

# YOUTH:WORK

## Jordan



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# Jordan



The Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) develops and implements comprehensive social policy that strengthens Jordan's communities, protects families and children, and enhances the quality of life for its citizens. The Ministry seeks to build public/private partnerships in the field of social services; encourages volunteerism; provides effective family and childhood services; and improves the economic and social status of rural families. MoSD activities include implementation of social and rehabilitation services for adolescents, the elderly, and the disabled. [www.mosd.gov.jo](http://www.mosd.gov.jo)

Youth:Work Jordan is part of the global Youth:Work initiative, where IYF works with USAID to deliver comprehensive employment and entrepreneurship programs to young people worldwide, including the Jordanian youth pictured below. Part of this effort is to identify and exchange best practices around youth employment globally.



## THE CHALLENGE:

Almost one third of Jordanian youth are unemployed. In some areas more than half drop out before completing school. Some have given up hope of a better life.

Yet, like young people everywhere, Jordanian youth have enormous potential to shape their futures and be productive members of society.

## Our Response: Youth:Work Jordan

Youth:Work Jordan (YWJ) is a community-based five-year initiative that seeks to improve the life and job prospects of highly vulnerable youth. Through a unique alliance, the International Youth Foundation is partnering with USAID, the Jordanian Ministry of Social Development, and well respected national and local organizations across Jordan to improve and expand community-based social services, with an overarching focus on promoting the employability and civic engagement of Jordan's youth.

## What do we seek to accomplish?

Youth:Work Jordan has four key goals:

- **Provide greater access** to life, employability and entrepreneurship skills through training, internships, and job placement.
- **Deliver youth-friendly services** that effectively respond to young people's needs and are relevant to their lives.
- **Support young people** in improving their own communities through small scale infrastructure and rehabilitation projects.
- **Generate knowledge** and lessons learned around youth employment programming that can be used to improve policy development and promote systemic change; scale up successful models; and be shared with the global community.



As a result of these activities, YWJ participants will be better prepared to join the job market, have successful careers, and become active citizens in their communities.

### Who do we benefit?

Youth:Work Jordan aims to improve the job and livelihood prospects of some of the most marginalized and underserved youth in the country between the ages of 15 and 24.

Initial neighborhoods were selected for YWJ activities based on high levels of poverty and unemployment; social factors such as violence and school drop out rates; population density; and representation of urban and rural areas. To develop programs that fully address the unique challenges of youth in each community, YWJ conducted in-depth surveys of community members, including youth, and collected information on critical challenges. This “rapid community assessment” (RCA) painted a stark picture of young people’s unmet needs.

In YWJ-targeted areas, families often cannot afford to keep their children in school, public services either do not exist or are inadequate,

and youth have few opportunities to improve their skills or become civically engaged. Young people identified smoking, alcohol, and drug abuse; community and domestic violence; and crime as negatively impacting their lives. Lack of youth services leave young people frustrated and far more likely to engage in risky behaviors.

In general, the RCA found that compared to the national average, young people in YWJ-targeted neighborhoods are more likely to live below the poverty level, drop out of school, and be unemployed. The study also reports that very few youth in these neighborhood are involved in sports or recreational activities, and even fewer are civically engaged. Among other RCA findings: youth in YWJ neighborhoods are willing to volunteer if opportunities exist; young people are aware of the dangers of unhealthy

For the first two years (2010–2012), YWJ is prioritizing programs in twelve selected neighborhoods in East Amman, Zarqa, Irbid, Russeifa, Aghwar Al Shamalie and Ma'an, which aim to improve youth services and empower community residents.



behaviors; and the private sector is the largest youth employer.

### How we work:

YWJ is designed to promote community-driven collaboration while ensuring a wide range of stakeholders the opportunity to contribute. Working together, government ministries, local experts in the field, community groups and young people identify best practices, provide critical advice and technical assistance, and offer overall vision and guidance. Young people are considered the primary drivers, helping to design, implement and evaluate YWJ initiatives.

To fully respond to community needs and build on existing assets, YWJ's Community Assessments not only identified challenges, but also intensively studied local labor market demands, identified economic opportunities for young people, and mapped out specific youth-serving institutions. This knowledge became the basis for developing Community Action Plans, which prioritize needs, propose interventions, and identify approaches best suited to each neighborhood.

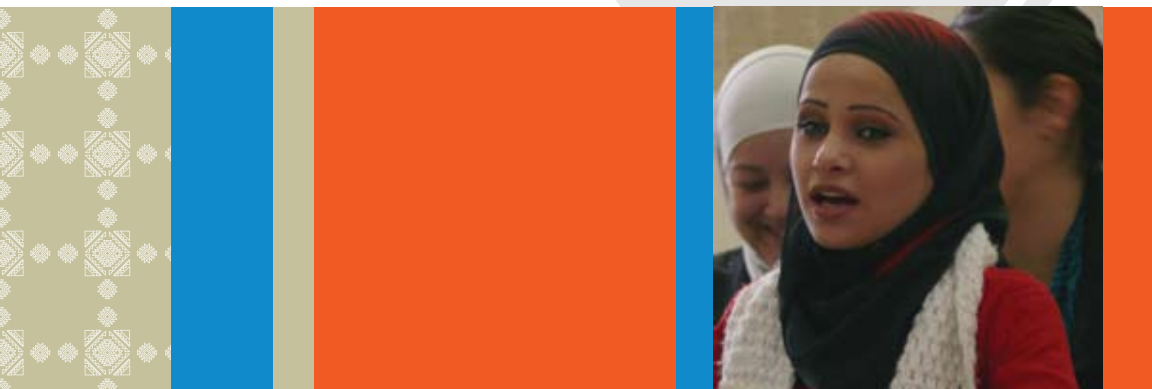
Four Coordination NGOs have been competitively selected to oversee the implementation of the Community Action Plans and engage community partners and young people in YWJ efforts. They include the Jordan River Foundation, Jordan Career Education Foundation, Al-Farouq Orphans Welfare Society, and Jordan Hashemite Fund for Human Development.

### What are our key strategies?

YWJ is outcomes-driven. We envision that by participating in YWJ-supported programs, young people in target neighborhoods, will:

- Be employed in quality jobs in key growth sectors that provide them needed income; successfully start a new business; or return to school.
- Utilize improved and “youth-friendly” services that support them in leading healthier lifestyles, becoming more civically engaged, and feeling safe in their surroundings.
- Be active citizens working to improve their own communities while developing their skills for the future.

Achieving these outcomes requires an innovative approach that builds on best practices in Jordan and worldwide in addressing challenges affecting youth. These include:



**Promote Local Ownership.** Fostering community ownership and empowering young people is at the heart of YWJ's implementation strategy. YWJ nurtures the growth of community-based alliances, which include governmental, religious and social organizations, the private sector, and young people. These partnerships promote innovation and deepen local support.

**Deliver a Comprehensive Approach.** YWJ provides youth with a wide range of skills as well as learning experiences that help them get a decent job. Participants also develop leadership skills, learn to lead healthy lifestyles, and are empowered in their communities.

**Build Local Capacity.** YWJ increases the capacity of local organizations and government field offices to meet the employability needs of Jordanian youth, with an emphasis on developing more youth-friendly services. Activities in-

clude strengthening organizations' financial and management operations, improving the quality and relevance of projects, and engaging youth in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of programs.

**Maximize Impact.** YWJ promotes coordination, collaboration, and synergy among Jordan's organizations and ministries committed to improving job preparedness. As a result, policy makers are able to reduce duplication, fill gaps in service delivery, and maximize resources.

### Get Involved

YWJ has chosen to work in some of Jordan's toughest neighborhoods in order to improve the lives and prospects of the country's most vulnerable youth. Our ability to leverage in-kind support and financial resources and build multi-sector alliances is critical to our success. We invite you to join us in this unique and powerful effort to expand opportunity and create hope within Jordan's next generation.

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The International Youth Foundation (IYF) invests in the extraordinary potential of young people. Founded in 1990, IYF builds and maintains a worldwide community of businesses, governments, and civil-society organizations committed to empowering youth to be healthy, productive, and engaged citizens. IYF programs are catalysts of change that help young people obtain a quality education, gain employability skills, make healthy choices, and improve their communities. To learn more, visit [www.iyfnet.org](http://www.iyfnet.org).