



YWJ BRINGS NEW AND EXPANDED YOUTH-FRIENDLY SERVICES TO JORDAN'S POOREST NEIGHBORHOODS

Young people in the Al Nuzha neighborhood of East Amman now have a place to go in their free time to enjoy ping pong, pool, chess, and other leisure activities thanks to the efforts of 20 Youth:Work Jordan (YWJ) volunteers. The 20 youth recently spent a week cleaning, painting, and rehabilitating a youth center and adding a new library as part of YWJ's efforts to create more youth-friendly services and spaces in some of Jordan's poorest neighborhoods. The young volunteers not only benefitted from the experience themselves – gaining skills and connecting to their community – but made a lasting contribution to their peers.

"Since none of our youth read, we thought this was something we could change and contribute to," said Majd, 19, of the group's goals through the center. "One day I'd like to put my work in the library for others to read," added the aspiring poet.

The renovated community center is one of more than 50 new or improved youth-friendly spaces and services being spearheaded by YWJ throughout the Kingdom, each catering to the recreational and educational needs of youth. Types of services range from non-formal, after-school enrichment programs to health and parenting programs to programs emphasizing the arts and sporting activities.

Just two weeks prior to the opening of the library in Al Nuzha, a new IT center, or "Knowledge Station," was launched in Waqqas. The center not only addresses young people's needs for IT training and exposure, but provides youth with a safe place to meet and use their free time productively. To build the capacity of youth workers and volunteers involved in managing such programs, YWJ has produced a best practices manual and trained nearly 100 service providers in the delivery of youth-friendly services.

The creation of youth-friendly services is a key component of YWJ's efforts to create a healthy, safe, enabling environment for young people to gather, express themselves, and contribute

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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
www.youthworkjordan.org/ar

Youth-Friendly Services: Key Factors

Below are some of the factors youth programs need to incorporate to be considered “youth-friendly:”

- Services promote positive youth development and a holistic approach. In developing and delivering such services, emphasis is placed on how they support young people’s physical, cognitive, social, and moral development.
- Activities take into consideration the needs and abilities of young people at different stages of their development.
- Young people have the opportunity to participate in the research, design, and planning of program activities, as well as in the implementation, governance, and evaluation of such activities.
- Attention is given to ensuring equitable access to girls and boys, and to designing programs that address social and cultural barriers that prevent girls from participating.

serve youth and adults who are not part of the YWJ program, inviting them to take part in the development of their community and building valuable social capital. In Russeifeh, for example, parent committees now maintain the youth-friendly parks renovated by youth so that they remain safe places for young people and their families.

“The community’s citizens own this place,” said Barakat Al Habarneh, head of the Sons of Russeifeh, a local CBO responsible for implementing YWJ activities in the area. “We’re literally giving these committees the keys to these parks so that they are the ones taking care of their own communities.”

As Myassar Sadi, President of the Family Development Association (FDA), which oversaw the youth’s efforts in Al Nuzha, said, “We want this center to be the light that illuminates a positive path for the youth of our community.”

to their own development. The demand for such services was underscored during YWJ’s initial research which found that safe and youth-friendly services were almost nonexistent in target communities and that those that did exist were in dire need of repair and upgrading. Surveyed youth agreed that establishing community centers, public parks, libraries, and other youth-oriented facilities – and providing local activities for youth – “would enhance their sense of safety and improve the quality of their lives.”¹

The type of youth-friendly services needed in any given area are determined by YWJ’s implementing partners – community-based organizations (CBOs) that work in collaboration with local youth and YWJ’s coordinating NGOs. Through a collaborative community mapping process, young people and the CBOs then take the lead to identify suitable spaces and transform them into stimulating and inviting places for youth and community members to gather.

Through leading efforts to create youth-friendly spaces, young people become empowered, developing greater confidence in themselves and their ability to impact the world around them. Such spaces also

Finding Your Passion: A Former IT Trainee Now Trains His Peers



“I couldn’t keep waiting for success, so I decided to walk toward it.” This is how Malik starts his story. The 23-year-old didn’t complete his secondary education and spent the last several years hanging out, working at a shopping mall, and going to movies. “I wasn’t thinking about my future,” he adds.

Eventually, Malik started yearning for something more and applied to be part of the YWJ program in Zarqa, which is being implemented by *Khawla Bint El Azwar*, a local community-based organization. Once accepted, Malik noticed he felt differently. “When I heard the good news, I started to feel like I was creating a destination for my life. My confidence grew.”

Through the basic life skills training, Malik learned to manage stress and foster positive interpersonal relations, slowly recognizing his potential as a leader among his peers. Through the program, he volunteered to plant trees in the Prince Mohamed district and later painted walls at a school and helped to carry out a hygiene campaign.

It wasn’t until he enrolled in the program’s 22-day IT training that Malik realized his passion for computers. “From the moment I started the training, I wanted to be a trainer,” he recalls. Through the course, he learned about various software programs (Excel, PowerPoint, Word) and how to carry out basic web page design.

After earning high marks, he was hired by an IT service provider to serve as a computer trainer and role model for other youth. Confident and content in his new role, Malik is now earning 180JDs (the equivalent of \$253) per month.

¹ BUILDING ON HOPE: Findings from a Rapid Community Appraisal in Jordan, International Youth Foundation © 2009, page 23.



"Youth involvement in decision-making leads to better outcomes. By communicating their views and having them taken seriously, they build skills, develop self-confidence, and form ambitions."

- Haya Qadoumi, JOHUD/PBYRC's Youth:Work Jordan Project Manager



Youth volunteers in the Royal Village of Zarqa beautified a local park with their mural painting.

Community Updates

EAST AMMAN | Jordan Career Education Foundation (JCEF)

Over 900 youth have benefited from the YWJ program in East Amman, 300 of whom have secured jobs with 100-plus returning to school. In addition to the trainings offered through YWJ's local CBOs in Khreibet Al Souq and Al Nuzha, youth have opened youth clubs and libraries, as well as rehabilitated local parks and playgrounds. JCEF has trained over 300 youth through its Yalla Shabab (Let's Go Youth) Camp, which exposes young people to the concept of good citizenship, while engaging them in meaningful recreational activities and the creation of youth-friendly spaces.

JORDAN VALLEY | Jordan River Foundation (JRF)

More than 300 youth have participated in life skills and technical trainings in the Jordan Valley, with a new focus on entrepreneurship training. As part of YWJ's mandate to create a more youth-friendly environment, a one-of-a-kind football championship was held under the patronage of His Excellency Fawzi Makhadmeh, Mayor of Northern Ghour, for ten teams of YWJ youth.

A YWJ office and Knowledge Station were also established in Waqqas. Senator Nader Dheirat inaugurated the Knowledge Station, underscoring its goal to create an enabling environment for youth to practice cultural and volunteerism activities that serve the local community. The new YWJ office, set to become a local youth hub for community development, will work in close coordination with YWJ's local partner, the Waqqas Charity Association, and the Ministry of Labor to pursue YWJ's objectives.

RUSSEIFEH | Jordan Hashemite Fund for Development (JOHUD)

Youth of Russeifeh continue to learn, teach, overcome challenges, and change their communities, with more than 360 enrolled in YWJ activities. Program beneficiaries participated in IYF's Passport to Success life skills course and then received training and job placement within various technical fields, including car mechanics, carpentry, iron and electrical work, window installation, and home repair.

More and more program participants are sharing what they've learned with their peers and community members. After completing the British Council English training, a group of youth was inspired to initiate an English training program for young women detained at a juvenile detention center. Similarly, YWJ youth started the initiative "Mothers.com" to train ten of their mothers in IT skills after completing their own IT training. "Our Kids; Our Responsibility," another youth-driven and inspired project, was also established whereby street children who used to harass YWJ participants as they went for their trainings, now go to the CBO for daily academic tutoring led by female participants.

ZARQA | Jordan River Foundation (JRF)

To date, more than 400 youth have benefitted from YWJ trainings in Zarqa. Most recently, a series of entrepreneurship training courses were launched to prepare youth to become business owners. Participating youth are being linked to funding institutions such as the Development and Employment Fund.

Two major events promoted youth participation and community activism. The first, the unveiling of a giant mural painted by 20 youth in the Royal Village of Zarqa, cast a spotlight on young people's creativity and contributions. The second, a cross-country race, rallied 1,400 youth in an effort to introduce young people from different YWJ communities to each other. Youth carried banners declaring, "Yes to exercise, no to drugs."

IRBID | Jordan Career Education Foundation (JCEF)

Nearly 250 youth have participated in the program in Irbid, receiving training in cosmetics/cosmetology and entrepreneurship. As part of YWJ's civic engagement focus, program participants rehabilitated Carmel Park.

News & Events

YWJ Expands to Three New Communities

YWJ announced the launch of the "I Can" phase of its program in three new communities: Sahaab, Southern Shouneh, and Mafraq, where it will promote economic opportunities and an enabling environment for marginalized youth.

Partnering with local community-based organizations (CBOs), the program will develop and implement high quality, results-oriented, and sustainable livelihood initiatives in the new communities. YWJ will continue building the capacity of its local partners to deliver programs related to career guidance, life skills, psycho-social enablement, youth-friendly services, youth engagement, and volunteerism.

As a result, it is expected that 3,600 youth will have the opportunity to develop high quality employment-related skills and participate in civic engagement activities. Of these, more than 2,000 youth will be employed within the first six months, 360 will receive entrepreneurship training, and more than 100 will return to the educational system.

YWJ Participates in "Jordan Youth Forum 2011"

YWJ played an active role in the Jordan Youth Forum 2011. Held on June 14-15 under the patronage of His Majesty King Abdullah II, the conference initiated a dialogue between national stakeholders from the public, private, and civil society sectors and youth, ages 18-40, giving young people a chance to contribute to and invest in a better Jordan. Over 1,100 individuals attended the event, where youth provided recommendations for alleviating poverty, enhancing economic opportunities, eliminating corruption, and strengthening political engagement in Jordan.

Ten of YWJ's youth took part in the national event. YWJ also played a key role in the lead-up to the Forum, serving on both its Preparatory and Advisory Committees. Mays Shakanbeh, YWJ's Life Skills Specialist, was one of two Masters of Ceremony and served as a spokesperson for the event on Jordanian national television. Rana Al Turk, YWJ Country Director, moderated two break-out sessions on "Poverty and Living Standards." Participants cited the need for greater public and private sector investment in marginalized communities, engaging non-governmental organizations more actively in development, and tailoring development projects to more effectively address the real needs of communities.

YWJ is part of a task force that will work with other stakeholders to present, advocate, and implement the Forum's recommendations at the national level.

YWJ Initiates Series of Policy Workshops

YWJ kicked off a series of policy workshops to foster dialogue and collaboration around key policies impacting the nation's youth. "The launch of YWJ's policy initiative is an important step in uniting various national and international efforts to identify the real needs of youth in Jordan and raise their concerns to local leaders and decision makers," said Rana Al Turk, YWJ Country Director.

YWJ's inaugural policy workshop, held on May 30, engaged stakeholders in identifying their interests and positions and analyzing and prioritizing key issues to be further explored. Policy task forces were formed and will meet regularly to pursue the three-year youth policy plan that includes capacity-building trainings for stakeholders on public policy principles and advocacy tools, preparing a three-year National Agenda for youth development, and developing policy position papers that include recommended interventions.



A youth in Shouneh registers to participate in YWJ as part of the program's expansion.



YWJ Life Skills Specialist Mays Shakanbeh addresses participants at the Jordan Youth Forum 2011.



Participants in YWJ's inaugural policy workshop.

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