



ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION: KNOW ABOUT BUSINESS IN JORDAN

Jordan is a demographically young country with one of the youngest populations among countries in its income category. The median Jordanian age was estimated at 23.4 years in 2010 (UN DESA, 2012), when young women and men aged 15–24 accounted for 19.8 per cent of the total population. There is therefore both scope and a need for capitalizing on this large future labour force for Jordan, so that it might benefit from both growth and development. Youth unemployment is a major issue for Jordan's economy, politics and society as a whole. In 2011, 29.9 per

cent of young women and men seeking work were unemployed. Underemployment is also a concern. A generation without hope of finding a stable job is a burden for all societies and unemployment at the early stages of a young person's career can harm job prospects – for life. The absence of entrepreneurship education and a culture of self-employment are among the main factors contributing to youth unemployment. Only about 5 per cent of micro, small and medium enterprise owners are young.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Partners:

Business Development Centre (BDC), Jordan; Ministry of Education; Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research represented by Al Balka'a Applied University

Beneficiary country:
Jordan

Timeframe:
June 2011 –
December 2015

Budget:
Pilot phases:
USD 74,500
Follow-up phase:
USD 394,000

THE RESPONSE

The ILO's Know About Business (KAB) training programme has contributed to the creation of an enterprise culture in many countries and societies. It promotes awareness among young people of the opportunities and challenges of entrepreneurship and self-employment, and of their role in shaping their future and their country's economic and social development.

In 2006 the ILO started applying the KAB entrepreneurship education programme in vocational and technical education in the region. The successes achieved in seven Arab countries and territories (Syrian Arab Republic, Oman, Yemen, occupied Palestinian territory, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon) led to a partnership with the Business Development Centre (BDC) in Jordan, aiming to target unemployed school drop-outs enrolled at the National Company for Employment and Training (NCET).

The positive results of this partnership attracted the attention of the Jordanian Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, who were interested in implementing the programme in selected industrial schools and technical colleges in Jordan.

As a result, a joint project between the ILO and BDC was initiated (funded by the Canadian International Development Agency – CIDA) in 2013 to pilot test the KAB programme in selected vocational schools and technical colleges. It was designed to reach 4,500 young students over two academic years (2013-14 and 2014-15). The evaluation of the pilot will allow both Ministries to take a decision on whether to roll out the KAB programme nationally. If this decision is taken, the ILO will prepare the programme for use at national level, together with the BDC.

RESULTS

The project has successfully:

- Developed new topics related to decent work, social entrepreneurship and green enterprises, which were added to the KAB package: gender and disability were also mainstreamed;

- Trained, assessed, and certified 13 NCET trainers as KAB national facilitators, who continue teaching KAB to students independently;
- Issued certificates of attendance to 549 NCET students who completed the KAB course.



“KAB helped me overcome my fear of failure and showed me that opening a business is within my reach.”

Project beneficiary

The KAB programme also had a significant and positive impact on the students – both at the personal and business levels:

- A questionnaire demonstrated that participating students’ knowledge of business increased by 41.8 per cent. At the same time, their awareness and perceptions of the difficulties and challenges they would probably have to confront when starting a business also increased by 8 per cent;
- Focus groups resulted in a change in the way students felt about the future: they had increased confidence in their ability to overcome their fear of failure and understood that starting a venture was within their reach – and was an option open to them in the future. They also mentioned how KAB had taught them how to organize businesses and plan their activities to provide better and timely services to their clients;
- During a focus group with the current employers of former KAB students, they mentioned that they would encourage the implementation of KAB in all educational institutions in Jordan.

The follow-up phase will:

- Pilot the KAB programme in up to 30 vocational schools and up to 12 community colleges;
- Train 100 facilitators on the delivery of the KAB programme;
- Reach 4,500 students, both from vocational secondary education and community colleges;
- Promote the integration of the KAB programme under the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, represented by Al Balka’a Applied University, in all vocational secondary schools and community colleges in Jordan.

To date, the project’s second phase has already trained a total of 122 KAB teachers and reached approximately 1,000 students.



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BENEFITS OF PARTNERING

The BDC is a non-profit organization that aims to contribute to overall economic development by helping enterprises reach their full potential and create more highly paid jobs – as well as to prepare them to compete successfully in regional and international markets.

Partnering with the ILO provides the BDC with access to international expertise, good practices and the latest entrepreneurship promotion tools, while ensuring commitment to decent work and building national capacities for sustainable impact. As a result of this joint implementation, the ILO benefits from the BDC’s presence and outreach in Jordan, as the Centre can handle daily project management, monitoring and follow-up, and contacts with Ministries – thus ensuring a smooth and timely implementation.

The Government of Jordan is supported in meeting the goals laid down in its National Agenda and National Employment Strategy, which include employment support and vocational training.