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YED Provides Career Education Support to 2,000 Secondary School Students

The *Youth Entrepreneurship Development (YED)* program is partnering with USAID, the Palestine Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE), the Community Development and Continuing Education Institute (CDCE-I) at Palestine Ahliya University College, the League of Vocational Education and Training Institutions (TVET League), and Agility Consulting to enhance the quality of career education services offered to secondary school students in the West Bank through the School to Career program.



School to Career builds on work done by Save the Children, in cooperation with the MoEHE, through a previous USAID-funded project implemented in 2011, which developed career guidance materials for students in grades 8 to 10. The second phase of the project, launched in 2013, focused on the development of materials for 11th and 12th graders. TVET League and CDCE-I provided career education support and activities to more than 2,000 secondary students and organized supplementary activities, including job shadowing, parents' workshops, field visits and career days, and one-on-one counseling using the *Tamheed* program, to provide experiential learning opportunities for youth to explore potential career paths.

Through the program, MoEHE staff, including school counselors and district supervisors, were trained to provide the career education materials and monitor schools' delivery of related content in classrooms. School to Career partners also facilitated the printing of 40,000 workbooks and uploaded the materials on the MoEHE's website for counselors' and students' on-going access. Overall, this work will support the MoEHE in making the School to Career materials available to more students over a longer period of time, with the expanded ability to track their usage and ensure that students receive quality career advice.

In May, the MoEHE, IYF, TVET League, and CDCE-I hosted a closing ceremony for the current School to Career work, turning these materials over to the Ministry of Education for use in public schools throughout the West Bank. Said Ms. Rima Kilany, MoEHE Counseling and Special Education Office Director General, "This program is foremost about developing the student's awareness and understanding of the labor market so they can make informed decisions about careers that fit their abilities and the community where they live."

USAID Mission Director Mike Harvey expressed the agency's appreciation of the Ministry of Education and the fact that the School to Career program is now a Palestinian-owned and implemented activity. He emphasized the importance of assessing what is working well, and what needs to be refined, to make the initiative a success story for every Palestinian student.

Dr. Mohammed AIMbaid, YED's Chief of Party, expressed YED's commitment to working with the MoEHE, stating: "We view the partnership with the Ministry of Education as critical to IYF's employability and entrepreneurship efforts in Palestine; it supports the scaling of our work with youth, and adds value to our efforts to prepare youth for a brighter future."

In the coming year, YED plans to continue working with the MoEHE and other partner institutions to further develop the materials and systems that support the School to Career program's quality implementation in schools.

The **Youth Entrepreneurship Development Program (YED)**, implemented by the International Youth Foundation (IYF) in partnership with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission to the West Bank and Gaza, is a four-year, US\$15 million youth-focused program in West Bank and Gaza.

YED's goal is to improve employability and entrepreneurship opportunities for young Palestinians, ages 14 to 29, by partnering with public, private, and civil society sector institutions. Through strong partnerships with local Palestinian youth-serving institutions (YSIs), the program supports high-quality, results-oriented, and sustainable livelihood initiatives to address the needs of Palestinian youth.

Want to know more?

For more information about IYF's programs go to www.iyfnet.org.

IYF President Visits West Bank and Meets with YED Partners

At the end of May, IYF's President and CEO William Reese, visited the West Bank



to see and experience firsthand YED's work with Palestinian youth. During his stay, Mr. Reese attended a graduation ceremony for youth trained in employability skills through Sharek's newly-established Services and Training for Employment Program (STEP) training center at Al Quds University's Abu Dis center. During the event, he dialogued informally with training participants to gain a richer understanding of their experiences in transitioning from the education system to the labor market.



Mr. Reese also met with representatives of YED's partner organizations to discuss their YED-funded projects and learn more about their efforts to address the high rate of unemployment among Palestinian youth. These partners stressed the importance of applied learning activities, such as internships, and career guidance education programs, to inform young people about available jobs and promising sectors of the labor market.

Finally, Mr. Reese met with representatives of the Ministries of Labor and Education and the Palestinian General Personnel Office to explore how YED can best coordinate and engage with public sector entities. These institutions welcomed the opportunity to collaborate with IYF and agreed to explore potential areas for cooperation.

YED Examines Successes and Plans for the Future

As the YED program reaches the halfway point of its implementation, IYF contracted an independent evaluation firm to examine the program's progress to date and document lessons learned to inform the remaining two years of its work. Overall, the evaluation confirmed the ongoing need for programs like YED to build the employability and entrepreneurship skills of young Palestinians, stating: "the situation of youth employment in Palestine demonstrates the need for programs like YED, aimed at building institutional capacity and supporting young people."

The evaluation recommended expanding the following three areas of YED's work based on results to date:

- **Establishing and supporting career guidance units at universities**, building on YED's success in supporting the establishment of the Center for Entrepreneurship and Career Development at Palestine Polytechnic University;
- **Providing career counseling to secondary students in partnership with the Ministry of Education**, expanding the work that YED partners have done through the School to Career program in 2013 to reach more youth and expand the Ministry's capacity to manage the program; and
- **Reaching youth in marginalized communities** through initiatives like Sharek's mobile outreach program, which is already underway in communities that lack access to this type of training.

Based on this feedback, IYF is working with USAID to develop a strategy for the program that builds on the successes of the first two years and offers more opportunities for Palestinian youth to benefit from the work of IYF and YED partner organizations.

YED Programs Provide Ongoing Support for New Enterprises

"I think starting my own business will help me develop myself and make me independent," said Hamza Omari, a 23-year old graduate in computer science from the Arab American University in Jenin. "PICI's training gave me the necessary courage to start; my dream is to have a big IT company." Hamza is one of the young people whose entrepreneurial dreams are being supported through YED grants to youth-serving institutions. Hamza's start-up company, an online virtual tour of Jerusalem's Old City, is one of two businesses awarded a 6-month incubation and support services contract with YED's partner organization, PICI.



Through such programs, YED supports aspiring young entrepreneurs by providing training and applied learning opportunities for young Palestinians to develop their business skills. Since 2011, YED's partners have supported more than 250 youth in developing businesses, are incubating six new businesses, and are providing pre-incubation assistance to seven more proposals. By the end of 2013, YED-funded projects plan to support 14 new business start-ups with mentoring and technical assistance related to business registration, product development and marketing, and financial planning.

Aya Jarrar, a 23-year old from Arraba village with a degree in Industrial Engineering from An Najah National University, also benefited from YED support. Her new business start-up, an online database of medical centers, clinics, hospitals, and pharmacies throughout the West Bank, is being incubated through a YED grant to Leaders Organization. Aya sees entrepreneurship as an opportunity to fulfill her professional goals while also serving her community. "My dream is to have my own business in which I can be creative while reducing unemployment by hiring new employees," she says.

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