



JORDANIAN YOUTH GAIN ESSENTIAL LIFE SKILLS

"I don't simply want to be a consumer in my community, I want to be a contributor," exclaimed Manar, 21, from Southern Shouneh who recently graduated from Youth:Work Jordan's (YWJ) five-week life skills training, Passport to Success (PTS), as part of the program's "I Can" initiative through which youth receive an integrated package of life skills and service learning training. Manar sees the training as an opportunity for personal development that will enhance her prospects for the future.

Launched by the International Youth Foundation (IYF) in India and Mexico in 2004, the PTS curriculum was translated into 12 languages and successfully implemented in 10 countries, before being adapted to meet the needs of Jordanian youth. PTS equips young people with a range of practical skills to help them navigate the challenges of daily life, such as the ability to set and achieve goals, make decisions, solve problems, and effectively manage their time. One of the most important life skills emphasized through the curriculum is self-confidence, for through developing confidence young people are better able to maximize their potential, make healthy decisions, and connect meaningfully with others.

"I learned so much from my trainer, who spent hours teaching us how to control our emotions, think positively, and communicate effectively," says Manar. "Before, I would lash out in uncomfortable situations. Now, I take a deep breath and count to ten."

Manar is one of more than 2,300 youth to participate in life skills training through YWJ. Over the course of the five-year program, more than 9,000 youth will receive life skills instruction, with 100 trainers trained in how to deliver the PTS curriculum.

"As youth come to realize their potential, search for suitable role models, and understand their emotions, they begin to reflect on their communities," says YWJ Life Skills Specialist Mays Shakhaneh. "They differentiate between what is right and what is wrong, and start to break free from biases, perceptions, and negative energy. All of this helps build their self-efficacy and self-confidence, motivating them to participate and engage, gaining them

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YOUTH:WORK Jordan

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Youth:Work Jordan (YWJ) is a five-year initiative of the United States Agency for International Development, the International Youth Foundation, and the Jordanian Ministry of Social Development. Working in partnership with the public, private, and civil society sectors, YWJ seeks to create an enabling environment for disadvantaged youth through improving youth employability practices and policies, strengthening the capacity of youth-serving organizations to deliver effective services, and engaging youth in developing their communities.

www.youthworkjordan.org
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Skills for Life

Below are ten core life skills developed through Passport to Success:

- **Self-confidence:** The quality necessary to make informed choices, resist peer pressure, and develop a strong character.
- **Managing emotions:** The ability to deal with one's feelings and express them.
- **Responsibility:** The ability to manage one's own life, to be accountable to other people, and assume responsibility for things and people.
- **Respect:** Cultivating respect for oneself and others; cultural understanding.
- **Cooperation/Teamwork:** The ability to work in a group, including when to compromise and when to take the lead.
- **Communication/Interpersonal skills:** The ability to express oneself and communicate with peers, friends, and family, including people from different backgrounds.
- **Creative thinking:** The ability to generate new ideas about how to approach a situation or solve a problem.
- **Critical thinking:** The ability to think through issues and problems logically and come up with conclusions or ideas based on an understanding of what one wants to achieve.
- **Decision-making:** The ability to analyze options and solve problems.
- **Conflict management:** The ability to mediate conflicts among others and to manage one's own aggression or anger.

respect from their parents, employers, and community leaders."

"Life skills training forms the very foundation of YWJ's programming," adds Sarabecka Mullen, Director of Life Skills Programs for IYF. "With these essential skills, youth are far more likely to succeed in the workplace and other areas of their lives. Part of our goal is to develop a cadre of PTS trainers in Jordan to sustain the program's impact well into the future."

The PTS training takes place over five weeks, three times per week, four hours a day. The interactive lessons include diverse learning methodologies such as group work, role-playing, and youth case studies.

In addition to learning self-control and how to assume greater responsibility, the training taught 19-year-old Dahham from Sahaab how to problem solve and communicate more effectively. "The owner of the bakery where I work thought I would never be able to handle the night shift," he says. "Now I'm the only one he can trust with the responsibility."

Dahham has now enrolled in hospitality training through YWJ while continuing to work at the bakery during the evenings. He says he no longer hangs out with the group that coaxed him to quit school.

What produces powerful behavioral outcomes from the PTS training is the interplay between emotional development and skills acquisition, especially with the approach being complemented by other YWJ program components such as psychosocial support, youth-friendly services, and civic engagement activities.

Passport to Success is a critical first step in enabling hundreds of youth like Manar and Dahham to achieve their goals.

A Quantum Leap for *That Al-Nitaqain Association*



That Al-Nitaqain Association, a community-based organization (CBO) in Dair Allah, an isolated agricultural area in northwest Jordan, creates opportunities for the most vulnerable and neglected children, young people, and families in this underserved community. "We pledge to support them, to stand up for them, and cultivate their best qualities," says Um Mohammad, *That Al-Nitaqain's* President. As a YWJ implementing partner, *That Al-Nitaqain* is strengthening community-wide supports for young people, while improving youth-friendly services.

"YWJ's capacity-building program made us more aware of the needs and challenges facing young people and residents," says Um Mohammad. "Now, *That Al-Nitaqain* serves as a bridge between youth and their parents, and between youth and potential employers. Moreover, we have developed new communication channels with government officials that will facilitate our work in the future."

Through its affiliation with YWJ, *That Al-Nitaqain* strengthened its services. Each component of the program posed a unique challenge and provided new experiences for the CBO's staff, its beneficiaries, and parents. The addition of more youth-friendly services meant that the association needed to develop new activities, such as forming football teams and holding sporting and chess competitions. The volunteerism component also demanded that staff gain new knowledge and skills.

By creating grassroots opportunities for youth-friendly services and volunteer activities, such as an art school for girls and a voluntary day to clean farms, local youth began to pursue volunteer work as a habit, and not as a one-time-only activity.

Through *That Al-Nitaqain* — one of 30 CBOs YWJ is working with across Jordan — unemployed youth now have the opportunity to realize their dream of securing a job. More than 150 youth have received training through the program, with 45 having gained employment.



"Take my Hand" initiative graduates.

YWJ recently began work in several new communities in Jordan, where hundreds of youth are now benefiting from life skills development and volunteerism activities through the program's I Can/I Serve trainings.

MAFRAQ

IYF is working with the Queen Zein Al-Sharaf Charity Association in Mafraq, where 91 youth have completed life skills training, and 36 have engaged in volunteerism activities. Youth representatives from Mafraq — as well as Sahab and Southern Shouneh — attended a youth media committee meeting on September 28.

SAHAB

The Sahab Charity Development Association has provided more than 90 youth with life skills training, with youth completing more than 140 hours of volunteer activity. Nearly 30 youth participated in a mural painting activity at Sahab Cultural Center. To foster youth-friendly activities, a series of football matches was also held.



YWJ graduates in Southern Shouneh.

SOUTHERN SHOUNEH

More than 200 youth in Southern Shouneh have benefited from life skills training carried out through IYF's CBO partners: Sayyidat Al Jawasreh Association, Al Rawda Association, and Al Ta'awon Association. Participating youth have carried out more than 440 hours of volunteer work. In September, 35 parents attended a psychosocial event highlighting cultural constraints facing women related to enrolling in YWJ and how parents can best support youth in pursuing productive futures. A Youth Dialogue was also held that explored volunteerism, the role of education in promoting community engagement, and constraints.

Community Updates

EAST AMMAN | Jordan Career Education Foundation (JCEF)

JCEF has succeeded in training 1,076 youth from both Khreibat al-Souq and Al-Nuzha, where nearly half of graduates have found jobs. A tournament was held for more than a hundred YWJ program participants who traveled all the way from Irbid to Ma'an. The tournament offered an opportunity for team building, not only for youth, but for YWJ partners. JCEF also launched a computer lab and renovated an outdoor space at Khreibet Al Souq Association to provide recreational opportunities for youth.

JORDAN VALLEY | Jordan River Foundation (JRF)

Forty YWJ participants from the Jordan Valley, as well as Zarqa, graduated from the "Take my Hand" literacy initiative implemented by JRF at the Hashemite University in Zarqa. The initiative targets youth, ages 15-18, with low academic achievement and strengthens their Arabic, English, math, computer, and life skills. Finally, a capacity-building meeting was held with CBOs from Zarqa and the Jordan Valley to discuss success stories, sustainability plans, and the creation of career guidance and psychosocial units.

RUSSEIFEH | Jordan Hashemite Fund for Development (JOHUD)

Youth of Russeifeh continue to gain technical skills such as sewing, designing accessories, and producing schoolbags and handbags, while benefiting from training in IT, English, and entrepreneurship. Seventy youth have started their own small business.

In September, more than 780 young men and women participated in volunteerism activities, including the distribution of schoolbags to children, painting projects, and raising awareness among mothers on how to improve communication with their children.

The "I Love English" initiative, a one-week English teaching course, took place at Al-Khansa'a Juvenile Centre, a rehabilitation center for girls, ages 13-18. YWJ volunteers taught the girls English and encouraged them to apply what they learned in expressing how they feel.

There are currently 13 youth-friendly services in Russeifeh, including computer labs, parks and courts, with 334 youth having benefitted to date.

MA'AN | Jordan Hashemite Fund for Development (JOHUD)

Youth in Ma'an continue to expand their knowledge and skills through participating in trainings in basic life skills, information technology, jewelry design, electricity maintenance, plumbing, and entrepreneurship. In order to positively affect the community as a whole, youth were supported in carrying out volunteerism activities benefiting those with disabilities.

Events that enhance the relationship between the community, stakeholders, and CBOs are ongoing. One such event was an *Iftar* held by CBOs to share updates about their activities, progress, accomplishments, and future plans. YWJ volunteers also distributed 1,560 school bags, along with stationary, to school boys and girls in local neighborhoods.

ZARQA | Jordan River Foundation (JRF)

Program partners in Zarqa supported youth in starting their own businesses. On 28 July, 8 microfinance institutions gave an entrepreneurship workshop to more than 200 young males and females from Zarqa and the Jordan Valley. At the workshop, the youth brainstormed small businesses ideas, including an Internet café, a beauty salon, a computer maintenance store, and second hand clothing shop. To support the start up of such initiatives, the Arab Bank signed agreements with Khawla Bint Al Azwar Association and the Family Rehabilitation Center to provide microfinance loans for youth.

To encourage knowledge sharing, JRF held a field trip for all CBOs to Beit Jeez Association and the Ajloun Trade Center, where the participants shared their strategic plans and activities.

News & Events

Al Quds College Hosts Career Guidance Sessions

More than 350 youth and their parents from Sahab, Southern Shouneh, and Mafrag participated in career guidance sessions led by Al Quds College over three days. The youth were introduced to new and nontraditional technical and vocational training courses and career markets.

Through its partnership with Al Quds, YWJ will assist youth in competing for high quality, demand-driven training programs and college scholarships allowing them to specialize in areas of their interest.

TEDxDeadSea Salons Explore New Educational Methods

YWJ has joined TEDxDeadSea in carrying out salons in each of the program's nine communities to inspire youth and other key stakeholders and "share ideas worth spreading."

Two salons were held so far in Zarqa and Shouneh, attended by over 200 youth, parents, and teachers. Local and national community leaders from organizations such as *Zawayed* and the Challenger Team spoke about creativity and new ways of learning.

A unique attribute of the TEDxDeadSea Salons and the YWJ partnership are open Q&A sessions allowing youth and community members to inquire and challenge mainstream perceptions in the presence of expert speakers.

YWJ Participants Receive Culinary Internships from Moevenpick

Moevenpick Resort & Residence Aqaba is generously providing four sessions of a two-week culinary internship at its hotel for YWJ participants valued at \$50,000. So far, 12 youth have been chosen to participate in these trainings.

Expert chefs introduced the youth to key kitchen operations, including pastry-making, butchery, and cold and hot food preparation.

Youth Dialogues Facilitate Peer-to-Peer Learning

"Youth Dialogues" is a YWJ initiative that provides youth with an open space to discuss issues of importance to them and their communities in the presence of key decision makers. The first Youth Dialogue was held on September 15 in Shouneh with Ms. Lina Ajailat from 7iber Inc on the topic of volunteerism. More than 40 youth, their parents, and community members attended the talk, with YWJ panelists sharing their experiences.

The dialogue focused on defining volunteerism, the role of education in promoting volunteerism, barriers to civic engagement, and social issues that can be addressed and prevented through voluntary activities.

The sessions leave youth with new ideas, a renewed spirit, and greater initiative to give back to their community.



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