



منتدى الاستراتيجيات الأردني  
JORDAN STRATEGY FORUM

## Jordan on the Youth Progress Index 2020

September 2021



**#Policy\_Brief**

## 1. Background

On 25 September 2015, the 193 member states of the UN agreed with the United Nation (UN) that they want to change the world for the better. To accomplish this, they have all adopted 17 “Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)” that reflect a call to action to “end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity”. The 17 development goals involve 169 targets and 230 indicators.

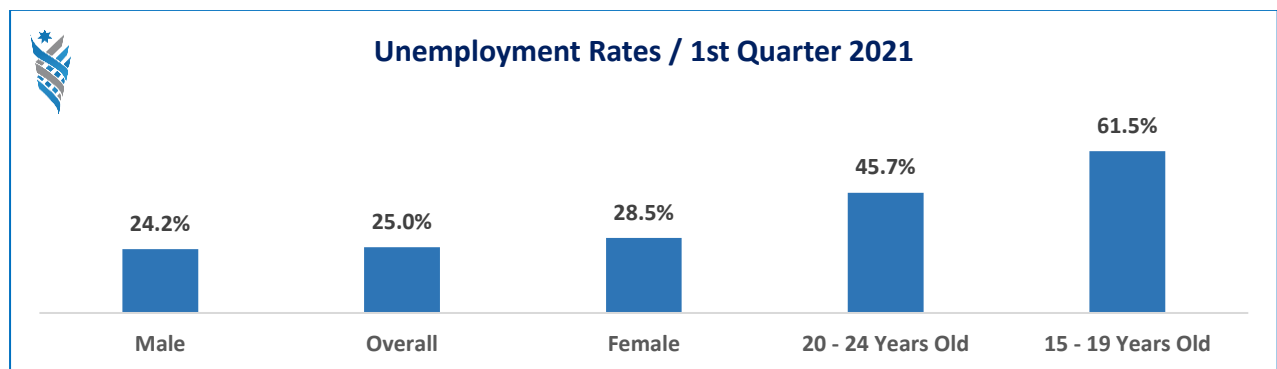
To ensure sustainable progress in “**human development**”, the 2030 Agenda identifies the areas where action is needed, including the employment of youth (defined as individuals between the ages of 15 and 24). In more specific terms, goal number 8 states “promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”. In addition, two of this goal’s specific targets are 8.5 and 8.6.

**Target 8.5:** “By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value”.

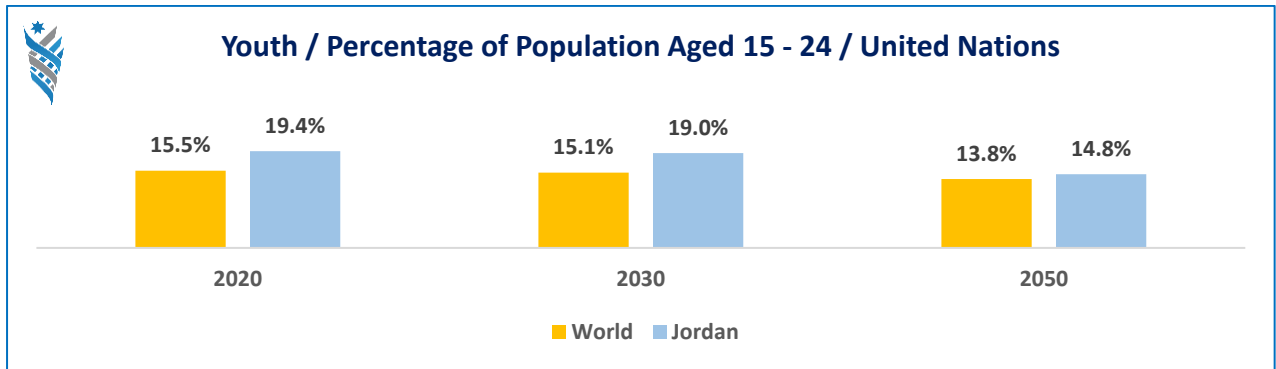
**Target 8.6:** “By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training”.

Within the context of the above-mentioned observations, it is useful to think of two observations about Jordan’s unemployed youth and the percentage of population aged 15 – 24 years old (youth according to the United Nations / UN).

1. Unemployment rates among the youth (15 to 19 and 20 to 24 years old) are particularly discouraging. While one expects the youth to hold high aspirations, they face high uncertainty and prolonged transition from school / university to work and hence, into adulthood.



2. Jordan’s percentage of population aged 15 – 24 years old is relatively high. This indicates the importance of “youth empowerment, development and engagement”. Indeed, when equipped with sufficient skills, youth can use them to find suitable employment opportunities, earn a decent living, and contribute to economic growth and development.



On 10 June 2021, The Social Progress Imperative released the **2021 “Youth Progress Index”** results. This index measures the quality of life of young people in more than 150 countries across the globe. The Index includes 58 social and environmental indicators.

In this Policy Brief, the Jordan Strategy Forum (JSF) highlights where Jordan’s youth stand on the prioritize some of the pressing needs of young people and to recommend some policy measures whose objective is to improve their wellbeing and prosperity.

## 2. The Youth Progress Index

The Youth Progress Index score is simply the average of three dimensions: Basic Human Needs, Foundations of Wellbeing, and Opportunity.

**A. Basic Human Needs:** This dimension is composed of four pillars. Each pillar involves a number of sub-pillars / measures.

- 1. Nutrition and Basic Medical Care:** This pillar’s measures are undernourishment (% of population), maternal mortality rate, child mortality rate, child stunting (% of children), and youth deaths from infectious diseases.
- 2. Water and sanitation:** This pillar’s measures are unsafe water, sanitation and hygiene attributable deaths, populations using unsafe or unimproved water sources, populations using unsafe or unimproved sanitation, and youth satisfaction with water.
- 3. Shelter:** This pillar’s measures are access to electricity (% of population), youth household air pollution attributable deaths, usage of clean fuels and technology for cooking (% of population), and youth affordable housing.
- 4. Personal Safety:** This pillar’s measures are homicide rate, perceived criminality, youth traffic deaths, women safe walking alone, assaulted youth, and youth stolen money or property.

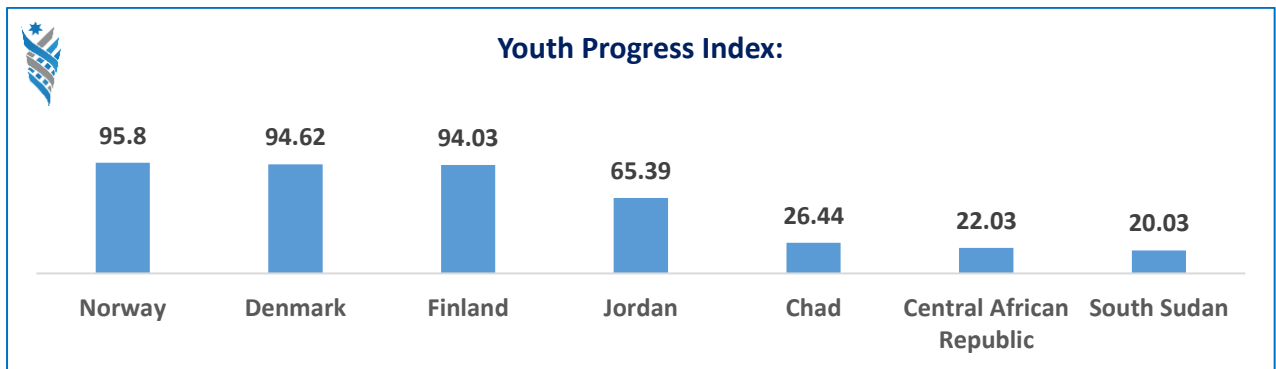
**B. Foundations of Wellbeing:** This dimension is composed of four pillars. Each pillar involves a number of sub-pillars / measures.

1. **Access to Basic Knowledge:** This pillar's measures are women with no schooling, primary school enrollment (% of children), secondary school attainment (% of population), gender parity in secondary attainment, and access to quality education.
  2. **Access to Information and Communications:** This pillar's measures are mobile telephone subscriptions (subscriptions / 100 people), internet users (% of population), access to online governance, and media censorship.
  3. **Health and Wellness:** This pillar's measures are youth life expectancy (years), youth premature deaths from non-communicable diseases, access to essential services, and access to quality healthcare.
  4. **Environmental Quality:** This pillar's measures are youth outdoor air pollution attributable deaths, particulate matter, youth satisfaction with air quality, and species protection index.
- C. Opportunity:** This dimension is composed of four pillars. Each pillar involves a number of sub-pillars / measures.
1. **Personal Rights:** This pillar's measures are political rights, freedom of expression, freedom of religion, access to justice, property rights for women, and percent of young members of parliament.
  2. **Personal Freedom and Choice:** This pillar's measures are early marriage (% of women), satisfied demand for contraception (% of women), corruption, youth freedom over life choices, youth perception of corruption, and youth not in employment and not in education.
  3. **Inclusiveness:** This pillar's measures are openness towards gay and lesbian people, discrimination and violence against minorities, equality of political power by gender, youth opportunities to make friends, youth openness towards immigrants, and youth community safety net.
  4. **Access to Advanced Education:** This pillar's measures are years of tertiary schooling, women with advanced education (%), quality weighted universities (points), and citable documents.

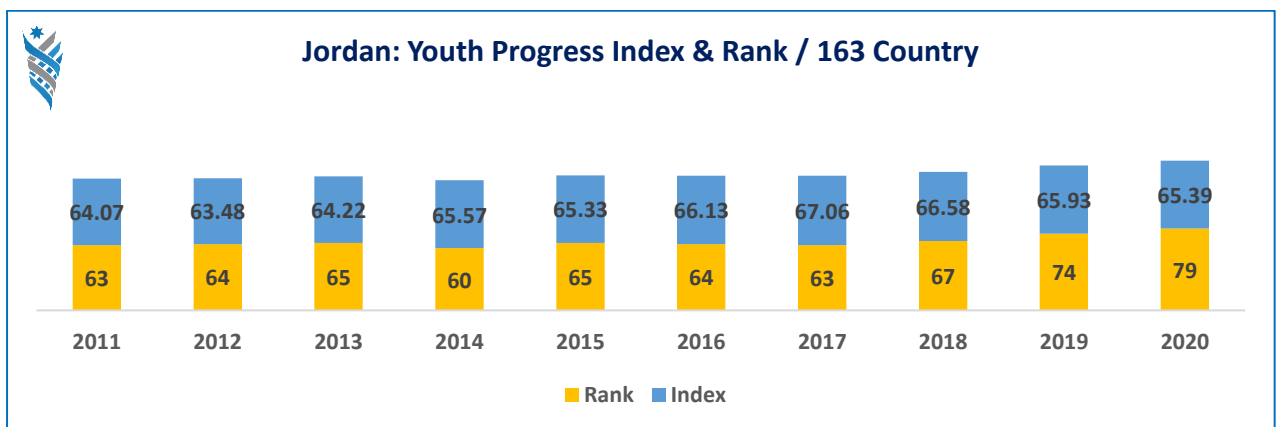
### 3. The Youth Progress Index: Where Does Jordan's Youth Stand?

Below, we outline a number of observations about Jordan's standing on the youth progress index.

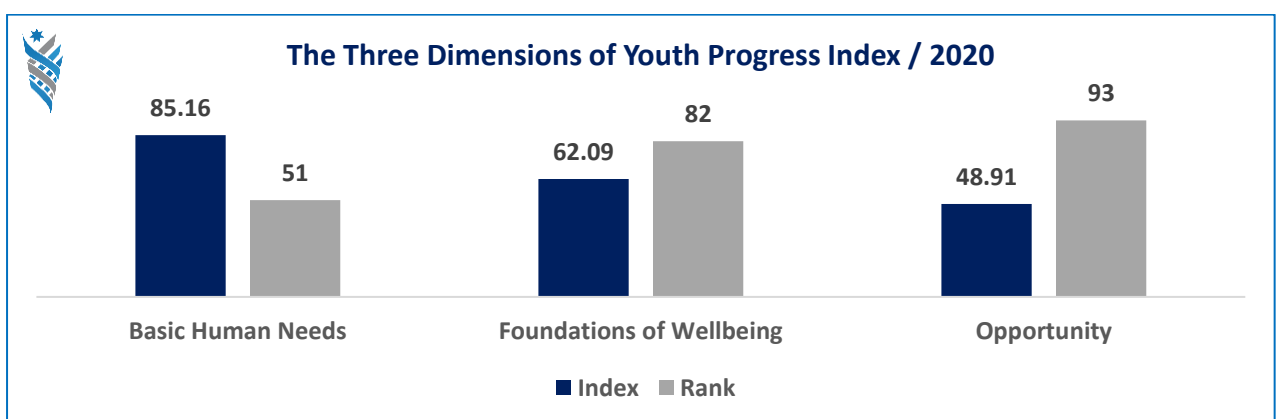
1. With a score of 95.8 in the index, Norway tops the world. South Sudan ranks last. However, with a score of 65.39, Jordan's score leaves a lot to be desired.



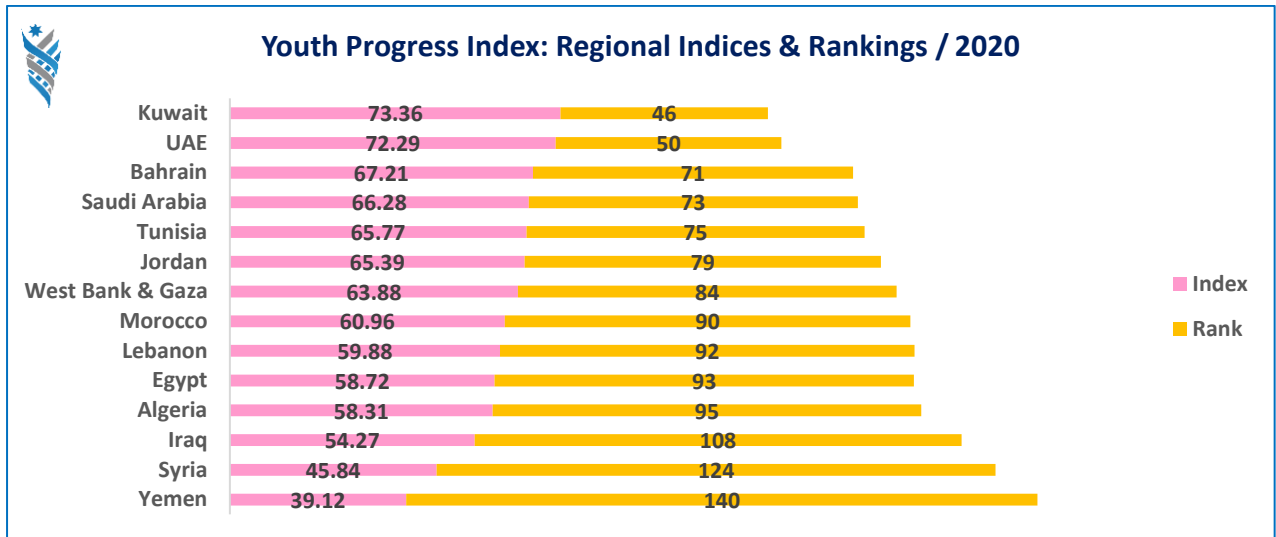
2. Over time, it is not encouraging to note that Jordan's score has not improved. Indeed, Jordan's rank deteriorated from 63<sup>rd</sup> in 2017 to 79<sup>th</sup> in 2020.



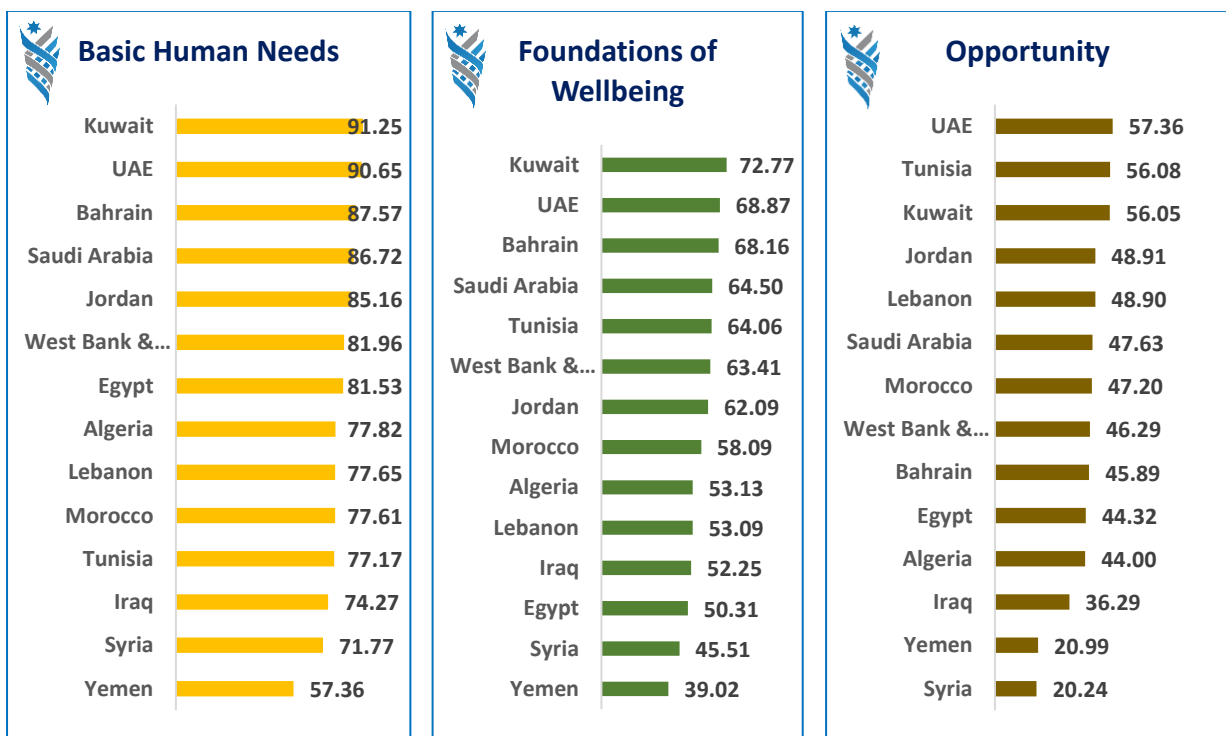
3. In the "opportunity" dimension of the youth progress index, Jordan's score is low.



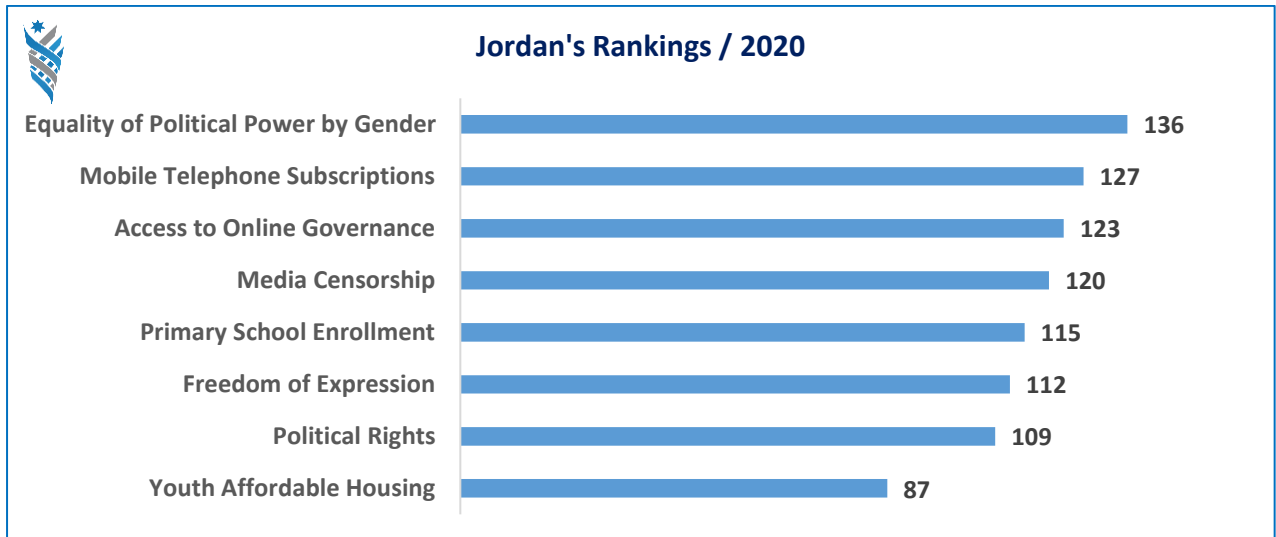
4. At the regional level, Jordan ranks 6<sup>th</sup>.



5. It is interesting to note that the scores of all the Arab countries are poor in the “opportunity” dimension of the index.



6. To improve Jordan’s score (and rank) in the youth progress index, stakeholders should look into the scores in which Jordan’s youth is poor. These include Affordable Housing, Political Rights, Freedom of Expression, Primary School Enrollment, Media Censorship, Access to Online Governance, Mobile Telephone Subscriptions, and Equality of Political Power by Gender.



## 4. In a Nutshell

The ranking of Jordan in Youth Progress Index is poor and leaves a lot to be desired. It is clear that providing job opportunities and qualifying young people to enter the labor market are basic entry points to improve Jordan's ranking. In addition, obtaining decent job opportunities guarantees income, which in turn, can contribute to achieving progress in other fields.

With regard to political empowerment, it is necessary to facilitate the involvement of young people of both sexes in youth, student, and community activities in order to qualify them to enter the political arena. Coordination at all levels to ensure harmony and cumulative work is essential.



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