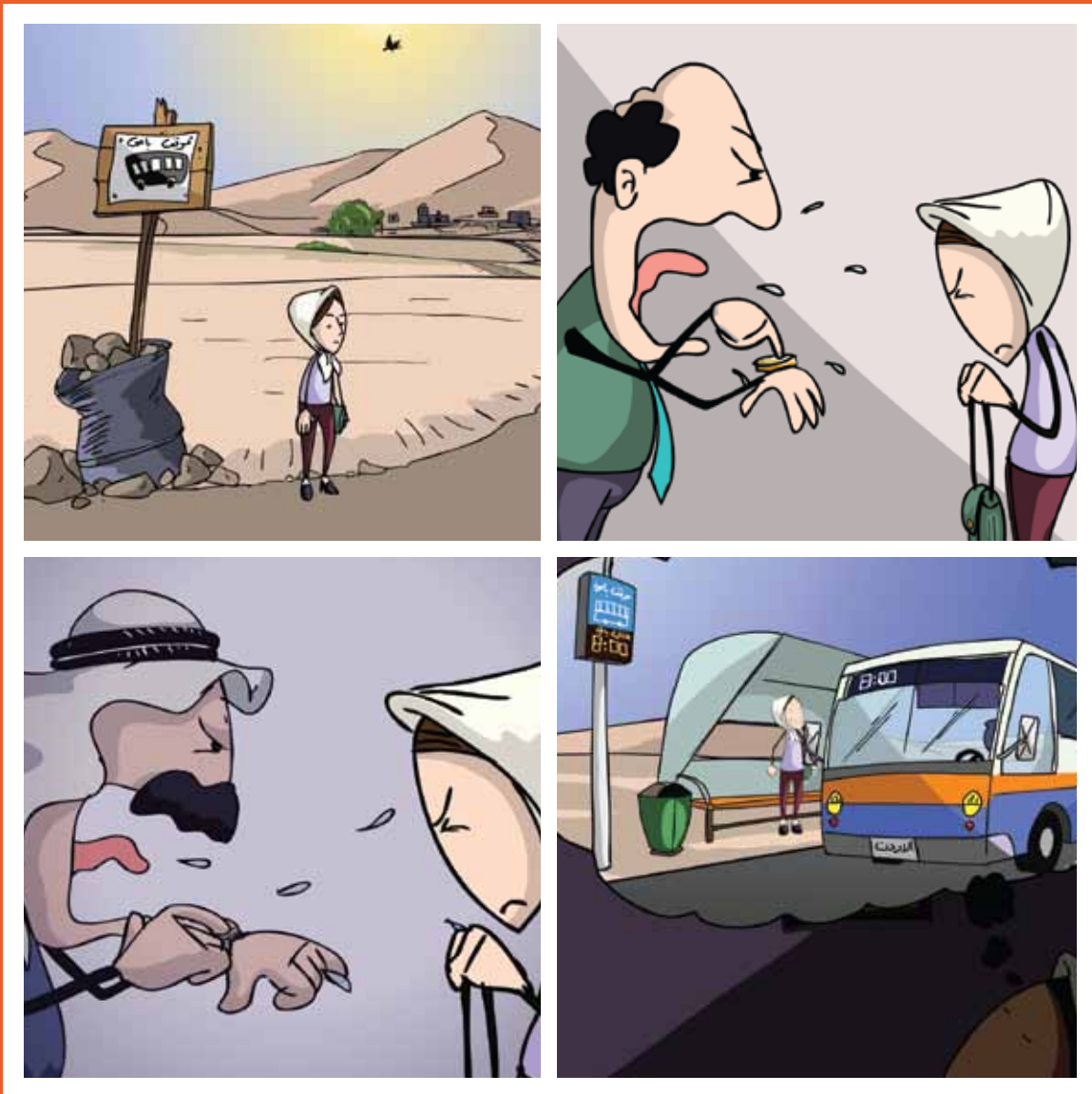


Transport Services and their Impact on Youth Employment and Development in Jordan





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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In response to the National Employment Strategy, Youth for the Future (Y4F), in close collaboration with government and non-government partners, set out to identify, analyze, and address reasons for youth unemployment. Data collected by Y4F indicate that transportation challenges are one of the most significant barriers to youth participation in the workforce, especially for females. Many youth leave jobs within six months of being hired because of these challenges. Youth surveyed in four areas where many young people are considered at-risk youth—Mafraq, Ruseifeh, South Shouneh and Sahab—highlighted four main transportation challenges:

- 1) High cost of public transportation
- 2) Disorganized service
- 3) Poor reliability
- 4) Limited or no service at hours when youth need transport, or to locations where they live or work

6% of surveyed workers go to work by taxi and 5% use public cars, but 86% take the bus. 39% of the surveyed young workers must transfer at least once to get to work. For them to be able to reach their destinations, they face unpredictable wait times which, combined with uncoordinated services, often prolong their commute even further. The average daily door-to-door round trip for these youth is 145 minutes. On a day when they work a 9-hour shift, this brings the total time devoted to work to nearly 12 hours. And on average, they spend 23% of their salary on these long commutes.

Employers also feel the effects of these transportation problems. 77% of employers surveyed by Y4F believe that public transport costs are very high for the workers. The same percentage of employers expressed willingness to provide financial subsidies for their employees, if their contributions are matched by government incentives. 29% of the surveyed employers in the hospitality, retail and manufacturing sectors do provide transportation for their workers; however, 37% of them charge their employees for the service.

Irregular schedules, poor quality vehicles and long waits regularly cause workers to arrive to work late. 48% of employers in Mafraq, South Shouneh, Sahab and Ruseifeh stated that employees usually arrive 15 to 45 minutes late. 69% of employers reported that these delays are due to the transportation system. Furthermore, 50% of employers believe that frustration with public transport is a major cause for workers to quit their jobs. 69% of employers indicated that public transport is not attractive for youth, and youth echoed this sentiment. 78% of the surveyed youth reported that lack of transportation limits their access to work centers.

Parents of working youth also see transport as a major limiting factor in their children's access to work. 30% of parents do not allow their children to use public transportation, citing poor service quality and the possibility of harassment during the trip, especially females. According to the parents of the young people in the surveyed areas, 40% of public transportation users have been subjected to harassment.

Representatives of public, private, and civil society organizations propose solutions and new initiatives to start improving public transport offerings for young working Jordanians. All agree that designing and launching transport services for targeted youth will require building strong partnerships among various parties. All government entities, including the Ministry of Labor, E-TVET

Fund, Social Security Corporation and the Land Transport Regulatory Commission will need to contribute to any policy initiative set in place. The same is true for business associations and, to a lesser extent, labor unions. The expertise of international donors may also be valuable, so that project design can be informed by successful experiences in other parts of the world.

The following key recommendations address the most important challenges listed in the study. All recommendations have been put forth with the goal to improve the quality of service and reduce costs to youth. Each recommendation is accompanied by a suggested solution.

- 1) **Expanding employer-provided transport:** Employers provide transport – in vehicles either owned or leased by them – to convey their employees to and from work, on a regular basis, as part of the benefits they offer their workers.
- 2) **Creating unified job transport services for small and medium employers:** Business associations coordinate with owners of small and medium enterprises in the same sector or location to jointly offer transport services to their employees.
- 3) **Carpooling:** Employees who live and work in the same area commute together using the private car of one of the individuals. The members of the group take turns offering the service, or the service may be provided by one member of the group permanently in return for fees paid by the rest of the group.
- 4) **Expanding public transport offerings:** Public and private transport companies offer new routes and more frequent service in urban areas, and in special cases, include industrial complexes and late hours in specific areas of Amman.
- 5) **Travel vouchers:** A government entity, most likely E-TVET, issues a voucher or coupon to workers who meet certain criteria, allowing them to take public transport to work at subsidized prices.
- 6) **Forming a National Job Transport Company:** Establish a public shareholding or limited liability company through a partnership between the government, represented by a relevant institution, employers, and transport companies wishing to invest in job transport, which would be the scope of services of this company, in addition to free partnership for organizations working with youth.

A. Background and Overview

Jordan's transportation sector is considered the backbone of the national economy and an essential pillar of the country's economic, commercial, social and cultural growth and vitality. The contribution of the transport, storage and communications sectors to the GDP in 2011 was estimated at 11.9%, driven by the transport subsector's activity in developing basic infrastructure and roads. The transportation sector provides almost 36,354 direct job opportunities, in addition to providing thousands of indirect job opportunities. About two million trips take place daily through available transport vehicles.

The public transportation sector has significantly evolved in Jordan over the past twelve years. The sector has been completely privatized, the number of serviced areas has increased, along with the number and types of public transport vehicles. The number of buses working on public transport routes was estimated at about 110 buses in 1997, and increased to about 2,382 buses in 2012. The number of transport routes also increased. Additionally, a number of laws regulating the land transport sector were passed, creating an effective and sustainable institutional framework for public transportation services. In 2011, the Land Transport Regulatory Commission Law was passed. In the area of feasibility and assessment studies, the holistic public transport for passengers plan was

completed, aimed at creating a public transport system for passengers that is effective, safe, reliable, environmentally friendly and able to keep up with the developments as well as fulfill the needs of all members of the community.

The economic and social development process, along with the expansion of Jordanian cities, population growth, and an increase in urban centers, have all led to an increasing need for the movement of people to the areas where they work and conduct daily activities. Homes, universities, schools, commercial centers and job sites at varying distances have constituted attraction points that generate daily trips, and the number of trips to reach those activities, as well as the length of these trips, has increased. With the decreasing cost of owning a car and the limited appeal of public transport as a result of the low quality of services, the option to choose individual, private transportation (i.e., reliance on a private car) has become the most desirable option. Meanwhile, public transportation remains the main means of transport for persons without access to private transportation options.

In spite of efforts by the government to create plans to address the increasing demand for transport services, improve performance, reach higher levels of safety and security, and find new transport patterns (such as railway transport and the rapid bus), the provision of necessary financing to implement and complete these projects remains a significant challenge. This is in large part due to the special nature of transport projects that require significant preparation and investment, but which take a long time before reaping the benefits and rewards of these investments.

Based on the experience of the Youth for the Future (Y4F) program, the poor availability of safe and reliable transportation services is a major obstacle to youth employment, especially amongst females and disadvantaged youth. Through its work in Amman, Zarqa, Ruseifeh, Irbid, Sahab, Mafraq, Shouneh and the Jordan Valley, Y4F learned that access to training centers, youth centers and job sites by public transportation was, in most cases, expensive and not available in all areas and at all times. Furthermore, the quality of transport services being delivered was generally low in terms of reliability of schedules, distances and frequency in the offering of the service and infrastructure services supporting public transport services. In addition, passengers experienced some harassment, particularly in large and medium sized public buses.

The lack of decent and available transportation options to support youth trainings and employment opportunities led Y4F to carry out a study to better understand exactly what these impediments were and to identify possible solutions to increase youth participation in the organization's activities and programs. A pre-assessment was conducted in 2013 by the Y4F program looking at a sample of 422 youth beneficiaries tracked through the program's monitoring and evaluation system. The findings indicated that one of the main reasons that prompted these youth to leave work or reject job opportunities was transportation problems, and that these transportation problems affected the decision of a number of youth to reject job opportunities from the outset or to decide to leave work. Transportation was an even greater obstacle to employment for females due to the sociocultural limitations that they are subject to. In addition, 66% of the reasons youth gave for leaving work or rejecting employment opportunities were related to low financial returns that do not cover general living costs, including transportation, distance from home to work sites, and difficulty of access. This confirms that transportation barriers influence the decision of a large percentage of disadvantaged youth to reject job opportunities.

Based on the initial findings of the pre-assessment, a larger study was carried out to identify the impact of current public transport services for young people, ages 15-24, on their training and

employment options, as well as to better understand the main challenges and issues youth face when using various means of transport to come up with practical and implementable recommendations that will help address these problems.

B. Methodology and Approach

The study methodology included descriptive and quantitative analysis of field surveys with data collected from a sample of Y4F's youth beneficiaries who graduated from the program, their parents and employers. Data was also collected in focus group discussions and interviews with Y4F's public sector and civil society partners working with these youth.

Geographical areas were selected for inclusion in the study based on several considerations including the geographic locations of Y4F's operations, levels of economic activity, percentages of the use of various public transport vehicles, and the groups of citizens at various times of the day.

The study began by identifying the most important problems and challenges facing youth in four communities (Mafraq, Sahab, Ruseifeh, and Shouneh) when using public transport, and presented their recommendations on finding solutions to alleviate these problems. In the second part of the study, other Y4F geographical areas were targeted such as East Amman and Zarqa, as they are areas that encompass a large number of diverse economic sectors.

The total youth population for the study included 460 graduates of the Y4F working in Mafraq, Sahab, Ruseifeh and Shouneh. The study survey was distributed to a sample of 212 youth, with a 77% response rate. 37% of respondents are female; 63% are male. 73 parents and 61 employers were also surveyed.

In addition to the surveys, focus group discussions were conducted with 19 people from the public sector, Y4F employers, civil society partners, parents of youth beneficiaries from all four communities and experts in the field. Focus group participants included representatives of the Public Sector Regulatory Commission, Restaurant and Dessert Owners Association, Touristic Hotel Owners Association, Carrefour Retail Trade Company and Integrated Land Transport Company, among others.

C. Summary of Findings

The study identified a number of findings that impact the quality of transportation services in Y4F's target geographical areas. These findings were analyzed and connected to a number of study variables to arrive at the final analysis and recommendations. The main findings were as follows:

1. Number of Transport Modes Used

46% of employed youth use more than two modes of transport to get to their homes from their place of work, and 39% use more than two.

2. Cost of Transport

The cost of transport borne by program graduates working in all four geographical areas is an average of 1.9 JD a day. Their average monthly salary is 202 JD and they work 9 hours per day. The largest share of salary being spent on transport is 46% in Southern Shouneh, while the smallest share is Sahab at 13%. The average for the four areas was 23% of the monthly salary.

77% of employers believe that the cost of transport using public transport is too high for the workers, and the same percentage of the employers expressed their willingness to offer financial support to the Y4F graduates who work for them, if there are parallel government incentives.

3. Commute Time

Youth spend an average of 115 minutes in transit to and from work each day. This does not include the time it takes to walk from their home to the transit pick-up point or from the drop-off point to their workplace (approximately 30 minutes). Taking into consideration the time required to commute to work and back, the total time allocated for work is an average of 12 hours a day.

4. Types of Transport Used

Young people use many different modes of transport to get to work. Only 6% use yellow taxis, 5% use service taxis, and 86% of graduates use the bus or mini bus. 29% of the employers targeted by the study in the commerce, restaurants, hotels and manufacturing sectors provide transport for their workers, and 37% of those (of the 29%) charge their workers for this service.

5. Transportation Delays and Inadequate Transportation Services

Y4F graduates who rely on public transit reported being late to work more frequently than those who get to work another way. They attributed these delays to irregularity in service and long wait times. 69% of employers stated that problems related to public transport cause their workers to arrive late, stressing the negative impact this has on consistency and productivity. 48% of employers in Mafraq, Southern Shouneh, Sahab and Ruseifeh estimate that the Y4F graduates who work for them are regularly 15 to 45 minutes late, and 24% reported that these youth often arrive 1 to 15 minutes late.

Moreover, 50% of employers believe that public transport is a main reason that workers quit their jobs. 69% of them believe that public transport is not attractive to passengers, a point repeated by youth as a reason for leaving a job.

Finally, 78% of the youth and 80% of parents report that limited transport service make it difficult to reach their workplace. 70% of parents believe that the cost of using public modes of transport constitutes an obstacle to reaching work.

6. Attractiveness of Public Transport

30% of the parents in the areas of Ruseifeh, Mafraq and Southern Shouneh do not allow their children to use public transport. They see public transport services as being of poor quality, and situations where their children may be the subject of unwanted attention from other passengers, particularly towards young women. According to the parents of the youth in these areas, the results indicated that 40% of the public transport users were harassed.

D. Summary of Recommendations from Study Respondents

The sample of employed program graduates, employers, and parents offered a number of recommendations to improve public transport.

- Serve the greatest number of public transport users, and attract more of them through:
 - Covering a larger number of neighborhoods
 - Making public transport stops more convenient to places where people live and work
 - Using one mode of transport to work and back.

- Reducing the duration of the trip to and from work and reducing waiting times
- Making the service regular and creating set, specific timetables
- Improving supporting infrastructure and services such as bus stations, transportation centers, etc.
- Public modes of transport need to be held to minimum standards for the safety and comfort of passengers, with special attention given to public safety, cleanliness, and driver and driver's assistant behavior and customer service.
- Provide new alternatives such as high-speed bus, light train, or a railway network for remote locations, to ensure safer and easier access to public transportation.
- Find ways to make public transport more affordable. This is a main problem raised by the members of the sample. Several solutions were offered for this including:
 - Subsidize transportation costs as a part of employee wages.
 - Provide employer-managed transportation services or offer allowances for transportation.
 As mentioned above, youth who have no alternative to public transport spend an average of 23% of their monthly salary , to get to work, except in cases where employers provide transport.

The surveyed youth, employers and parents recommended a number of short- to medium-term solutions to transport problems including:

Short Term Implementable Recommendations

- Subsidize or reduce transportation fees.
- Require employers to pay transportation allowances or provide transportation.
- Customs exemption for employee transportation services owned and operated by private companies.
- Monitor public transport to ensure compliance with the set fees and routes.
- Increase frequency on existing routes, especially in rural areas.

Medium Term Recommendations

Reconsider the design of public transport networks in the four study areas through:

- Open new routes to link work sites and communities.
- Define set, regular timetables and improve levels of service.
- Upgrade vehicles on existing routes.
- Improve public safety and security on vehicles, but also at transport centers and pick-up stations,.
- Allocate public modes of transport for males and others for females in special and specific cases.

Long Term Recommendations

- Create new modes of transport on the roads (such as high-speed bus, trams, etc.) and electric railways in urban areas.
- Establish a railway system for longer distances.

E. Summary of Overall Recommendations

This study solicited ideas from various institutions working on public transport in Jordan and experts in this field, who made , who made a number of recommendations:

- Expand the provision of job transport services

- Incentivize small- and medium-sized companies to coordinate and offer unified job transport services
- Encourage carpooling
- Expand public transport services
- Provide transport vouchers, either from the government or transport companies
- Establish a national company specializing in job transport to support coordination of and advocacy for improved transport services for Jordanian workers.



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