

YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT | برنامج تعزيز الريادة الشبابية

THE CHALLENGE

Although many young Palestinians are well-educated, healthy, and computer savvy, being a young Palestinian in the West Bank and Gaza also means facing significant obstacles, including an education system that does not align with labor market needs and widespread unemployment. Recent statistics reveal that a third of Palestinians between the ages of 15 and 29 are unemployed (compared to a 25 percent rate in the general labor market) and more than half of Palestinian families live in poverty. Youth's ability to successfully navigate these challenges requires resilience, courage, and optimism that their lives and circumstances will improve.

Fortunately, young people are being helped by Palestinian organizations with strong mandates to address youth needs and aspirations. Yet these organizations are often without the full resources, capacities, or support to take their activities to scale. As a result, young Palestinians and the organizations that strive to support them are unable to reach their full potential.

THE INITIATIVE

In response to these challenges, *Youth Entrepreneurship Development* (YED) collaborates with specialized Palestinian Youth-Serving Institutions (YSIs) in the West Bank to improve and expand employability and entrepreneurship opportunities for young Palestinians. YED, a five-year, USD \$15 million program implemented by the International Youth Foundation (IYF) with funding from the United States Agency for International Development's West Bank and Gaza Mission (USAID), partners with relevant public, private, and civil society institutions to implement high-quality, results-oriented, and sustainable initiatives that adapt international best practices to the Palestinian context to address the needs of Palestinian youth.

Strengthening Youth-Serving Organizations

Through YED, IYF strengthens Palestinian YSIs' capacity to provide quality training and applied learning opportunities for Palestinian youth to start an enterprise or enhance the skills they need to compete in the job market. To this end, YED has strengthened the capacity of 20 YSI partners and awarded 18 sub-grants, to 10 YSI partners to fund employability, entrepreneurship, and social entrepreneurship projects. IYF works in close collaboration with these YSI partners as they implement the grants, providing oversight and mentoring to YSI staff, supporting their development, and helping them to expand their institutional capacity.

Enhancing Employment and Entrepreneurship Education

During the first three years of the program, YED has provided high-quality, comprehensive work readiness skills training to more than 8,000 youth. Building on these achievements as YED enters its fourth year, the program is focusing on three strategic objectives:

- **Strengthening the capacity of career guidance units at local universities** to enable them to carry out credible career guidance and counseling support for students and alumni;
- **Expanding career guidance services to secondary school students** through School to Career in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE); and
- **Supporting service provision to marginalized and rural communities**, including meeting the employability needs of rural women.

Increasing Access to Practical Training

In addition to providing life skills training, YED also connects youth with real hands-on experience through the organization of internships, job fairs, business plan competitions, social enterprise plan competitions, and job shadowing opportunities. In the first three years, YED's work has brought more than 2,000 youth into direct contact with potential employment opportunities, including job fair experiences for 1,200 youth, internships for nearly 1,000 trainees, and business plan/social enterprise plan development training for more than 500 young people.

SELECTED ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

During its first three years of implementation, YED achieved the following results:

- **Strengthened significantly the capacity of 70% of YSI partners:** The training and support IYF provided to YSI partners supported 70% of YED's partners to implement youth employment and entrepreneurship projects that use best practices in effective programming. YED's work included one-on-one mentoring and support; training of trainers; and sharing of curricula, learning materials, and tools.
- **Introduced and supported the use of Passport to Success, Build Your Business, I-Serve, and Tamheed,** four youth training packages that IYF has adapted and made available to YSI partners to support the development and implementation of quality youth employability, entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, life skills and career guidance projects.
- **Provided training and career education services to more than 8,000 youth** to enhance their employability, entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, and life skills. YED training has reached 65% women, and facilitated mobile training and career guidance services to 30 marginalized communities throughout the West Bank.
- **Provided Career Guidance support services for more than 4,000 youth** through the provision of Tamheed career education materials, the work undertaken through the STEP Centers, and the School to Career activities conducted in partnership with the MoEHE, which reached more than 2,100 secondary school students with career education activities, including job shadowing opportunities and visits to universities and vocational training centers.
- **Supported 850 youth to find a job, start an enterprise, or decide to return to school.** Of the YED beneficiaries who found work, 45% were young women, which is better than double the national average female labor force participation rate.
- **Established five Support for Services and Training for Employment Participation (STEP) Centers:** Through YED, Sharek Youth Forum established five STEP Centers in Ramallah, Jerusalem, Hebron, and Nablus, which provided employability training and career guidance services to youth throughout the West Bank.
- **Expanded partnerships with private, public, and NGO sectors:** IYF actively engaged a number of new partners and alliances to support YED grants and initiatives. By the end of Year Three, YED had worked with more than 125 external partner organizations, including: private sector companies like Wataniya Mobile, PADICO Holdings, and National Insurance, public sector institutions, universities and vocational training centers, youth clubs, and MoEHE secondary schools.

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