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# BETTER WORK Jordan Mental Health Project Internal Mid Term Evaluation

## QUICK FACTS

**Countries:** Jordan

**Evaluation date:** 20 June 2023

**Evaluation type:** Project

**Evaluation timing:** Mid-term

**Administrative Office:** BWJ

**Technical Office:** BWJ

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**DC Symbol:** JOR/20/50/USA

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*Key Words:* MENTAL HEALTH, WORKPLACE WELLBEING, MIGRATION

## BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

### Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

Better Work Jordan approximately covers 63.000 workers, of whom 74% are migrants from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India and Nepal. Under the Jordanian legal framework and the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), factories have to provide medical care to both migrant and Jordanian workers, including the provision of health care clinics on site at factories. Challenging circumstances and serious issues of mental health have continued to affect the migrant workers who are the backbone of the sector. In recent years there have been multiple cases of suicides and attempted suicide cases. The entire sector was alarmed at this trend which raised the awareness of the challenges related to mental health among migrant workers in the garment factories.

In the framework of those developments, BWJ designed the project “Mental Health in the Garment Sector in Jordan” with the aim to improve workers’ mental well-being, especially among women and migrant workers. The project focuses on two Long Term Outcomes: *LTO 1 Workers become resilient against mental health risks, including seeking psychosocial support; LTO 2. Factories and the mental health referral system reach more workers needing Mental Health and Psychosocial Support services (MHPSS)*. Each of these two long term outcomes include two medium term outcomes as follows: *MTO 1.1 Workers report more willingness to seek psychosocial support; MTO 1.2 More workers report an acceptable level of stress; MTO 2.1 Factories take measures to detect workers at risk and provide mental health and MHPSS services; MTO 2.2 The MH referral system serves a broader range of workers, including women and migrant workers.*

### Present situation of the project

The project has well advanced in its four main axes: assessing the mental health needs of the work population; conducting awareness raising campaigns, building the capacity of the stakeholders, and increasing worker’s access to mental health and psychosocial support services.

The focus is placed on the increased resilience of workers against mental health risks, and the increased support from the factories and the mental health referral system. The project entails multiple interventions (including the establishment of mental health focal points, introduction of counsellors, and training programs for workers and non-worker staff). The project started in

	January 2020 with an initial duration of 24 months and has been subject of a no-cost extension till December 2023.
<b>Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation</b>	The purpose of this internal Mid-term evaluation is to learn from the experiences of the project to inform ongoing and future programming in the area of mental health. The evaluation has done this by examining the project's coherence and effectiveness, efficiency, potential impact, adaptability and sustainability. The evaluation has identified strengths and weaknesses in the project design, strategy, and implementation, lessons learned and recommendations.
<b>Methodology of evaluation</b>	<p>The evaluation has followed the ILO's guide for internal evaluations and utilizes the standard ILO framework and follows the OECD-DAC criteria (with the exception of Relevance). The suggested questions and information needs found in the Terms of Reference were incorporated in an Evaluation Matrix with indicators to respond to them together with the sources that have been used for each Evaluation Question (EQ). The five EQs have served as the basis to draft the report. The indicators have been taken from the Results Framework and suggested by the evaluator as per her analysis of project documents, background and context.</p> <p>The methodological approach for data collection has been primarily qualitative in nature. Quantitative data has been drawn from project documents and reports, and incorporated into the analysis. In particular the evaluation has used the recent “<i>BWJ Quantitative Impact evaluation of the project's factory-level interventions commissioned by BWJ.</i>”</p> <p>The evaluation consultant conducted a one week field mission in Jordan from 24<sup>th</sup> February until 3<sup>rd</sup> March and has visited several factories (Jerash factory, Tusker Apparel, Classic Fashion, Century Miracle Jordan, Needle Craft). Together with the participants in the Focus Groups, the evaluation has involved a total of 75 people, 49 women and 26 men.</p>
<b>MAIN FINDINGS &amp; CONCLUSIONS</b>	The project's design is coherent and valid to address MH challenges in the garment sector in Jordan. It ensures a balance between the prevention and the support approach towards MH. The project's design and its result's framework include two terms (mental well-being and mental health) that have

different nuances, expected to be used accordingly in project's implementation.

The design is robust and comprehensive regarding the involvement of the sector's and national stakeholders. It is also comprehensive as it tends to place the migration component into the picture, while it could be strengthened from a gender perspective.

The project has raised awareness about mental health and contributed to an increased understanding and sensitivity toward mental health among workers, managers, and key stakeholders. The multilevel awareness-raising campaign with a unified identity proved very effective and increased workers' awareness about MH and their willingness to seek psychosocial support. The project has contributed to reducing the stigma around the MH concept by focusing on positive and preventive aspects of mental well-being.

Workers in the garment sector have increased their knowledge and skills to manage prevalent issues affecting mental well-being thanks to the training provided by the project on financial issues, sexual harassment and reproductive rights, and social media. In alliance with the buyers, the project has very successfully persuaded and convinced factories to take measures to detect workers at risk and provide MHPSS services. Four support elements stand out: the MH policy and standard procedures, the MH focal points and the counselors, the training on mhGAP for non-mental specialists, and the raised awareness among crucial sector stakeholders.

The project has advanced well in preparing, in a participatory manner, with MH focal points, the Mental Health Policy in the Workplace, and the Standard Operation Procedure for MH and Psychosocial Support in Jordanian Garment Factories. The dialogue platform among the focal points from different factories has proved effective in building their capacities on mental health topics and encouraging knowledge/experience exchange through regular meetings.

The project has successfully promoted the figure of a counselor inside the factories to create a healthy and productive working environment by providing support and care to employees in need. Workers and management staff very much appreciate their work, and Non-mental health specialists at

the factory level have also increased their knowledge and skills to identify workers needing MHPSS.

The mental health referral system in Jordan proves to have severe limitations in covering the needs of the MH for migrants. Therefore the responsibility for migrant workers' health should be taken by the private sector employing such a workforce. The migration component of the project faced several challenges. It is important to ensure that such part (induction training and support in the countries of origin) is considered while addressing MH issues.

The Project efficiently used resources, as funds and human expertise have been strategically allocated to achieve outcomes. The project has been able to optimize ILO internal resources by tailoring the existing education financial training to the sector's needs. It has benefited from WHO resources and has been able to leverage resources from the leading factories. Stakeholders unanimously appreciate the quality of the products and services delivered by the project, although some stakeholders consider that the training packages in general should be shortened.

The project is well-orientated to its long-term intended impact, improving mental well-being, especially among women and migrant workers in the garment sector in Jordan by building worker resilience against mental health risks, including through help-seeking, and enhancing access to support at the factory level and through referral to specialized organizations.

The projects has had a wise strategy towards sustainability by actively involving the stakeholders at different levels. The CBA is an element that contributes to the project's sustainability, as factories are requested to implement a MH component. The project's sustainability will also depend on the stakeholders' decision to prioritize the sector needs in the future, so it is crucial to enhance stakeholders' commitment and capability.

## RECOMMENDATIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

### Main findings & Recommendations

Regarding the terminology, it is advised to use "mental well-being" and "mental health" when applicable. This includes promoting positive mental states and cultivating well-being while providing resources and support for those struggling with mental health challenges. Using both terms "mental

health" and "mental well-being" throughout the project can communicate a message of both prevention and support and ensure that all aspects of mental health are addressed.

In terms of activities, the evaluation recommends expanding the ToT on financial education, sexual and reproductive health, and social media, adapting its length when feasible. It also suggests continuing to provide the mhGAP to medical staff. Continue preparing leisure activities for the MH Day, wherever possible ensure the maximum participation of workers and management staff. Strengthening the dialogue platform among the MH focal points from different factories is advisable to encourage exchange and peer learning.

Regarding the MH Policy in the workplace, it is suggested to involve BWJ colleagues in its revision and development, as well as experts on grievances and working and living conditions in the factories. The ILO and the WHO Mental Health at Work policy brief should guide their joint work. In the future, this Mental Health Policy in the Workplace should be developed or complemented with a Mental Well-being Policy covering a broader range of issues related to the working and living conditions of the workforce in the garment sector.

As the project needs to reach out to more factories, it is advised to prepare a strategy to reach the small & satellite factories to expand the project's benefits when feasible using the BW service module and identify the mechanism to support small and remote factories.

The private garment sector in Jordan should take full economic responsibility for the costs related to MH disorders and treatments of the migrants working in the factories. The private sector should also invest in translating the training materials BW provided to overcome the language barriers in the project's implementation.

Hiring a migration expert could strengthen the project's migration component for the remaining period. Options should be discussed with the corresponding ILO regional office, and the expert should use the ILO Fair Recruitment Project results.



**Main lessons learned and good practices**

For future interventions on MH in the garment sector, the evaluation recommends having a more robust gender lens approach. Many of the challenges women face in the industry regarding MH could be improved if addressed from a gender perspective.

The role of buyers in pushing forward the mental health project and encouraging factories to engage with the project seems crucial. Buyers were indeed very much concerned about the suicide cases that occurred in some of the factories, encouraging BW for specific measures to face such challenges. Some buyers, who play a leading role in the current scenario of MH challenges, are very concerned about the MH risks associated with the working and living conditions of migrants in Jordan.

An emerging good practice is the designation of a counselor in the factories to improve mental well-being. A counselor's objective in the garment factory is to create a healthy and productive working environment by providing support and care to needy employees. This includes conducting periodic evaluations to assess their psychological needs, providing psychological support, including assessment, therapy, and follow-up, maintaining case records, and ensuring the confidentiality of employee information. Introducing counselors into factories leads to significant and substantively meaningful improvements in workers' self-reported job stress levels and mental well-being.

The project has implemented an MH multilevel campaign using the material in five different languages (Arabic, English, Bengali, Indie, and Sri Lankan) that emerge as a good practice. As a result of this campaign, there are evident achievements in terms of awareness about what MH is and when and what workers, co-workers, dorm supervisors, managers, etc., can do when finding initial symptoms of an MH disorder. The information, education, and communication (IEC) materials (flyers, brochures, etc.) are very effective, and the project will continue distributing them. Videos, in particular - good communication channels for the younger generation- are very much appreciated by stakeholders interviewed.