



■ Youth leaders from Zarqa speak with local shop owners to support their efforts to clean up the streets.

## LEADING THE WAY TO IMPROVE THEIR COMMUNITIES

### A Day with Youth:Work Jordan Youth

"I like to work. I like to get experience. Youth:Work Jordan (YWJ) allows me to do that," said Dalia, a 23-year-old young woman from the Ma'soom neighborhood in Zarqa. Dalia is one of hundreds of youth who will be taking the personal initiative to improve their futures as well as their community as trainings and other programming start in earnest in six of YWJ's twelve targeted neighborhoods.

Youth are taking classes in life skills, business English, and IT skills, and are beginning to plan for how they can empower and revitalize their own communities. Excitement is brewing as more and more young people and their families hear about the program and learn how they can get involved.

A few of us from YWJ's Program Management Unit (PMU) joined several young people for the day in Ma'soom to see firsthand how the program has started to change these YWJ communities and the young people who live in them. We began at the local training center, where we sat with some young people who were taking a break from their business English class.

"[Before YWJ] I was always just going back and forth between my home and the net [internet café]," said Jamil, a 16-year-old Jordanian who left school when he was in 6th grade. "I wanted to join YWJ so it could help me get back into school, and then eventually get a job."

"I didn't want to join at first," said Tareq, 19. "But after sitting in the first two classes [for life skills], I really liked it. It helped me have confidence in myself, and showed me how to deal with others."

These young people, most of whom heard about the program through their local community-based organizations (CBOs), also discussed how the YWJ training differs from

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## 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.

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what they experienced in the past. “You wouldn’t think that we’d be able to spend hours in a classroom,” Dalia said. “But we’re not bored. We’re happy.” Hassan, 16, agreed, saying, “It’s better than school. Here we have training but we also do something.” The trainings have given them a second chance to reach their aspirations. “I’m taking the English [training] because it was the one subject that stopped me from passing my Tawjihi [Jordan’s equivalency of a high school diploma],” said 17-year-old Lina. Now, these aspiring technicians, secretaries, and beauticians — who faced so many challenges — are hoping for a brighter future.

Leaving the business English class, we joined some of the community’s youth leaders, many of whom were also just wrapping up their courses for the day. Walking down the road, they were in deep conversation about how to plan out the volunteer activity they wanted to carry out in the next few days. They were exploring different ways to launch their community clean-up project — since street trash was the main issue they wanted to address. Stopping outside the local school, they all agreed to come back in two days to clean up the street — and to install new trash baskets to discourage littering.

To gain support from the community, they decided to inform local shop owners about their plans and encourage them to participate as well. The group split into two teams, each taking one side of the street, and started talking to shop owners one by one.

“Excuse me,” said 17-year-old Amira, as the rest of the group gathered around her. “We’re from the Youth:Work Jordan program, and we’re starting a project to clean up this street, and we’d like you to join us. Do you have anyone who currently cleans your storefront every day?”

The shop owners often paused for a second, trying to grasp why ten young people were standing outside his door. The responses were mixed. “Why, yes, my staff cleans our portion of the street every morning,” some would say, while others responded, “There’s no one to do it; we wish there were youth like you who could do it.”

Amira then continued. “Well, we’re planning to come in two days to clean up the street, and we’d like to ask your help in keeping it clean. It would help the whole community and help us take care of our own environment.” The shop owners then asked more about the program, its goals, and how their children, nieces and nephews, or neighbors could get involved.

Even as the young people walked through the neighborhood, they noticed how some of the store owners started sweeping their area right after we left. Others offered juice for the youth to refresh themselves as they continued down the street.

“The way we’re doing it, we’re showing community members how YWJ is not only benefitting the youth through the program, but also benefiting them, and that way we’ll get more and more people to join us,” said Rami Aqqad, with the Challenger Team, a Jordanian organization that has been working alongside the youth in their civic engagement activities. Even as the youth were leaving, a group of young women approached the team leader, asking if they could be part of the program. The team leader took down their names and contact information, and let them know about the many different ways to get involved in YWJ.

Over the coming months, these youth-led activities — and the excitement they are generating — will be taking place in all of YWJ’s targeted neighborhoods across Jordan. YWJ hopes to engage over 4,000 youth in employability training programs and civic engagement activities by the end of 2011. As Her Excellency the Minister of Social Development Hala Lattouf has said, “One unique element of YWJ’s comprehensive approach is that civic engagement goes hand in hand with workforce development. When young people volunteer, they accomplish more than improving conditions around them; they build critical life skills that are needed for success in the workplace.” These projects are distinguished by being comprehensive, she said. “We consider the power of the youth and their abilities to make positive change.”

## Youth Profile

Ahlam, a 21-year-old female from Khreibt Al Souq neighborhood in East Amman had no motivation to wake up in the morning and interact with the outside world or educate herself. Having dropped out of high school, she lacked the confidence to take on a steady job.

After learning about the YWJ Program from Khreibt Al Souq Women Society, Ahlam was encouraged to volunteer in the society to recruit other youth. Through her volunteer work at the Society she heard about the workplace success training delivered by JCEF and signed up for it.

Today Ahlam is a full-time employee at the same Society working as an administrative assistant for the YWJ Program in coordination with the Jordan Career Education Foundation. “Today I feel much more confident, and I feel that there is nothing that I cannot do and achieve.”



■ Ahlam talks about her successes with YWJ at East Amman’s Ramadan Iftar event.



## Community Updates: Key Trainings Begin as CBOs Finalize Projects

### EAST AMMAN

#### *Jordan Career Education Foundation (JCEF)*

Two CBOs — the Charity Families Development Association in Al Nuzha and Khreibet El-Souq Women Association in Khreibet El-Souq — signed sub-grant agreements with JCEF to provide training in retail, welding, event management, and other skills. JCEF itself has begun to offer technical training in heating ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) and started a film club for the youth of East Amman. Participating youth also receive life, IT, and English language skills in tandem with technical skills training. Three additional CBOs have proposed a number of technical training and employment activities, including hospitality and tourism, that address local market demands in communities across East Amman. A second round of solicitation for sub-grants was launched in early September for interested CBOs in the community.

### IRBID

#### *Jordan Career Education Foundation*

The Community Action Plan for Irbid was finalized in September, and it is anticipated that CBO proposals will be received in October. Training activities will meet the employment needs of emerging sectors such as tourism and hospitality, sales, and the maintenance of mobile phones. Youth will also be trained to start their own businesses to meet high demand in the production of furniture, carpentry and cleaning detergents. The program is integrating life, IT and English language skills training into the technical training courses.

### JORDAN VALLEY

#### *Jordan River Foundation (JRF)*

Grant agreements have been signed with three CBOs (Moussa Al Saket, Al Balawneh Charitable Society, and That Al Netaken Charitable Society). JRF is working with each of them to help them refine their project plans for proposed training activities for youth in the following fields: computer maintenance, air conditioning maintenance, secretarial work, pastry making, tailoring and produce grading. In



■ Young men from East Amman participate in YWJ-supported classroom and on-the-job training for HVAC technicians through LG.

addition, IT, English and life skills training have begun for YWJ beneficiaries in the Jordan Valley. YWJ expects to begin a second round of solicitations for CBO grant applications in the near future.

### MA'AN AND RUSSEIFEH

#### *Jordan Hashemite Fund for Development (JOHUD)*

During the summer, a training of trainers (TOT) for 30 youth facilitators and community leaders, as well as CBO coordinators was conducted for JOHUD's life skills trainers in Ma'an and Russeifeh. After the TOT, life skills training commenced in Russeifeh for 50 youth. To gather momentum and build support for JOHUD's activities at the community level, an Iftar was conducted in both Ma'an and Russeifeh attracting approximately 120 people in each community. JOHUD is

currently finalizing proposals and implementation activities with the 8 finalist CBOs in Ma'an and Russeifeh.

### ZARQA

#### *Jordan River Foundation (JRF)*

Grant agreements have been signed with three CBOs (Khawla Bint Al Azwar Charitable Society, Abna' Al Watan Charitable Society, and Sua'a' Charitable Society). JRF is working with each of them to help refine their project plans for proposed training activities for youth in the following fields: shipping and customs clearance, mobile maintenance, mechanical trades, cosmetology, cooking and hospitality arts. In addition, IT, English and life skills language training have begun for YWJ beneficiaries in Zarqa. YWJ expects to soon start a second round solicitation for CBO grant applications.

## News & Events

**July – August: Project Management Course Offered:** As part of the capacity building program for MoSD staff, the YWJ Program Management Unit organized a project management training course for MoSD field directorates, focal points and seconded staff in co-ordination with the Kafaaf Institute. Upon completion of the one week training course, a graduation ceremony was held under the patronage of the Minister of Social Development Her Excellency Mrs. Hala Lattouf (pictured below left, with Rana Al Turk, Director of YWJ), where participants received their certificates.

**July – September: Agreements Signed with Key Training Service Providers:** IYF and the CNGOs have signed agreements with service providers to train young people in key skills as part of the YWJ program. The British Council will train young people in all six communities in general and business English. The Challenger Team has started training youth in the communities for civic engagement and volunteerism activities. Shabakat Al Urdon is providing IT training to youth in the Jordan Valley and Zarqa, while the Talal Abu Ghazaleh group is providing job training to youth in East Amman.

**August – September: Ramadan Iftars Engage Youth:** In the spirit of the holy month, YWJ organized a series of Iftar dinners across the kingdom to share success stories and achievements as a result of the program. During these events, youth engaged in interactive activities that encouraged team work and cooperation — skills that would help them strengthen their efforts in implementing their YWJ projects on the ground.

**September: YWJ Stakeholders Hold Technical Workshop:** YWJ organized a two-day training workshop for its strategic partners including the Coordinating NGO partners (CNGOs), eight granted Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), and field directors and focal points of the Ministry of Social Development field directorates. The YWJ PMU team and technical specialists introduced the upcoming elements, protocols and special considerations of the different technical areas for the implementation phase. The presentations and training sessions were followed by working groups to develop action plans for upcoming activities through the end of 2010.

**September: Agreements Finalized with CBOs:** YWJ celebrated the signing of grant agreements between the CNGO partners and 9 CBOs in Amman, Zarqa and Jordan Valley. The event was held under the Patronage of Her Excellency Ms. Hala Lattouf Minister of Social Development and attended by USAID Mission Director in Jordan Mr. Jay Knott. The CNGO partners and CBOs jointly presented their plans to improve the livelihoods of out-of-school and unemployed youth by training them and placing them in the retail, hospitality and manufacturing sector and supporting them in starting new businesses.

**September: Jordan's USAID Mission Director Visits YWJ Communities:** YWJ and partner CNGOs (JRF and JCEF) organized a field visit to Zarqa and Nuzha for USAID Mission Director Jay Knott (top right), who was accompanied by representatives from the Ministry of Social Development, local associations, and representatives from the different service providers delivering the training programs such as the British Council, Tala Abu Ghazaleh Group and Shabakat Al Urdon. They observed the delivery of life skills and business English training courses to YWJ youth and engaged the young people in discussions about the benefits of the training program and their future plans and aspirations.

**October: USAID's George Laudato Visits YWJ Targeted Communities:** USAID Special Assistant to the Administrator for the Middle East, George Laudato, visited a number of YWJ targeted communities to take a closer look at the program's achievements as well as the different components of the initiative.



## Upcoming Activities

- **December: Private Sector Partnership Ceremony to be Held:** YWJ will organize a partnership ceremony in Amman for some of the most prominent private sector companies in Jordan. The event aims to introduce representatives from the business community to YWJ's objectives and showcase the major milestones and targets achieved to date. In addition, participants will explore potential new partnership opportunities.