creates conditions that are intimidating or humiliating for the victim” (ILO, 2007). In the amendments brought to the Jordanian Labour law in Article 29, sexual harassment was defined as “any physical or verbal practice or behavior of a sexual nature, or threats related to it, that affects the worker's dignity, is humiliating to him, and leads to physical, psychological or sexual harm to the individual” (Ministry of Labour – Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, 2023).

According to a report published by Action Aid, one in five women experienced gender-based violence in the workplace in Jordan, ranging from unwanted staring and touching to stalking and sexual harassment (2019, 5). Since this study was conducted, other research led by the Coalition Against Violence and Harassment in the World of Work in Jordan has demonstrated even higher rates of harassment in the workplace, ranging from 30-40% of women surveyed being targeted by such acts (Jordan Now, 2022). Certain sectors of the economy face higher rates of violence and harassment than others, such as the agricultural sector (which

is predominant in the region of Shouneh) in which 41% of female workers reported being subject to harassment according to the latest study (Ibid, 2022). These statistics demonstrate the pervasiveness of gender-based violence in the workplace, which constitutes a barrier to facilitating women's integration in the labor market and creating safe workplaces for all.

In terms of reporting incidents, a third of women who experience violence and harassment remain silent and only 14% of women resign after experiencing such acts (Action Aid, 2019, 5). Furthermore, most women (75.3%) surveyed by the Coalition Against Violence and Harassment in the World of Work did not think about pursuing legal action against their employer (Jordan Now, 2022). Yet according to one study, more than 50% of women seeking legal aid for issues arising in the workplace have informally reported that they were targets of sexual harassment (Jordan Times, 2018). The stigma associated to victims of sexual harassment as well as the lack of confidence in reporting mechanisms constitute barriers to denouncing such acts in the workplace (Ibid, 2018). Furthermore, few workplaces have adopted anti-harassment policies in the country (The World Bank, 2020). Overall, the numerous studies demonstrate that gender-based violence in the workplace is underreported, hidden, and pervasive in Jordan.

Other than harassment occurring in the workplace, Action Aid also identified transportation as a major site where women are targeted, reinforcing the need to ensure safe transportation options. According to their research which concurred with findings from a 2018 World Bank report, in 40% of cases, violence and harassment took place in transportation to and from work (Action Aid, 2019, 5). In addition to lack of safe transportation, studies have identified long working hours and inadequate childcare services as barriers to women's participation in the labor market (The World Bank, 2020). As a report prepared by the Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARDD) highlighted, "sexual harassment in the workplace cannot be viewed in isolation to other harmful workplace practices, such as inequality in other labor rights" (Jordan Times, 2018). As many women work in informal sectors, their labor conditions tend to be more precarious and, in such sectors, women face greater risk of violence and harassment (Action Aid, 2019). Understanding and contextualizing gender-based violence in the workplace through a holistic lens can help to identify structural and societal barriers to achieving equal opportunity and women's rights in the workplace.

Centering women's lived experiences through feminist research

JW's approach to research is gender-transformative, engaging a feminist research framework and methodologies which highlight the lived experiences of women. At its core, feminist research centers the personal within the political, as matters which were once considered "private" become part of the public dialogue and are present on political agendas (Man Ling Lee, 2007). Through JW's advocacy on addressing gender-based violence in the workplace, and with the support of local partners in Jordan, the public and political discourse on these topics has become more present. Work remains to be done to ensure women's voices and experiences are heard and that the amendments to the Labor laws are widely

supported and implemented by all. Building towards this goal and adopting the core principles of feminist research practice, JW's feminist research framework supports a critical understanding of gender-based violence in the workplace. JW works to highlight women's lived experiences at work and ensure their voices are at the center of policy discussions on addressing discriminatory practices.

JW also believes that the responsibility for the transformation of gender discriminatory norms lies beyond the individual and within society at large. As this research aims to inform further action, adopting a critical feminist research framework allows us to mobilize research to advance social change (Wigginton & Lafrance, 2019). This action research allowed JW to convene community members and employers, among other key actors, to reflect on their responsibilities to act on gender discrimination and violence in the workplace to create safer workplaces. Thus, JW's feminist research framework reflects the organization's stance to advance gender equality through societal transformation; ultimately building towards a feminist economy in Jordan and in the region.

Mobilizing key actors for societal transformation

Aligning with JW's vision that gender equality requires societal transformation, a variety of actors were identified and involved in the stakeholder analysis and research process, among other project activities. For example, during the stakeholder analysis, participants were asked questions which allowed the research team to identify their field and scope of action. Collaboratively with the research team, participants classified themselves according to one of the five categories of actors engaged in the project: community-based organizations (CBOs), influencers, tribal leaders, and public and private sector actors. Table 1 below defines the types of actors targeted in the three project regions.

Table 1. Defining key actors

Key actors	Definition
Community-based organization (CBO)	These are associations or institutions established by individuals working to advocate for a common cause. They include non-governmental organizations, labor unions, charitable organizations and institutions, religious associations, and professional associations.
Influencer	Individuals who play an active role in producing and disseminating content through social media and other media platforms (such as newspapers), becoming representatives of states, societies, and cultures they represent, as they are considered leaders in public opinion.

Tribal leader	A tribal leader, also known as a sheikh, leads the tribe or clan in tribal systems. They are responsible for the tribe, representing their tribe in public meetings, and are a source of strength for tribe members. They assist in solving societal problems or issues, due to the tribal nature of Jordanian society (customs and traditions of tribes influence Jordanian communities).
Public sector	Part of the national economy owned and managed directly by the state or through other public institutions established by the state to be managed on its behalf. This sector includes public services (such as government administration), industrial, agricultural, commercial, and financial activities.
Private sector	Part of the national economy owned and managed by individuals, whether private companies or publicly traded corporations. Naturally, some circumstances require consultation between business leaders in the private sector and public authorities on certain issues.

Following their participation in the stakeholder analysis and the research, these actors will be mobilized as part of the advocacy campaign to raise awareness on the amendments to the laws and women’s right in the workplace. Our approach aims to dismantle power imbalances and systemic barriers to work towards a feminist economy by engaging all stakeholders through feminist action research. Engaging a diversity of actors also allows for awareness and advocacy campaigns to have greater influence in communities. Both men and women were engaged in the research activities to gain a comprehensive outlook of community perspectives on the law. Additionally, JW believes in the importance of engaging men and promoting positive masculinity to achieve gender justice and societal transformation.

Methodology

Given JW’s feminist research framework, the Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR) methodology was applied in this research. The FPAR methodology can support a critical understanding of power dynamics in gender-based violence and enables stakeholder engagement to facilitate the co-creation of knowledge and action with communities (Goessling, 2024). Applying the FPAR, whose core principles are inclusion, participation, and action, aligns with the research and project objectives to bring about structural and systemic change to address gender inequalities in the world of work in Jordan.

The research process, including the data collection and analysis, was conducted over 4 months from October 2023 to January 2024. Over this period, 6 focus group discussions (FGDs) and 23 key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted, reaching 79 people (37 men and 42 women) in the three targeted regions of Irbid, Shouneh, and East Amman. These participants were asked to share their perspectives, opinions, and lived experiences with regards to the changes in the labor laws and the challenges facing women's participation in the labor market in Jordan. The semi-structured interview protocols and questions were drafted by the research team through a critical, feminist lens. Some of the feminist methodological considerations which were reflected upon in the development of the interview protocols included: whose interests the questions served, potential assumptions embedded in the questions, and the impacts of the assumed findings (Wigginton & Lafrance, 2019).

Data collection & sampling method

Participants in the research activities were selected after a stakeholder analysis was conducted at the beginning of the project. The objective of this analysis was to identify key organizations, institutions, and individuals who have a stake in enabling a safe and equitable work environment for women in the three targeted regions. In the process of conducting the stakeholder analysis, a map was created detailing the CBOs working on women's rights in each region (i.e. women's rights organizations – WROs). Some of the WROs selected to act as partners in the project and to facilitate the recruitment of participants in the research had already established working relationships with JW, whereas other organizations were new partners. These WROs connected JW with other stakeholders and facilitated the identification of participants for the FGDs and KIIs in the three targeted regions.

Firstly, for the FGDs, JW employed the purposive sampling method by selecting key CBOs/WROs who work on issues relating to women's rights and employment, and who would be able to positively contribute to the research goals. Purposive sampling is particularly useful when "researchers seek to identify individuals or groups with particular knowledge, skills, or experiences relevant to the research question" (SAGO, 2023). Given the expertise of these partner organizations in mobilizing community members, they facilitated the recruitment of participants for the FGDs. Regarding the sampling method CBOs employed for the selection of participants, a mix of purposive and convenience sampling methods were used to identify participants based on both their interest and experience, as well as their availability and willingness to participate in the discussions on the topic. In addition, careful consideration was placed on achieving parity between men and women participants for the FGDs.

A total of 6 FGDs were conducted, 2 in each region (Irbid, Shouneh, and East Amman), targeting a total of 56 attendees as can be observed in Table 2 below. Each FGD was conducted in two parts, one part focusing on Article 29 and the other on Article 69 of the Labor Law. Different participants were mobilized for each FGD in each region. The questions asked during the FGDs are listed in Annex B.

Table 2. Number of participants in the FGDs

Region	# of FGDs conducted	Date of FGDs	Total # of attendees	Male		Female	
				#	%	#	%
East Amman	2	14/11/2023	9	4	44%	5	56%
		11/12/2023	10	3	30%	7	70%
		Total	19	7	37%	12	63%
Irbid	2	18/10/2023	11	6	55%	5	45%
		11/01/2023	8	4	50%	4	50%
		Total	19	10	53%	9	47%
Shouneh	2	25/10/2023	9	3	33%	6	67%
		11/08/2023	9	4	44%	5	56%
		Total	18	7	39%	11	61%
Total	6 FGDs conducted		56	24	43%	32	57%

Secondly, for the KIIs, the partner CBOs developed criteria in collaboration with JW to select the key actors (based on the five profiles listed in Table 1). The selection of these participants was conducted according to an evaluation of stakeholders' ability to contribute to the project's objectives and share their opinions on the impacts of the changes in the law. More specifically, the criteria revolved around participants' ability to answer the questions clearly; their active engagement and participation in the FGDs wherever relevant; their sensitivity to and experience on the topic of women's economic participation and gender-based violence at work; and finally, their influence in society.

13 KIIs with targeted stakeholders were conducted, 5 in East Amman, 4 in Irbid, and 4 in Shouneh as detailed in Table 3 below. These stakeholders included representatives from community-based organizations (CBOs), influencers, tribal leaders, and members of the public sector in the three regions. Questions were prepared according to their profile and are detailed in Annex C.

Table 3. Number of participants in the KIIs with targeted stakeholders

Region	Date of interview	Gender	Role
East Amman	11/12/2023	Male	CBO & Public sector
	11/12/2023	Female	CBO & Influencer
	11/12/2023	Female	CBO
	14/11/2023	Male	Public sector
	14/11/2023	Female	CBO
Irbid	18/10/2023	Male	CBO
	18/10/2023	Female	CBO & Influencer
	01/11/2023	Female	Public sector
	01/11/2023	Male	CBO & Influencer
Shouneh	25/10/2023 ³	Female	CBO
	25/10/2023 ⁴	Male	Tribal leader & Public sector
	08/11/2023	Male	Influencer
	08/11/2023	Female	Public sector
Total	13 inter-views	6 men, 7 women	1 tribal leader, 5 public sector, 8 CBOs, and 4 influencers (some participants occupy more than one role)

Finally, 10 KIIs were conducted with representatives from the private sector in all three regions, 4 in East Amman, 3 in Irbid, and 3 in Shouneh, operating within various sectors, as detailed in Table 4 below. The questions targeted towards private sector actors are listed in Annex D.

Table 4. Number of participants in the KIIs with the private sector

Region	Date of interview	Sector	Gender	Position
East Amman	09/11/2023	Service industry	Female	HR Manager
	09/11/2023	Food industry	Male	Administrative & Financial Director
	21/11/2023	Food industry	Male	Legal Counselor
	22/11/2023	Restaurant	Male	HR Manager
Irbid	28/11/2023	Fashion	Male	CEO
	28/11/2023	Fashion	Male	HR Manager
	28/11/2023	Food industry	Male	HR Manager
Shouneh	23/11/2023	Restaurant	Female	CEO
	23/11/2023	Education	Male	CEO
	23/11/2023	Hospitality & Tourism	Female	HR Manager
Total	10 interviews		7 men, 3 women	5 HR Managers, 3 CEOs, 1 Financial Director, 1 Lawyer

Data analysis

All FGDs and KIIs took place in Arabic and were recorded and transcribed, except two private sector interviews which were not recorded at participants' request and only written notes were taken. The transcriptions and notes were then translated from Arabic into English, and the data collected was analyzed using a thematic analysis approach. This type of analysis allows the researcher to interpret and summarize the major themes which emerge from the transcriptions (Naeem et al., 2023). The analysis took place over two steps. The first step consisted of sorting and organizing the data collected (i.e. participant responses) according to the major themes of questions. The interview questions had already been classified into different categories as listed in Table 5. Thus, participant responses were organized according to the theme their response addressed. The second step of the analysis revolved around summarizing the common themes which emerged from their responses for each category of question.

Table 5. Categories of questions according to the key actor interviewed

Themes addressed in FGDs		Themes addressed in KIIs	
Article 29	Article 69	Key actors (except private sector)	Private sector
Awareness of Article 29	Awareness of Article 69	Role in awareness raising	Awareness of the changes in the laws
Definition of sexual harassment	Women's employment in various sectors	Societal barriers	Opinions on the changes in the laws
Safe workplaces and protection mechanisms	Safe workplaces	Power and influence to change views	Understanding of sexual assault and harassment
Cases of sexual harassment	Protections for breastfeeding and pregnant women	Support for the implementation of the laws	Reality of the business
Reporting of sexual harassment	Employing people with disabilities	Addressing backlash	Sexual harassment policy
Impacts of the law	Definition of night work	Community perceptions (specific questions for tribal leaders only)	Policies for people with disabilities, breastfeeding, and pregnant women
Opinions on the changes in the law	Protection for night work		Impacts of changes in the law on business
	Opinions on the changes in the law		Employing more women (such as for night work)
			Barriers to implementing the changes in the law
			Impact on women's participation in the labor market

The data was also disaggregated and analyzed according to the targeted region (Shouneh, Irbid, and East Amman), and for the KIIs, according to each actor's role (CBOs, influencers, tribal leader, public sector, and private sector). The perspectives of the different stakeholders consulted on these themes are detailed in the next section of this report.

Challenges & limitations

A variety of challenges were faced when conducting the FGDs and KIIs, including the unavailability of participants, the lack of awareness and understanding by participants of the topics discussed, and some inconsistencies in the delivery of the FGDs and KIIs by the research team. Firstly, due to the lack of availability of some participants, new stakeholders had to be identified at the last minute by the CBOs to participate in the FGDs. This challenge resulted in the selection of participants available on short notice but not necessarily sensitive or aware of the topics to be discussed. This lack of awareness was shown by the misuse of certain terms understood differently by some participants. For example, certain comments were made sarcastically mocking terms such as gender, which demonstrated both a lack of understanding and potentially more conservative views by some community members on gender equality and women's participation in the labor market.

Secondly, the method of convenience sampling employed by the CBOs, to recruit participants who were available to participate in the FGDs on short notice, also resulted in challenges when selecting participants for the KIIs based on their participation in the FGDs. In fact, convenience sampling limited the pool of participants who could be selected for KIIs from the FGDs, as participants who were non-collaborative or held strong negative opinions regarding women's rights were not considered for the in-depth interviews. As mentioned earlier, participants' sensitivity to the topic of gender equality was one of the criteria for the selection of participants for the KIIs. On the other hand, the diversity of participants in the FGDs allowed for contrasting and contradicting views to be shared, which could be perceived as painting a more realistic portrait of societal views on women's economic participation.

Thirdly, due to internal changes within the research team, the facilitators of the FGDs changed midway during the project. Different approaches to the interview protocols were employed depending on the facilitator of the session, which could have affected the research results. Although the interview protocols were semi-structured and allowed for some flexibility in the questions asked, deviation from the protocol could at times have impacted the data collected. For example, during the second FGD in East Amman, the facilitator made the choice of presenting the amendments to the Labor law at the beginning rather than near the end of the session, which differed from the protocol followed for the other FGDs. Thus, participants' responses in this case could be more informed and directed.

Findings & Analysis

The main themes which emerged from the research are organized below according to the thematic categories developed in the interview protocols. Regarding the first question category on participants' awareness of the changes in the Labor law, it is important to note that across the different types of stakeholders and regions, most of the 79 participants consulted were not aware of the amendments which were adopted in March of 2023. Only a few participants, notably a lawyer, some CBOs and influencers were aware of the details of the amendments.

Article 29 – Sexual Harassment

1. Definition of sexual harassment: discrepancies and disagreements when defining sexual harassment

Participants expressed different views on the distinctions between sexual harassment and assault. Verbal abuse was commonly associated with sexual harassment, while sexual assault was seen as involving physical attacks and force. Some participants believed harassment encompassed all types of actions of a sexual nature, including touching and gestures. Criteria for classifying behavior as harassment, according to participants, include the other person's acceptance of such actions and the nature of the relationship between both parties. The location, repetition, and nature of the behavior were also identified as important criteria in determining harassment. In terms of who can be targeted by harassment, most participants acknowledged that sexual harassment and assault can happen to both males and females. Some emphasized that children, regardless of gender, are also vulnerable to such acts.

Participants pointed out that views on harassment vary based on societal norms; as some participants mentioned that what might be considered acceptable in another society can be deemed harassment in the Jordanian context and vice versa. In this sense, the challenge in defining actions which constitute sexual harassment and distinguishing between what is considered "normal" versus offensive behaviors was a major point of debate. Participants emphasized the need for clear definitions and terms, including clarifying the term "sexual nature" in the amendment to Article 29.

Opinions varied on whether harassment could occur in public places or workplaces, although generally, harassment in the workplace was acknowledged. Workplace dynamics, including the mixing of male and female in workplaces and night work in and of itself, were perceived as contributing factors to sexual harassment. Power imbalances in the workplace were recognized, with some arguing that harassment does not happen instantaneously and may have precedents (i.e. incidents which lead up to the harassment). Finally, conditions set by employers were discussed, emphasizing the responsibility of both employers and employees to respect the established framework in the company.

2. Safe workplaces and protection mechanisms: rendering employers accountable

Participants emphasized the need for clear guidelines specifying relationships in the workplace. The code of conduct, while setting limits, was perceived by some participants as insufficient for the prevention of sexual harassment. At minimum, most participants agreed that there should be a code of conduct signed by all parties. However, the need for workplace monitoring, training programs, and awareness campaigns on sexual harassment was emphasized by all. Other suggestions to prevent harassment included establishing external investigation committees, confidential phone lines, and internal protection officers to investigate complaints.

Challenges in proving harassment and concerns about the adequacy of punishment in the law were also debated. Participants generally expressed skepticism about the effectiveness of fines to address cases of harassment, particularly when the perpetrator/ employer is influential in society. There was a call for stronger penalties, especially for larger companies, thus exceeding the fines in the law's amendments. Although some participants believed that increasing the fines would act as a stronger deterrent, others argued for proportional fines based on the size of the institution to avoid penalizing smaller companies. Some participants suggested the need for imprisonment of the perpetrator rather than relying solely on financial penalties for the employer. Opinions on closing a facility varied, with some viewing it as collective punishment for the workers, while others believing it should still be an option (even though it is not included in the amendments to the law). Ultimately, participants recognized that addressing harassment perpetuated by employers is challenging due to the power dynamics at play. According to participants, employers should commit to preventing the recurrence of these acts by raising awareness among employees. Beyond legal obligations, an increased understanding of harassment issues and prevention measures could contribute to a safer workplace.

3. Cases of sexual harassment: implications of a societal phenomenon


Participants acknowledged the existence of sexual harassment and gender-based violence in the workplace by sharing examples of cases. These cases consisted of various forms of harassment, including physical and verbal harassment, online harassment, and unjust termination. Overall, a lack of protection for the victim was highlighted as women were forced to leave their jobs in some cases.



"I know a lady who left her job because she was sexually harassed by a colleague, and there was no protection for her. The harassment was verbal."

Male participant in Irbid - (18/10/2023)


Discrimination against women, particularly in cases of termination, was mentioned. Participants noted instances where women were terminated unfairly due to personal emergencies.



"There is discrimination in how women are treated, with unjustifiable reasons for their terminating from work. For instance, if an employee is absent from work due to an emergency and does not provide a reason for her absence, she is terminated, even if her absence is just for a day or two due to a death in the family."

Female participant in Shouneh (25/10/2023)

Additionally, some of the cases shared extended beyond the workplace to public transportation, universities, and society in general. The impact of social media and public outrage in addressing harassment were highlighted in these cases.



"Do you remember last year when a case of harassment occurred at one of the universities by the university president? The perpetrator was defamed on social media platforms, and many students were withdrawn from the university...There were pictures proving what happened, and the students did not return to the university, unless the president was changed."

Female participant in Shouneh (25/10/2023)

The potential influence of legal amendments in the context of these incidents was discussed. In cases where harassment incidents were addressed, they were handled through a combination of internal workplace mechanisms and external complaints to government bodies. Some of the internal measures named included the dismissal of employees, forming committees to address the complaints, giving warnings to employees, and transferring perpetrators to different roles. Although some cases were resolved according to the wishes of the complainants, many were not addressed.

4. Reporting of sexual harassment: a tedious and mistrusted process

Although reporting harassment was highlighted as a crucial step, participants shared concerns about the law's effectiveness in this regard. Participants identified several barriers to reporting, including societal norms, fear of job loss, potential conflicts with family, lack of trust in reporting mechanisms, and the lengthy legal proceedings. The impact of societal norms on how harassment is perceived was discussed, with some arguing that harassment is normalized both within and outside the workplace. Thus, the societal perception of harassment and its location (private or public) plays a role in individuals' willingness to report. Participants also noted that victims hesitate to file complaints due to the fear of losing their jobs or that reporting might negatively impact future employment opportunities. Furthermore, the fear of stigma and repercussions from family members, as well as concerns about one's reputation led to the reluctance to report. Finally, company culture and the influence of the owner were identified as factors contributing to silence and fueling the lack

of trust in reporting mechanisms. Despite these challenges, participants recognized that reporting could provide psychological relief, as it shifts the problem from the personal to the organizational level.

Debate arose regarding handling harassment cases in the absence of a complaint from the victim. The role of the institution in applying the law and not tolerating harassment, even without formal complaints, was highlighted. The confidentiality and privacy of cases were emphasized as crucial factors determining whether individuals would feel comfortable reporting in the first place. On the other hand, some participants suggested collective reporting as an alternative, to avoid the burden placed on the individual. Due to the prevalence of unreported cases, participants also proposed strategies such as empowering workers, particularly women, to encourage them to file complaints as well as raising awareness on the process to do so. The importance of training and informing employees about the Labor laws to increase their knowledge about their rights and responsibilities was highlighted, as lack of awareness contributes to reticence in reporting incidents.

5. Impacts of the law: role of societal actors to create safer work environments

According to participants, ensuring safer work environments would increase women's participation in the labor market. Participants highlighted that women would feel safe when necessary measures are in place to safeguard against harassment, creating an environment conducive to their active involvement in the workforce. Participants also noted that the families of women workers can play a crucial role. If families trust that workplaces are monitored and protected, they would be more likely to support and encourage their daughters to enter the workforce, thus increasing women's participation.

Participants suggested that implementing the measures in the law, including legal consequences and fines for employers, would create a deterrent effect. Employers would be afraid of financial penalties and damage to their reputation, potentially leading to them implementing a safer work environment. Strengthening the legal framework within companies, by determining set working hours and signing contracts, were suggested as tools to protect workers and prevent harassment. However, participants acknowledged that sexual harassment could also occur outside the workplace. This recognition emphasizes the need for measures that extend beyond the confines of the workplace to ensure safety for women in society in general.

While legal measures were highlighted, some participants also emphasized the moral responsibility of individuals. Promoting the adherence to certain morals and ethical conduct were seen as complementary factors in creating a safe environment. Thus, societal culture, customs, and traditions were identified as influential factors in shaping perceptions of sexual harassment.

6. Opinions on the changes in the law - Article 29

The majority of participants expressed positive views of the recent changes in the Labor law, viewing them as protective of employees' rights. Some suggested that the law has not

only improved workers' rights, but also created a more secure working environment. Participants identified gaps in the previous laws, particularly the lack of coverage regarding sexual harassment. However, regarding the amendments to the law, many emphasized the need to address situations where harassment is committed by supervisors or other employees (versus solely incidents perpetrated by the employer), as well as rendering employers who were aware of incidents but took no action accountable.

In terms of their critiques, participants expressed the need for a clearer and unambiguous definition of the terms relating to sexual harassment in the law. A precise understanding of these terms was seen as essential to avoid subjectivity in judgment. Concerns were raised about the potential misuse of the definition to make false claims, making employers vulnerable to unfounded accusations. However, others argued that a balance should be struck between protecting employers and employees.

Support for victims, including psychological treatment, was also discussed. Some participants suggested that the law should not only address punishment for the perpetrator but also support the victim, including provisions for psychological treatment.

Participants emphasized the need for effective oversight mechanisms to ensure the implementation of laws. Workplace oversight can play a role in increasing the rate of participation of women in the labor force, although economic challenges were acknowledged.

Although there were similarities between participants' responses across the three regions, some specificities emerged regarding their perceptions on the changes to Article 29:

- **Irbid:** Participants generally support the changes. Concerns revolved around its implementation, focusing on the need for a clearer definition of sexual harassment and addressing potential retaliation towards those who denounce harassment. The potential impacts of the law on employers were raised, regarding the financial burden of the fines (even though participants mostly support an increase in penalties), the fear of false claims, and enforcement challenges.
- **Shouneh:** Participants highlighted gaps in the law and discussed the responsibility of employers. There were varying opinions on the effectiveness of fines, though most support an increase in fines for employers, as well as stricter measures such as the closures of facilities where harassment occurs and the imprisonment of perpetrators. Societal views on harassment and assault, as well as the influence of culture, customs, and traditions when tackling these issues was emphasized by participants in Shouneh.
- **East Amman:** Participants emphasized the need for awareness programs and a precise definition of terms. The changes in the law were generally considered positively, but suggestions for adjustments were made, including considering the size of the institution when determining the fine, incorporating imprisonment measures for em-

employers, as well as creating a blacklist of perpetrators. The need for continuous adaptation of the laws to societal changes was raised. Discussions were also had on preserving family and societal values alongside enforcing legal protections. Concerns were raised about loopholes in the law and unqualified labor inspectors.

Article 69 – Equal opportunity

1. Women’s employment in various sectors: societal limitations to women’s participation in all economic sectors

Participants held a diversity of opinions regarding women’s employment in various sectors and which jobs they consider “suitable” for women to occupy. Views ranged from supporting women’s involvement in all sectors to those who believe certain jobs are not suitable for women, based on gender stereotypes and a gendered division of labor. Traditional gender roles influence participants’ perspectives, with some participants expressing preferences for women to work in fields like education, healthcare, and the public sector. These preferences are rooted in societal norms and expectations of women’s roles.

While many support women’s economic participation, there are reservations about achieving absolute gender equality, citing differences in physical abilities between men and women which limit the jobs women can undertake. Concerns about the job conditions, privacy, and societal acceptance remain barriers to women’s full participation in various professions. Some participants mentioned jobs they consider unsuitable for women, such as those involving overtime, dangerous work, or jobs requiring physical effort. However, opinions vary, and some argue that technology has enabled women to engage in previously male-dominated sectors. Several participants, both men and women, also expressed concerns about work-life balance for women. The idea that women should have jobs ending at specific times to accommodate household responsibilities was a recurring theme. This reflects an awareness of the challenges women face in balancing professional and domestic duties.

Although participants acknowledged changes in societal norms and acceptability regarding women’s work, resistance is highlighted, suggesting that cultural attitudes play a significant role in determining acceptable professions for women. The stigmatization of women working in certain sectors is acknowledged, suggesting a need for societal shifts in perceptions and attitudes to ensure women are not stigmatized for their career choices.

2. Safe workplaces: measures to create safer workplaces and environments

Participants commonly associate a safe workplace with security measures such as cameras, guards, and other surveillance methods. Some skepticism was expressed regarding these measures however, as some participants highlighted that the presence of security measures does not guarantee the prevention of harassment or misconduct. There is a prevalent concern about harassment in the workplace, influencing women’s decisions about where to work. The need for effective reporting procedures and policies to address harass-

ment was emphasized. Raising awareness of women workers' rights was also mentioned as a crucial component of a safe workplace, protecting women from discrimination, harassment, and ensuring fair labor practices. Concerns were also raised about the physical conditions of the workplace, for example, exposure to the sun and long hours in the agricultural sector in Shouneh. Calls for adherence to safety conditions, reasonable working hours, and the protection of pregnant women were highlighted. Overall, suggestions were made for improving the work environment for women, including the need for supportive policies, better job conditions, and efforts to challenge gender stereotypes. Participants emphasized the role of management in creating a safe environment, including effective leadership, stimulating morale, and recognizing the importance of employee well-being.

Beyond the workplace itself, participants also stressed the importance of safe transportation, particularly for women who face harassment during their commute. Lack of safe transportation was identified as a significant barrier to women's participation in the workforce. Additionally, the absence of childcare services was identified as a challenge, with discussions on how the lack of these facilities impacts women's ability to work. Suggestions were made for employers to provide nurseries for employees.

3. Protections for breastfeeding and pregnant women: need to ensure compliance and implementation of adequate protection mechanisms in the workplace

Participants stressed the importance of providing maternity leave, as well as for employers to commit to implementing breastfeeding hours and paternity leave for spouses. Flexibility in working hours was emphasized for both pregnant and breastfeeding women, as well as ensuring that work conditions are not exhausting, avoiding exposure to radiation, and providing psychological support as necessary. Participants argued that such conditions are essential not only for pregnant and breastfeeding women but also for all workers in regular job settings.

Among participants, there was debate as to whether certain professions should be restricted for pregnant women or solely certain tasks within these professions that could have harmful effects on her pregnancy. Some participants argued for flexibility, allowing each institution to determine the ideal scenario according to its internal policies and based on their knowledge of the job requirements. Other participants believed dangerous professions should be prohibited to pregnant women from a health standpoint. Concerns were raised about women working with harmful substances that may affect their reproductive health. A suggestion was made to provide women with opportunities in other sectors or employing them in primarily administrative roles in previously restricted sectors.

There are concerns about discriminatory practices, such as not hiring pregnant women, leading some women to lie about their pregnancy during the hiring process. Concerns are raised about the lack of implementation of laws related to breastfeeding hours and the provision of nurseries. Although a few positive examples of companies implementing rest periods for pregnant women and allocating closed spaces for breastfeeding were men-

tioned, many instances of employers not abiding by maternity leave laws and discriminating against pregnant women in hiring were raised. Some call for state intervention and stronger oversight by the Ministry of Labor to protect employees' rights, including auditing work records to ensure fair treatment and that employees' roles align with their social circumstances, such as pregnancy or disability. Others proposed rewarding businesses that adhere to the regulations and support women's needs with tax reductions or incentives.

4. Employing people with disabilities: adapting the workplace and work requirements

Participants emphasized the importance of adjusting physical infrastructure in workplaces by adding ramps, elevators, accessible toilets and hallways, rest areas, and specially designed entrances and exits to facilitate the integration of people with disabilities. Suggestions were also made for employers to hire people with disabilities in jobs that do not require physical effort, such as office work, as well as to implement technology and computer programs which could facilitate their work. The need for specialized means to support people with disabilities was emphasized. Participants also suggested training employees on how to interact with and support people with disabilities in the workplace. Although many participants shared success stories of individuals with disabilities working in various sectors, including hotels and municipalities, some participants expressed concerns about potential negative experiences and the importance of creating a positive environment for people with disabilities.

Participants also called for legal provisions that obligate institutions to include people with disabilities. Some suggested specifying the percentage of employees with disabilities in the workforce. Others suggested surprise visits to be conducted by inspectors to evaluate workplaces and ensure the implementation of the instructions. Participants acknowledged the importance of ensuring that provided facilities are effective on the ground and not just for show. There is also a recognition of the role of organizations like the Supreme Council for Persons with Disabilities in addressing complaints. Participants expressed the need for effective complaint resolution mechanisms.

Outside of the workplace, considerations for suitable transportation options for people with disabilities were highlighted. Providing specialized services, parking spaces, and accommodating specific needs of people with disabilities in public spaces were raised as important measures.

5. Definition of night work: mixed opinions on defining night work and the appropriateness of women working at night

Participants had varying opinions on what constitutes night work, ranging from specific time periods (e.g., after 5 p.m., from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m., or from sunset to sunrise) to factors like the nature of the job and official working hours. Participants suggested certain sectors and jobs that could be suitable for women at night, according to them, including hospitals, office settings, factories, and restaurants. However, safety concerns emerged as a recurring theme,

including the lack of safe environments, the failure to secure safe transportation and protection for women who participate in night work.

Some argued against restrictions for night work for women, emphasizing the importance of women's autonomy in deciding their work hours. Others highlighted potential social problems, such as supposedly increased divorce rates, when women work at night. Economic conditions and family decisions were cited as factors influencing women's participation in night work. The impact of social customs, stigma, and the potential negative perception of women working late hours were also raised as barriers to women's participation in night work. Participants stressed the importance of addressing societal norms.

Opinions vary on whether the government should set specific instructions on night work for women. Some suggested that protective measures should be in place, while others argued for flexibility, leaving the responsibility to employers to present protection mechanisms to employees before employment. Overall, while some participants expressed optimism and believe the measures regarding night work for women are appropriate, others doubt the level of acceptance in the community.

6. Protection for night work: implementing mechanisms to protect women

Participants highlighted the importance of providing transportation, security, first aid, and safe entrances/exits for employees working at night. There is a consensus that these measures should apply to all employees, not just women. Concerns were raised about the availability of these services for night work, especially during winter. In particular, transportation emerged as a significant concern, with participants noting that secure transportation is often unavailable during the night shift.

Opinions vary on the necessity of women being accompanied by another woman at night. Some view it as unnecessary, emphasizing the strength of individual women. Others argue that such instructions might burden employers and negatively impact women's employment opportunities. Participants express concerns that certain instructions, such as this requirement, might have negative consequences on women's employment. Employers may be deterred from hiring women, perceiving additional obligations and potential societal or tribal backlash.

Overall, there are participants who suggested certain groups may need protection from specific jobs, such as people with disabilities, older individuals, and pregnant women. The focus of participants is on public health and safety considerations.

7. Opinions on the changes in the law - Article 69

Opinions vary on whether the new law will significantly increase women's participation in the labor market. Some express skepticism, suggesting that the increase might not be substantial and stressing the need for additional measures like raising the minimum wage to make a significant impact. Current economic difficulties are seen as a major driver for women being forced to work, although the jobs they employ are often precarious and underpaid.

Others are more optimistic, expecting a rise in participation, especially in certain sectors which were previously restricted for women. However, many participants do not believe that women can or should work in all sectors, especially when it comes to night work.

The enforcement of laws, fair work environments, and employer commitments are seen as critical factors influencing women's participation. There are mixed views on whether private sector practices will change after the amendments. Some believe that not all employers will accept the changes or adapt their work environments according to the legal requirements, as private institutions primarily prioritize profit and business continuity. Suggestions include the need to ensure compliance to the Labor Law, particularly regarding working hours and transportation.

Issues such as transportation and childcare were raised as factors affecting women's participation. However, different perspectives were shared regarding childcare, as some argued that leaving children in nurseries can negatively impact their upbringing and development.

Comparing participants' responses across the three regions, some specificities emerged regarding their perceptions on the changes to Article 69:

- **Irbid:** Participants generally support Article 69 and admit that economic difficulties are forcing women to work in different sectors. However, participants were doubtful that the changes would lead to a significant increase in women's participation in the labor market. Participants raised concerns about the societal and domestic issues, such as divorce, which could arise as a result of the implementation of the laws, allowing women to work in all sectors and at night.
- **Shouneh:** Participants were optimistic about the potential increase in women's participation, with some expecting the amendments to stimulate women's participation in the labor market. Participants emphasized the need for enforcement of laws and discussed obstacles to women's employment including the lack of transportation and parental responsibilities. Ignorance of the laws among women employees was also perceived as a problem, and competence-based employment was emphasized.
- **East Amman:** Positive views were expressed on the amendments to the law, with a focus on ensuring implementation. However, skepticism towards gender equality and support for the old version of the Labor law restricting women's employment in certain sectors was also raised. Overall, participants believed that the changes in the law would increase women's participation in the labour market.

Perspectives from key actors

The following section of the analysis details the perspectives of key actors who participated in the KIIs, according to their roles: CBOs, influencers, tribal leaders, and public and private

sector actors. It is important to note that participants' responses were influenced by their profiles and roles in society.

A. Community-based organizations (CBOs)



"What is the importance of the law if community members are not aware of it!"

CBO (female) in Shouneh

CBOs can play an important role in awareness-raising activities which are crucial for the effective adoption and implementation of labor laws by communities. Notably, the trust these associations have developed with community members and the way they are perceived may lead to more collaboration. CBOs also mentioned their willingness to cooperate with various parties, including government bodies.

"We were witnessing a very positive interaction from the women, which indicates that there is an urgent need to raise the awareness of the local community about the labor law."



CBO & Influencer (male) in Irbid

CBOs recognize the key role they can play in raising awareness on the changes in the laws through workshops, trainings, and advocacy campaigns, targeting women, men, youth, and society in general. Given their proximity to community members, CBOs understand societal barriers to reporting sexual harassment and the norms, customs, and traditions which influence women's economic participation. CBOs also recognize the importance of empowering and mobilizing women on their rights.

B. Influencers




"We care about awareness of the law...because if the employee does not have awareness of the law, he/she will not be able to benefit from it.."

Influencer (male) in Shouneh

In addition to the role CBOs will play to raise awareness, influencers can spread the word about the amendments to the law through media, including social media, newspapers, and blogs, as well as by writing press reports, stories, etc. to educate community members. One

of the influencers interviewed mentioned the challenges faced by journalists to report on the topic of women's employment, given the absence of data on female workers and people with disabilities, as well as the lack of statistics on incidents of sexual harassment. Despite these challenges, influencers can be powerful advocates for changing societal viewpoints and perceptions on women's employment, as well as "enabling [community members] to access these rights even if they are not aware of them" as mentioned by an influencer (female) in East Amman.

C. Tribal leader




"...values, customs and traditions prevent people from accepting some things, but now people are opening up a little in order to be able to cover their material and living needs...In the past, individuals used to go too far and transgress the law under the pretext of tribal law, but now people cannot go too far with the law, which means that the law will be adhered to by all parties."

Tribal leader & Public sector (male) in Shouneh

As for the tribal leader interviewed, he views the changes in the law positively and believes the law will be adhered to by all parties in the community. He believes men will understand that they must act within the law and that women will be aware of her right to report if she is exposed to a situation (and reporting will not cause her problems with her family). The tribal leader also mentioned using his double role as a government employee to inform and raise awareness among community members and his colleagues about the law. As only one tribal leader was interviewed in the KIIs, his response cannot be generalized to represent tribal leaders in general. In fact, other tribal leaders who participated in the FGDs had very different views regarding women's employment, as some suggested women should not be working either during the day or at night, thus reinforcing traditional gender roles and expectations.

D. Public sector



"It is known that the employer will avoid implementing laws that will cost him financially, but raising awareness among workers will force the employer to fully implement the law..."

CBO & Public sector (male) in East Amman

The public sector perceives their role as mobilizing women, in the workplace and in society, to inform them about the changes in the laws and encourage their presence on the labor market, in addition to educating the wider community. Representatives of municipalities believe that knowledge transfer from woman to woman through awareness sessions, targeting both working and non-working women, can support women's economic participation.

They also mentioned the importance of working within government and with other government institutions to implement the changes and hold information sessions for employers, though some believe that it is easier to implement the laws within government institutions compared to in the private sector. Potential obstacles identified include facility managers and employers who are unwilling or refuse to implement the law due to financial concerns. Societal views and acceptance, particularly on provisions such as women working at night, may also pose challenges; although public sector representatives do not anticipate backlash from the community, particularly as community members will be engaged in awareness sessions, which will not only be limited to decision-makers. Potential adverse reactions from the community can be mitigated by information sessions where their questions and inquiries can be answered, and the amendments can be clarified effectively.

E. Private sector

Generally, the private sector is more cautious in supporting the amendments to the laws and holds more conservative views than the CBOs, influencers, and the public sector. Employers mentioned the new instructions and amendments constitute a burden and will not encourage them to employ women. Some employers also believed that the laws can be used by employees to pressure employers.

"If these burdens [referring to the instructions for pregnant women] are because of women, I will not employ women. I will prefer to employ men, because it will bear less responsibilities."



Private sector (male) in Irbid

Regarding Article 69, many employers held the belief that women cannot work in all sectors or at night due to their nature and restrictions imposed by societal culture, except for a few employers (2 in East Amman and 1 in Shouneh) who supported women's choice in determining their field.

"I strongly support women in various fields. A woman's goal does not stop at a certain limit. A woman does not say that she cannot work. She perseveres, works, sacrifices, and struggles, and her goal is always persistent."



Private sector (female) in East Amman

Regarding Article 29, mixed opinions were shared as some employers believe the definition of sexual harassment is too broad and difficult to prove, whereas other believe the changes are positive. Some employers support harsher punishment for sexual harassment, including the closing of the establishment and a prison sentence for the perpetrator, except for one employer who only agrees with the fine. Despite their views on the amendments, most private sector employers are committed to informing their employees about the changes through training, meetings, and by updating their internal policies and bylaws.

Recommendations

The following recommendations emerged from the research and can orient the development of the media and advocacy campaign for the three targeted regions. As a reminder, this campaign seeks to raise awareness and action on the changes to the Labor law in communities, to facilitate and encourage women's economic participation in Jordan. Some recommendations target specific barriers to implementing Articles 29 and 69, while other recommendations extend beyond the Labor law, as the findings demonstrated the need for a holistic approach to community mobilization.

1. Adapt the campaign messages to the realities of the world of work in each region:

While in Shouneh the agricultural sector is predominant, Irbid hosts several industrial zones and thus the campaign messages promoting the protection of women's rights at work can be adapted to the employment realities in each region. In addition, being aware of the realities of precarious work and short-term contracts, which can be structural barriers to access certain workplace protections, can help better target and develop campaign messages.

2. Focus on addressing the barriers to access employment, including safe transportation and access to childcare:

By encouraging employers to provide safe transportation and childcare services, the barriers for women to access employment, particularly night work, can be lifted. The public and private sectors can work on improving transportation options to ensure safety for users, thus increasing the confidence of women in accessing employment.

3. Mobilize influencers to change mindsets and raise awareness on women's participation in the labor market:

Patriarchal mindsets, influenced by societal culture and norms, permeate communities and workplaces, impacting women's ability to access and thrive in the labor market. By highlighting the economic and social advantages to women's participation in society and in the labor market, influencers can work on mindset change within communities to foster a greater understanding and acceptance of the Labor Law.

4. Reinforce the message that protection against sexual harassment creates a safer workplace for everyone

Concerns around false claims of harassment in the workplace and vague terms in the definition of sexual harassment in the law were raised by participants. Clarifying the concept and reaffirming the message that policies against sexual harassment create safer workplaces for all, men and women, can increase adherence to the amendments.

5. Change employers' perceptions on the amendments to the law from perceiving the changes as a burden to a transformative tool:

Private sector actors and employers in general expressed reticence in the amendments to the law, perceiving them as a burden and disincentivizing them from employing women. Targeting reticent employers by explaining the amendments and demonstrating their advantages can help to change employers' perceptions on employing women and guaranteeing safe workplaces.

6. Address the limitations to the amendments with policymakers, particularly the instructions on breastfeeding and pregnant women, people with disabilities and people working at night:

Work remains to be done to advocate for women's rights in the workplace with policymakers. Current instructions, particularly the requirement for women working at night to be accompanied by another woman as well as other protection mechanisms for breastfeeding and pregnant women, are perceived as a burden for employers, who believe they lack support to implement these laws.

7. Use a community-centered approach to address societal and familial barriers to women's employment at night and in all sectors of the economy:

Participants mentioned the influence of societal norms on women's employment and the importance of engaging families and communities in awareness-raising sessions on the law. Building trust with these groups that workplaces are monitored and protected can increase their support for women to enter the workforce, thus increasing women's economic participation.

Further recommendations can be extracted from the findings according to the needs of the advocacy campaign. Additionally, follow-up meetings can be organized with key actors to ensure their recommendations are implemented in the subsequent project activities.

Conclusion

Overall, this research demonstrated the impacts of the amendments to the Labor law on women's rights in the workplace in Jordan, through the perspective of community members, CBOs, influencers, tribal leaders, and the public and private sectors in three regions: Irbid, Shouneh, and East Amman. Using a feminist research framework and methodology, a total of 79 people (37 men and 42 women) were reached through focus group discussions and key informant interviews. This research process facilitated the co-creation of knowledge with communities on the obstacles to countering gender-based violence, discrimination, and inequities facing women in the world of work in Jordan. JW will move forward with the knowledge co-created through this research to select champions in the three targeted regions and develop a social media and advocacy campaign to raise awareness about the amendments to the law. Despite the challenges remaining, increased awareness, acceptance, and adherence to these amendments will contribute to striving one step closer towards a feminist economy.

Annexes

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B. Focus Groups Interview Protocols

Article 29

Focus Group Protocol

Guidelines for Focus Working Groups

A. Presentation of Labor Law Amendments in March 2023 (Article 29)

B. Ask questions to the whole group

Frame	Frame Focus Working Group Guide
Definition	<p>1. What do you know about Article 29 of the Jordanian Labor Law? Note: It is an article that regulates the relationship between the employer and the worker, especially emergency cases that include (change of workplace, etc.), but there is a clause that talks about sexual assault and sexual harassment, so do you know the difference between them.</p>
	<p>2. Do you see a difference between sexual harassment and sexual assault and/or other forms of discrimination based on sex? A. What is your definition of sexual harassment? B. What criteria can characterize behavior as sexual harassment or not?</p>
Protection	<p>3. How can the law prevent and address sexual harassment in the workplace?</p>
	<p>4. In your opinion, how can an employer reduce sexual harassment in the workplace?</p>
Cases	<p>5. In your opinion, is there sexual harassment or sexism in the workplace? Have any of you heard of a case of sexual harassment in the workplace that led to leaving work? A. Do you have any examples of cases where the problem has been addressed or resolved, and how it has been addressed?</p>
Inform	<p>6. Reporting: A. Do you think there is a possibility of reporting? Do people trust reporting mechanisms? B. Do you feel comfortable reporting sexual harassment in the workplace?</p>
Impact	<p>7. If the necessary measures are taken with regard to sexual assault or harassment, will women's participation in the labor market increase?</p>
After the presentation	<p>8. Following the changes to Article 29, will you feel more comfortable dealing with or reporting sexual harassment (and/or misconduct) in the workplace? A. After these changes, do you feel more secure in the workplace?</p>
	<p>9. When you learned about the recent changes in Article 29, at first glance, what was your view on these changes?</p>

Article 69

Focus Group Protocol	
Guidelines for Focus Working Groups	
A. Presentation of Labor Law Amendments in March 2023 (Article 69)	
B. Ask questions to the whole group	

Frame	Frame Focus Working Group Guide
Knowledge of Article 69	1. What do you know about Article 69 of the Jordanian Labor Law? A. From your point of view, what potential jobs do you think are suitable for women? Where do you see women working (in the tourism sector, factories, etc.)?
Pregnant and breastfeeding women	2. What does a safe workplace mean to you? How can workplaces be sensitive to protecting breastfeeding and pregnant women? What instructions can be implemented to ensure a safe working environment for breastfeeding and pregnant women?
People with disabilities	3. How can workplaces be sensitive to the protection of persons with disabilities? a. What instructions can be implemented to ensure a safe working environment for persons with disabilities?
Night work	4. What are the night working hours from your point of view? A. What do you think is the most appropriate night shift period?
Protections	5. What are the appropriate measures to achieve protection in night work?
After the presentation	6. When you learned about the recent changes to Article 69, at first glance, what was your view on these changes?
Open discussion/ after presentation	7. Do you think that the changes to Article 69 will ensure that women have the same opportunities as men in the private sector? A. From your point of view, how do you think that these changes to Article 69 will affect a change in society's acceptance of women's work in the sectors that have been opened? B. Do you think private sector actors will change their practices after these changes? C. Will the new article increase women's opportunities for participation in the labor market? D. What actions will women participate in at night based on the new regulations in your area?

c. Individual Interviews with Targeted Stakeholders Protocol

Individual interviews with targeted stakeholders

Guidelines for individual interviews

- A. Explain the interview process
- B. Review the outcomes of the focus groups
- C. Specify the questions that will be asked according to the stakeholder group

Semi-structured interview guide

Decision-makers/governments/municipalities

1. How do you see your role in raising public awareness about these changes in the law?
2. How will you support the implementation of these laws at your level of decision-making, externally and internally? Do you foresee any obstacles in the implementation of the laws?
3. Do you think there will be backlash or pushback from the general public surrounding awareness campaigns on the changes of the law? If yes, how so and how do you think the backlash should be addressed? If No, what made you sure about this?

Influencers/CBOs

1. How do you see your role in raising public awareness about these changes in the law?
2. What are the societal barriers to implementing these laws for women to be able to work in any sector and at any time of the day?
3. Do you feel you have the power/influence to change the societal views on women's role? (Women's economic participation) What can you do or what would you like to take action on regarding this issue?

Tribal leaders/gatekeepers

1. Is your community aware of the changes in the laws (articles 29 and 69)?
 - A. How do you think your community perceives or would perceive these changes in the laws? What would they think?
 - B. How do men in your community perceive it? How do women in your community perceive it?
2. What are the societal barriers to implementing these laws for women to work in any sector and at any time of the day?
3. How do you see your role in raising public awareness about these changes in the law?

D. Individual Interviews with Private Sector Actors Protocol

Individual interviews with Private Sector Actors

Guidelines for individual interviews

- A. Explanation of changes in the laws and the specific ministerial instructions
- B. Overview of implications for private sector actors (ex. penalties for harassment)
- C. Bring in examples of changes in laws in other MENA countries
- D. Ask individual questions below

Semi-structured interview guide

1. Did you know about these changes in the Labor laws? Is it the first time you have heard about the changes?
2. After hearing about the changes in the laws, at first glance, what are your views about these changes? How do you perceive them (positively, negatively, indifferent)?
 - A. What do you think about Article 29?
 - B. What do you think about Article 69?
 - C. What do you think about the specific instructions from the minister on breast-feeding and pregnant women, as well as people with disabilities?
3. How do you perceive the impact of these changes on your business/ institution/ organization?
4. Do you currently employ women in your workplace? If yes, how many?
 - A. Which jobs or sectors do women work in?
5. Do you have a sexual harassment policy or any policy to protect from sexual harassment in your organization?
 - A. If yes, what are your protocols, policies, or processes? How do you ensure that these policies protect from sexual harassment in the workplace?
 - B. Do you train your employees on sexual harassment in the workplace?
 - C. If not, how do you ensure a safe, respectful, and inclusive workplace for all?
 - A. What policies and protocols can be implemented to ensure a safe working environment for people with disabilities, breastfeeding woman and pregnant women?

6. How will these changes in the law impact your workplace, in your opinion?

A. Do you think the laws will create a safer workplace for women?

7. How will these changes impact your organizational culture and practices?

A. Do you plan to employ more women (ex. For night shifts or in certain jobs where they were previously restricted to work in)?

8. What do you foresee are the barriers to implementing these regulations in your workplace, if any?

9. Do you plan to make your employees aware of these changes and if yes, how so?

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