Passport to Success
International Youth Foundation
1. Background and description

Developing countries face economic and social challenges that affect their societies in general and opportunities for youth in particular. Around 125 million children worldwide are not enrolled in school\(^2\) and the overall unemployment rate in developing countries is estimated\(^3\) to surpass 12 per cent and reach 45 per cent in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The MENA region is considered to have the highest youth unemployment rates, particularly for young women.\(^4\)

Employability is associated with education, staying in school and appropriate training and skills.\(^5\) Life skills have been identified as another important factor for positive youth development\(^6\) which can contribute to successful employment. Thus, the International Youth Foundation (IYF) developed a comprehensive life-skills curriculum model to support youth in finding jobs and succeeding both within and beyond the workplace.\(^7\)

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1 Programme Inquiry Form (21 August 2014), Internal validation (6-10 February 2015), Implementer validation (24 February 2015); Final validation (October 2015).

2 IYF Website: http://www.iyfnet.org/center/Learning


6 http://www.who.int/mental_health/media/en/30.pdf

Passport to Success® is a programme that equips vulnerable youth aged 14 to 29 years with a set of skills that will help them stay in school and enhance their education and readiness for employment. The programme consists of an 80-module curriculum delivered to young people who are out of school, out of work or in school but at risk of dropping out. The curriculum develops six essential categories of life skill: personal development; problem solving; healthy lifestyles; workplace success; entrepreneurship/skills for professional growth; and service learning. As part of the training, participants gain cross-cutting core life- and work-readiness skills such as cooperation/teamwork, communication/interpersonal skills and decision-making.8

The programme emerged in 2003 as a result of a partnership between IYF and the GE Foundation, and was introduced in India and Mexico in 2004. The objective was to create a standardized life-skill curriculum which could be adapted and replicated in different social and cultural settings. Over the course of one year, experts in education and life skills from the United States, India and Mexico developed the curriculum and core lessons, ensuring that the content could easily be adapted to any cultural or country context.

In the years since, IYF has consulted with a variety of stakeholders at the local and international levels who helped to inform content questions and also served as champions for the programme during the implementation phase. Key stakeholders have included: life-skills and education experts; large global employers such as at the GE Foundation and Hilton Worldwide; key members of the public sector from Latin America, the Middle East and Asia; community members, teachers and facilitators; and of course the target youth populations themselves. These consultation sessions allow IYF to continue identifying common topics that the life-skill programme needs to address and at the same time to discuss realistic expectations for the programme with stakeholders.

Passport to Success® has been adopted and delivered in more than 33 countries and is available in 19 languages. Passport to Success® was introduced to the MENA region in 2006, and to date has provided training to over 40,000 youth from about 60 youth-serving organizations, businesses or government training programmes in the region. Countries in the MENA region which have implemented the curriculum include Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, State of Palestine (West Bank) and Tunisia.9

Countries beyond the MENA region which have implemented Passport to Success® include Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bhutan, China, Colombia, Grenada, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Mexico, Mozambique, Namibia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania.

More than 110,000 young people worldwide and over 4,000 youth educators and teachers have been trained using this curriculum, which has allowed them to incorporate interactive teaching methodologies into classrooms that were traditionally lecture-based.10

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9  PTS MENA Organizations document (Passport to Success: Monitoring and Evaluation / Passport to Success in the Middle East and North Africa).
Organization profile

The IYF was founded in 1990 “to prepare young people to be healthy, productive, and engaged citizens”. IYF operates by building, from the ground up, an international network of organizations all working to ensure that youth anywhere on the globe could receive a quality education, learn the skills needed to get a job and ultimately become engaged in their communities.\(^\text{11}\) Based on the IYF mission and vision, hundreds of programmes have been funded to serve youth development-related organizations worldwide. Since 1990, IYF has mobilized over $200 million to expand opportunities for the world’s youth by helping to fund programmes and partnerships with 472 youth-serving organizations worldwide.\(^\text{12}\)

2. Goal and objectives

2.1. Goal

The primary goal of Passport to Success® is to equip youth with a range of skills to help them “stay in school and acquire the education, professional skills, employment readiness and confidence they need to succeed in life and in the workplace”.\(^\text{11}\)

2.2. Objectives

In order to achieve its primary goal as stated above, the goals of the Passport to Success® curriculum are:\(^\text{13}\)

- Encompass key or ‘core’ life skills;
- Emphasize skills and behaviours for workplace readiness;
- Provide demand-driven skills and real-life practice situations which employers regard as paramount for hiring and job success;
- Able to be adapted to any cultural or institutional setting and be flexible in design to incorporate additional life skills identified through consultation with key stakeholders.

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\(^{11}\) IYF Website: http://www.iyfnet.org/iyf-history

\(^{12}\) IYF Website: http://www.iyfnet.org/iyf-programs

\(^{13}\) Inquiry form received from Ms. Sarabecka Mullen, Director, Life Skills Programs and Senior Trainer.
3. Target group

3.1. Age group
The programme targets vulnerable youth aged 14-29 years.

3.2. Gender considerations
The programme is available to males and females with no particular gender strategy.

3.3. Ethnic / disability considerations
The programme does not present any specific ethnic/disability focus and aims to reach out to all vulnerable youth.

3.4. Targeting the most / marginalized / most at risk
The programme was created especially to equip vulnerable and marginalized youth with skills. As such, the curriculum is delivered to youth who are at risk of dropping out, are out of school or work in dangerous environments. Children living or working on the street in India, school dropouts in Jordan and Egypt and former gang members in Mexico have participated in the programme.14

3.5. Human rights programming
The mission of IYF is anchored in human rights. It aims “to prepare young people to be healthy, productive and engaged citizens”. Passport to Success® offers youth “a chance to build personal skills and reflect on their goals”. Moreover, “it encourages them to value not just who they are, but what they have yet to contribute, so that they can take positive steps towards building the future that they have hoped for”.15

3.6. Youth involvement
Youth have been involved in the development of the programme by providing feedback through focus groups, administrative surveys and assessments, which have contributed greatly to the development of the curriculum, especially in new geographical areas or populations. As part of the curriculum adaptation team, youth were able to identify topics which consequently increased the programme’s impact.16

4. Strategy and Implementation

4.1. Strategies / theoretical approaches / methodologies
Much of the content and instructional methodologies for Passport to Success® were based on research and tested experience by IYF in the life-skills and health promotion fields, based on the Lions Quest’s Skills for Adolescence,18 a programme associated with the Lions Clubs International Foundation, and the Nokia Make a Connection programme.19 Based on experience in training youth in a variety of educational settings, IYF was committed to developing a curriculum which used rich, experiential pedagogical methods to enhance not only youth learning gains, but also to improve the teaching styles of the trainers involved in the programme. Experiential learning pioneer Carl Rogers believed that all individuals have the ability to learn, especially when that learning is applied to something meaningful and relevant in the learner’s life.20 For this reason, the scenarios, practice sessions and case studies included in the Passport to Success® curriculum have been carefully...
crafted to be relevant for a youth audience. Additionally, the curriculum encourages trainers to adjust these elements so that they are culturally and developmentally appropriate for their youth through clear guidelines and instructions.

The Passport to Success® pedagogy focuses on providing learners with both an individual and group learning experience through a blend of small-group activities and space for individual reflection. Each lesson is designed as a type of interactive ‘laboratory’ where every participant plays an active role, rather than as a lecture, which typically revolves around the instructor. This ‘laboratory’ also allow learners to tap into their own knowledge and experience as the basis of their learning, in accordance with constructivist learning theory. Youth benefit most from instruction involving peer learning, practical application of the skills they are taught and self-reflection. In addition, youth participants are more likely to change their own behaviour if they see a role model – in this case the trainer – modeling each life skill in his/her interactions with youth during the lesson, making the active role of the facilitator critical to success.

The in-class life-skills instruction is complemented by opportunities for youth to practice their skills outside of class through assignments at the end of each lesson and in real-life situations through service learning projects. Youth are encouraged to take charge of their own learning process and to fit new information into their pre-existing knowledge, thereby increasing relevance and retention.  

Finally, to be highly effective, the Passport to Success® curriculum is also based on the belief that life-skills training methodologies need to be flexible enough to adapt to the primary learning styles – auditory, visual, and kinaesthetic – that exist in any classroom. The lessons incorporate a variety of learning techniques, from paired practice to individual drawing to large group educational games, which will appeal to all different types of learners.

The core elements of the Passport to Success® model include:

- An 80-module curriculum available in 19 languages focused on: personal development; problem solving; healthy lifestyles; workplace success; entrepreneurship/skills for professional growth; and service learning. Two tailored curriculum ‘tracks’ – employability and entrepreneurship – allow for customization of the Passport to Success® experience for groups of youth with different career goals;
- A trainer’s guide to serve as a resource for trainers on how to deliver the Passport to Success® lessons in a consistent and high-quality manner;
- A trainee handbook that supports students as they progress through the course;
- A comprehensive training-of-trainers and master trainers’ programme which equips trainers, through multi-day interactive workshops, with the skills and confidence necessary to successfully deliver the experiential, student-centred methodology;
- Coaching by qualified education professionals offering guidance and support to the trainers virtually and in person;
- Tracking and performance measurement tools including pre- and post- curriculum tests measuring skills and behaviour.

change, teacher and student focus groups and mechanisms to track employment and educational outcomes.

The programme’s flexible approach allows it to be implemented as a stand-alone training through a local organization (NGO or a community-based organization); through formal schooling (public and private secondary schools or university); as a component of vocational training (at public employment centres, vocational technical institutes, colleges); or as part of a private employers’ on-the-job training.  

4.2. Activities

For participants

The curriculum includes skills in 10 key areas: self-confidence; conflict management; anger management; career planning; responsibility; job preparation; respect; workplace readiness; cooperation and teamwork; and project planning.

• On the job: IYF works with businesses to include life skills as part of their orientation and on-boarding of new employees. Lessons are selected to meet specific needs of employers. This model encourages retention of entry-level employees as they adjust to their new workplaces.

• Post-secondary education: IYF works with universities, technical schools and vocational training providers to tailor a life-skills training schedule for their students. Trainees receive two to three lessons each week, spread over a semester, giving them the chance to practice their skills as a complement to their regular classes.

• Secondary schools: IYF works with middle schools and high schools to provide a selection of life-skills lessons. IYF trains teachers to complement their regular classes with the life-skills modules, either staggered over the academic year (2-3 lessons every week over a semester) or after school.

• Stand-alone: IYF works with community-based organizations to offer a minimum of 30 life-skills lessons over a period of six to eight weeks. On average, partners typically select about 40-50 lessons. As stated above, the organization determines the number of hours available. For example, for the hospitality sector adaptation, Hilton selected 30-40 hours depending on the location. This most intensive application complements basic education, technical or entrepreneurship training.

Organizations select the number of content hours appropriate for their training needs and IYF works with them to select the most appropriate lessons depending on the profile and needs of the youth. IYF requires a minimum of 30 lessons (equivalent to 30 hours) per programme. The curriculum is delivered using a participatory and engaging approach and students are encouraged to work in groups and share opinions with each other.

For trainers and coaches

High-quality training of trainers and coaches is a key element of the success of the Passport to Success® programme. The IYF training ensures that participants understand how to implement the experiential teaching methodologies that are at the core of programme’s success. As part of the Passport to Success® model, IYF master trainers lead four-day interactive training workshops for all

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22 Inquiry form received from Ms. Sarabecka Mullen, Director, Life Skills Programs and Senior Trainer.
23 Ibid.
trainers and coaches who will implement the programme. Participants in these training workshops include the staff, administrators and/or consultants supported by the institution, all of whom are nominated by the host institution and interviewed by IYF during the design phase.

During the training workshop, participants learn about the following:

- The background of the Passport to Success® programme;
- Passport to Success® training goals for youth;
- Passport to Success® programme units and lesson topics;
- How to effectively use Passport to Success® lessons;
- The role of Passport to Success® trainers and coaches;
- Skills and strategies to implement the programme with a variety of beneficiaries.

During the training, participants will also have the opportunity to see life-skills lessons modelled by master trainers. They then prepare and deliver a sample lesson with a small group of peers in a practicum setting and receive feedback on the delivery of their training approach. The training workshop is extremely ‘hands-on’ and allows participants to experience and practice the training and coaching techniques employed by the Passport to Success® programme. During the training of trainers, each participant also receives and begins using the Passport to Success® Trainer’s Guide, which has been tested by IYF and will guide them through future use of the curriculum and methodology.

In order to ensure quality instruction within the classroom and to retain programme trainers, it is important for newly trained trainers to receive coaching support following their training. This coaching can be provided either by coaches from IYF or from the partner institution. These coaches visit trainers as they commence training activities and undertake the following:

- Observe the delivery of Passport to Success® lessons to youth;
- Provide specific and constructive feedback to help improve training skills;
- Assist trainers in learning to prepare adequately for lessons;
- Support trainers in addressing unexpected questions or other challenges;
- Ensure effective delivery and adherence to Passport to Success® standards.

New Passport to Success® trainers and coaches are eligible for the IYF Global Life Skills Trainer Certification. This certification requires successful completion of the training-of-trainers’ workshop and practicum requirements. Certification serves several purposes including demonstrating the professional qualification of trainers and coaches and allowing them to continually improve their skills through participation in continuing education courses. It also entitles the trainers and coaches to receive standard Passport to Success® content upgrades and access to the online IYF portal which connects them to the global community of life-skills trainers and provides a platform for continued mentorship, coaching and quality assurance.
4.3. Innovativeness

Beyond the curriculum, the intensive training and coaching model has two primary objectives: (1) to encourage trainers and teachers to use the interactive teaching methodologies they learn through Passport to Success® in all classroom settings; and (2) to certify all qualified candidates to ensure that they meet IYF standards. This innovative and comprehensive approach to mentoring and certification of trainers is uncommon in the MENA region.24

4.4. Cost and funding

Various donors to IYF fund implementation of the Passport to Success® programme. The cost is determined based on several factors, including the type and scale of programme implementation. Interested parties may contact IYF directly for more information on costs.

4.5. Sustainability

For institutions wishing to build their own internal capacity to expand and regularly replenish their supply of certified trainers, IYF is able to provide a Training of Master Trainers workshop for certified trainers and coaches who meet eligibility requirements. This training allows institutions to fully execute Passport to Success® in a continuous and fully sustainable manner, enabling them to certify individual trainers, coaches and youth trainees within their institution’s Passport to Success® programme, subject to annual quality assurance checks by IYF.

The Training of Master Trainers certification requires participation at a five-day workshop conducted by IYF senior trainers. This workshop is followed by coaching of new master trainer candidates through their co-facilitation of a training-of-trainers workshop with an IYF master trainer, or by a master trainer’s observation of the candidate leading the workshop with another master trainer candidate. Upon fulfilling these requirements, new master trainers are then eligible to conduct training of trainers, provide coaching, certify new trainers and otherwise support the design and implementation of Passport to Success® for the institution. When an institution has developed master training capabilities within its own training system, IYF will also undertake quality assurance checks to ensure that master trainers and the trainers whom they have trained are adhering to global training standards.

4.6. Replicability

The Passport to Success® programme has been used in 33 countries and translated into 19 languages, facilitating its implementation in different social and cultural contexts. A country can start working with the programme on a small scale and expand to a larger scale through partnerships with other organizations via IYF master training. In the MENA region, for example, after refining the programme to fit its cultural background, Jordan scaled the programme nationally to reach youth in multiple regions throughout the country. This was achieved through collaboration with public and private sector partners to integrate the model into national-level educational and training systems. The IYF worked in partnership with Jordanian associations such as the Jordan Federation for Tourism Association and Jordan Hospitality and Tourism Education Company to target unemployed youth aged 18-30 years.25

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5. Evaluation of effectiveness

The evaluation of Passport to Success® has been ongoing since the programme's early stages. Focus group discussions and feedback forms for trainers, employer surveys and pre- and post-curriculum assessment surveys of the youth participants have been used to evaluate the programme's effectiveness and relevance.

A key measure of success is the extent to which young people are either in school, employed or doing better on the job six months after participating in the programme.

Examples of programme results after implementation include:

- In Morocco, a 44 per cent decrease in students dropping out of school;
- In Mexico, a 50 per cent decrease in the dropout rate of secondary schools using Passport to Success®;\(^{25}\)
- In Poland, 86 per cent of the youth view their future more optimistically after having completed the programme;\(^{17}\)
- Eighty-six per cent of youth in India and 97 per cent of youth in Mexico were employed six-nine months after completing Passport to Success®;\(^{17}\)
- More than 110,000 young people have successfully completed Passport to Success®;\(^{27}\)

Monitoring and evaluation

The IYF developed a rigorous monitoring and evaluation protocol to measure the performance of the programme. Indicators are set for objectives and tools are developed to measure progress.\(^{28}\)

Data available to IYF show that many institutions are still implementing Passport to Success® past the involvement of IYF; some have maintained contact with IYF by reporting on beneficiary data and some have scaled it up to additional implementation sites using new funding sources. However, specific data are not available on the percentage of institutions that have maintained the programme against the total number of institutions trained.

Programme outcomes were observed through the following statistics:\(^{29}\)

Employers can expect improvement in key life skills from young employees including team work, listening skills and cooperation.

- 91 per cent of young Hilton Team members who received Passport to Success® training in South Africa reported being more thoughtful listeners; 75 per cent indicated improvement in conflict management and cooperation skills.
- 80 per cent of employers surveyed in Jordan report that programme graduates meet their company's needs and 90 per cent said they would hire more graduates in the future.
- 90 per cent of employers in the Caribbean who hired programme graduates said they would do so again.
- 75 per cent of the employers interviewed in Egypt stated that there is a remarkable and noticeable difference between the Passport to Success® graduates and other young employees.


\(^{27}\) IYF Website: http://www.iyfnet.org/passport-to-success.

\(^{28}\) Passport to Success Performance Measurement Overview document.

\(^{29}\) Passport to Success® Monitoring and Evaluation document.
School programmes create well-rounded students who are more likely to stay in school and to make positive choices, and benefit teachers through interactive teaching methodologies.

- Middle schools in Morocco using Passport to Success® saw a 44 per cent decrease in dropout rates and students who participated in life-skills clubs tripled their life-skills scores.
- 96 per cent of Polish teachers using Passport to Success® indicated that the programme had been helpful for their students.
- More than half of Egyptian trainers using the programme said they would use the methods in other training after seeing how well the youth responded to the interactivity.
- 94 per cent of youth receiving Passport to Success® in Mexican schools were still enrolled six months later.
- Indian participants showed statistically significant improvements in 10 of 12 life-skill areas; 86 per cent were enrolled in school, training or work six months later.

Community organizations will see young people with purpose and hope.

- 72 per cent of Zimbabwe youth receiving Passport to Success® demonstrated increased resiliency post training, a key measure of an individual’s ability to adapt within a context of significant adversity.
- 82 per cent of Polish youth participants with the lowest average life skills at programme entry improved their life skills by a statistically significant margin after completing the programme.
- 79 per cent of Indian participants indicated that their ideas about what they will do or how they will act in the future “have changed a lot.”

6. Strengths and opportunities

Passport to Success® adheres to ‘best practice’ standards which address all key components of an effective life-skills model. Through review with key life-skills experts, IYF developed 10 core standards, with a focus on the content, teaching methodology, facilitator training and evaluation requirements, for effective life-skills programming, all of which are the core elements of the Passport to Success® model. Adhering to these standards has allowed IYF to take Passport to Success® to scale, in terms of both geographic reach and depth and the variety of implementation settings in a given country.

7. Challenges

The primary challenge for Passport to Success® is to ensure the continued high quality of training as the scale of the programme increases. IYF responds to this challenge through its coaching programme and standardized feedback forms for all trainers, so that weaker facilitators can be identified easily and given more support to bring them up to certification standards.

8. Next steps and the way forward

In order to improve cost-effectiveness, IYF has developed a ‘blended learning’ training of trainers workshop, which involves 2.5 days of in-person training and five online training modules taken before and after the workshop. This blended
content format ensures that trainers enter the in-person workshop at the same level in terms of their background understanding of life skills, and also improves their long-term retention through follow-up activities and assessments. IYF is currently piloting this format in Africa and plans to roll it out globally in late 2015.

In addition, IYF recently has worked with corporate donors to create some online Passport to Success® content that can complement the in-person sessions. IYF will continue to test blended learning formats to maximize scale while also retaining quality.

9. Lessons learned and recommendations

Depending on the focus of the programme, life skills have been shown to help youth do better in school, make healthier decisions and be more prepared for work and to engage in civic life. In order to encourage changes in behaviour, an effective life-skills programme should have a balance of knowledge and skills. As participants gain knowledge and practice skills, they will increase their confidence in their abilities to act in a healthy and effective manner. More specifically, and as demonstrated by Passport to Success®, life-skills programmes should:

- Build knowledge of the topics included in the programme;
- Increase skills that participants can use as they apply their knowledge;
- Increase participants’ confidence in their abilities to use their knowledge and skills.

The IYF also encourages inclusion of a wide variety of stakeholders in the curriculum design process and throughout all stages of implementation, as this promotes sustainability and local ownership. For example, engaging local employers has proven to be particularly effective as future Passport to Success® graduates are often offered jobs or internships at these organizations and constant contact with these companies ensures that the content of the training remains relevant to labour market needs.

10. Components to consider for scale-up in MENA

One of the major components that is considered essential to scale up of any life-skills programme in the MENA region is collaboration and partnership with both public and private sector organizations to maximize outreach. The IYF is currently focusing its partnerships with government ministries on integrating Passport to Success® into school systems, and those with corporations on introducing the programme into employee training programmes. As the scale of the training for either intervention increases, it is critical to ensure the quality of training and mentoring of all facilitators involved, which may need to be done virtually or through certified local coaches.

11. Resources

The resources cited below, which can be accessed from the IYF online library, are country-specific case studies:

- Passport to Success® Hilton Worldwide Fact Sheet;
- Passport to Success®: Equipping Jordanian Youth with Essential Life Skills;
- Passport to Success® In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Fact Sheet;
- Preparing Youth for Success: An Analysis of
Life Skills Training in the MENA Region.

12. References

An inquiry form received from Ms. Sarabecka Mullen, Director, Life Skills Programs and Senior Trainer on 21 August, 2014.

IYF Website: http://www.iyfnet.org/center/Learning

IYF Website: http://www.iyfnet.org/iyf-history

IYF Website: http://www.iyfnet.org/iyf-programs


Passport to Success: http://www.iyfnet.org/passport-to-success

PTS MENA Organizations document (Passport to Success: Monitoring and Evaluation / Passport to Success in the Middle East and North Africa)


Passport to Success Performance Measurement Overview document

Passport to Success® Monitoring and Evaluation document


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