

Case Study

IYF'S LIFE SKILLS CURRICULUM ADOPTED IN ALL VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTERS ACROSS GAZA



IN PALESTINE, YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IS A REAL CHALLENGE

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), as of late 2019, the unemployment rate among young people (18-29 years of age) in Palestine reached 38 percent (31 percent among males and 63 percent among females). The majority of unemployed youth, 63 percent, are from the Gaza Strip compared to 23 percent from the West Bank.

Data also showed that the higher unemployment rate was among youth with intermediate diplomas and higher, where this percentage reached 52 percent (35 percent male and 68 percent female).

According to the "Employment Perception Assessment" conducted by the Center of Youth for Economic Development (CYEE), one of the main reasons for this gap is that young people are not properly equipped with the right skills to meet the demands of the labor market. The current educational curricula do not provide youth with key skills to succeed in terms of general, technical, and vocational education.

PROGRAM:

EquipYouth

FOCUS:

Life Skills, Career
Guidance,
Employability,
Gender Awareness

LOCATION:

West Bank and
Gaza, Palestine

PARTNER:

The Center of Youth
for Economic
Development (CYEE)

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TOGETHER WITH OUR PARTNERS, IYF IS FINDING SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS TO MAKE AN IMPACT

The *EquipYouth* program addresses the shortfall in critical employability and career training services by bridging the gap between the training provided by the Vocational Training Centers (VTCs) and the requirements of the labor market.

Since 2015, *EquipYouth* has worked with the Ministry of Labor to **increase the capacity of VTCs** through the **integration of life skills and career guidance** as part of the VTC curricula. By **equipping teachers and VTC staff members** with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitude, they can better **provide their students with the soft and practical skills** needed to more successfully transition from school to work and compete in the labor market.

WHEN FACED WITH OBSTACLES LIKE COVID-19, OUR TEAMS INNOVATE QUICKLY AND EFFECTIVELY

EquipYouth works with VTCs in the West Bank and Gaza, focusing on implementing a series of Training of Trainers (TOT) for Passport to Success® life skills (PTS) and My Career My Future (MCMF) Career Guidance Training for partner VTC teachers.

Due to the political situation, permitting restrictions and obstacles, and the state of emergency in Gaza due to COVID-19, the project team and curriculum master trainers were not able to physically travel to Gaza to participate in the TOT and other project activities in-person. However, despite these challenges, the team persisted and innovated, using distance learning technology as a tool to reach Gaza.

During the summer of 2020, *EquipYouth* developed and implemented the first blended-format PTS TOT for a group of 25 teachers from five partner VTCs in Gaza. The six-day course combined remote training via Zoom with two small in-person groups placed in Gaza to enable social distancing and trainee access to digital technology. The blended format required engagement of experienced facilitators from Gaza who assisted the in-person activities and supported the master trainers to connect virtually with the groups. The role of the facilitators was critical and important, so they were provided an extensive orientation to prepare them for success.

The team in Gaza also took into account the special circumstances related to electricity and technology in Gaza. To address this issue, they selected a meeting location with excellent internet connection, a power generator,



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equipment (including cameras, microphones, and projectors) and hired information technology support at all training days.

SUCCESS SURPASSED EXPECTATIONS AND WILL BE BUILT UPON GOING FORWARD

None of the partners believed that this first remote training would succeed with all the challenges and obstacles, but at the end of the TOT all partners agreed it was successful and effective.

In fact, the *EquipYouth* Palestine team received several requests from the administration departments of Gaza VTCs for a second opportunity to train additional teachers. They remarked that the Gaza TOT was the first time the teachers had experienced life skills training, and the VTCs wanted to expand this opportunity to even more teachers so they too can deliver improved services to young people.

The Gaza VTCs administration officially adopted and integrated Passport to Success and My Career, My Future as a comprehensive course for life skills and career guidance into their program plans, naming the course “Professional Culture.” Professional Culture will be given to all students of the Gaza VTCs, and will be considered a requirement for graduation.

CONCLUSION

IYF believes in the importance of the PTS and MCMF curriculum adoption by the VTCs administration. Through this course, *EquipYouth* has the potential to reach tens of thousands of young women and men after the program ends in 2021. IYF sees this accomplishment as an excellent example of transformative systems change, especially in Gaza where the need for life skills training among young people is increasing as a result of the pandemic. During COVID-19, Gaza youth are experiencing higher depression and suicide rates, but life skills—like those taught through participation Passport to Success—can help foster hope and resiliency while equipping youth with the relevant skills they need to succeed in life and to be active, competitive contributors in the labor market.

CONTACT

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