



Skills-Building for
University Students

INJAZ

Region	MENA
Country	Jordan
Organization	INJAZ
Name	Skills-Building for University Students
Category	Skills development
Start date	1999
End date	Ongoing
Partners	Ministry of Education, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Ministry of Social Development, Vocational Training Centre, King Abdullah II Fund for Development (KAFD), United Nations Volunteers Programme (UNV), Central Bank of Jordan, over 300 private sector companies and a range of local and international civil society organizations including Mosaic, Al Faisal Without Borders, All Jordan Youth Commission and the Jordan Hashemite Fund for Development.
UN involvement	Non-UN
Contact	Mr. Muhannad Al-Jarrah, Executive Director, Partnership Unit mjarrah@injaz.org.jo

1. Background and description

The population of Jordan is marked by a large youth cohort (70 per cent under 30 years of age), which faces high unemployment:² 33.7 per cent of Jordanians aged 15-24 years are unemployed.³ A mismatch between educational outcomes and the needs of the market has been cited as one of the key factors affecting the unemployment rate. In addition, it has been reported that 70 per cent of recent university graduates are unemployed for up to two years after graduation.⁴ The dire employment situation not only affects the economic prospects of this youth but also takes its toll on their positive development and well-being. The notion of 'waithood'⁵ has been coined to refer to youth who are stalled in long periods of unemployment, inactivity and uncertainty, leading to extended dependency on the family and the inability to transit fully into adulthood, which in turn create feelings of frustration and helplessness.⁶

Aiming to build the skills of young people in Jordan and to inspire and prepare them to become productive members of society, the non-profit organization INJAZ develops and delivers a series of curricular and extracurricular programmes and activities for adolescents and youth through a network of partnerships with the private sector, civil society organizations and governmental institutions. The premise guiding the work of INJAZ is that the development

1 Desk Review (17 July 2014); Interview (9 October 2014); Internal validation (19 November 2014-11 January 2015); Implementer validation (14 January 2015-03 February 2015); Final validation (October 2015).

2 ILO (2013).

3 Ibid.

4 PKF Study INJAZ (2012).

5 Ibid..

6 RAND (2014); Dhillon, N. (2008).



and integration of youth into the job market are a shared responsibility among all actors in society. It is through coordinated efforts, with the guidance of the government and educational institutions and the financial support and knowledge brought by the private sector, that more prepared generations of Jordanians can access the job market and contribute to the national economy.

INJAZ offers a variety of programmes,⁷ but this good practice document will focus on the university programme, which has been evaluated for effectiveness.

Organization profile

Established in 1999, INJAZ became an independent non-profit Jordanian organization in 2001 with the mission to “inspire and prepare youth to become productive members of their society and accelerate the development of the national economy”.⁸ The organization operates with 75 full-time paid staff and a network of volunteers who implement the programme and activities. In the academic year 2011-2012, 80 per cent of the volunteer base of INJAZ were corporate volunteers.⁹

2. Goal and objectives

2.1. Goal

The overall goal of INJAZ is to build the skills of Jordanian youth, help them find jobs and prepare them to be competent and productive members of society.

2.2. Objectives

The main objectives of all INJAZ programmes are to:

- Build the skills of youth through curricular and extracurricular programmes and activities focusing on financial education, business and entrepreneurship, ethical leadership and career guidance;
- Facilitate access to jobs for the youth through social and company programmes as well as employment and entrepreneurship training;
- Support the institutionalization of all volunteerism efforts in Jordan by building a network of partnerships with the private sector, schools, civil society organizations, governmental institutions and universities;
- Engage a greater number of Jordanians, particularly youth, in volunteering and improve their awareness and appreciation of the personal, professional and societal benefits of volunteerism.¹⁰

As mentioned above, this good practice documentation focuses on the INJAZ university programme.

⁷ For the full list of programmes, please see Annex 1.

⁸ INJAZ – About us: <http://www.injaz.org.jo/SubDefault.aspx?PageId=186&MenuId=45>

⁹ INJAZ Programme Form.

¹⁰ Jarrah, M. (2014).



3. Target group

3.1. Age group

INJAZ university programmes and activities target youth enrolled in university.

3.2. Gender considerations

There is no gender-sensitive strategy, but the equal participation of boys and girls is encouraged and planned. Currently, female beneficiaries account for 61.2 per cent of the participants in INJAZ university programmes who participated in an evaluation of the programme in 2012.¹¹

3.3. Ethnic / disability considerations

INJAZ developed 'My Team', an adapted version of the company programme which provides work experience to students who have mild to medium special needs (education, mental and physical). Guided by teachers and volunteer advisers, students establish companies and secure funding. The programme aims to develop their communication skills, boost their confidence and introduce new working opportunities.¹²

3.4. Targeting the most marginalized / most at risk

Since INJAZ began, the network of colleges/universities and governorates where its programmes have been introduced has grown, allowing it to reach vulnerable youth in some of the most deprived areas of Jordan. Currently, INJAZ operates in public and private universities across all 12 governorates.

3.5. Human rights programming

The initiative promotes equal access to education through the curricular and extracurricular programmes. It also

promotes students' dignity and improved self-esteem and confidence through programmes and activities that build their skills and encourage an active role in the community through volunteer activities.

3.6. Youth involvement

Focus group discussions are conducted prior to programme implementation to assess the needs and expectations of beneficiaries, and again after implementation to gather feedback on the participants' benefits, concerns and suggestions for improvement. The curricular development and implementation teams use this feedback to adjust the design and execution of future programming. Specific data collection methods and targets vary between programmes, but they all utilize a variety of pre-, mid- and post-implementation surveys and questionnaires with the beneficiaries.

4. Strategy and implementation

4.1. Strategies / theoretical approaches / methodologies

INJAZ relies on a consultative partnership model involving the public, private sector and civil society with the aim to build the capacity of youth. It mobilizes the public sector, notably the Ministry of Education, to maximize the use of educational facilities and human resources. It engages the private sector by promoting volunteerism and corporate social responsibility, encouraging not only financial support but also the use of their technical expertise and mentorship. INJAZ students receive training from corporate volunteers who deliver the skills-building programmes and act as mentors, sharing their professional

¹¹ Evaluation report in Arabic 2012 (SARAH please add title in Arabic)

¹² INJAZ Prezi Presentation (May 2014).

expertise and guiding students in how to apply their skills in a business environment.

The partner private sector companies provide a pool of corporate volunteers who participate in the design and implementation of programmes. Beyond corporate volunteers, INJAZ also recruits civil society sector volunteers to participate as teachers and mentors for the programmes.

Almost 3,000 (2,818) volunteers were registered in the 2013-2014 academic year, of whom 50 per cent were corporate volunteers. An average of 60 per cent of volunteers are returnees and 40 per cent are first-time volunteers. The high retention rate of volunteers allows INJAZ to quickly mobilize experienced individuals and reduces the number of volunteers requiring training on an annual basis. The volunteers are selected through an interview process that assesses their knowledge, experience and fit with the INJAZ programmes. The nature and content of the programme, the age and educational level of beneficiaries and the qualifications and interest of volunteers are some of the criteria used to select and allocate volunteers to INJAZ programmes.

Training sessions are organized to build the capacity of the volunteers in working with adolescents and delivering the programmes. Returning volunteers are retrained only if they are implementing a new programme. In 2011-2012, INJAZ launched 'i-Volunteer', a committee composed of 24 members which aims to enhance knowledge-sharing between recruited corporate volunteers.

The delivery of INJAZ programmes is based on experiential learning or the 'learn by doing' methodology. In this process,

participants acquire skills and knowledge by engaging in a concrete experience.

4.2. Activities

Employment and entrepreneurship

The employment and entrepreneurship programmes are both curricular and extracurricular programmes for youth aged 15-25 years attending colleges and universities. Curricular programmes are grouped into three main tracks:

- Business Entrepreneurship: The Company Start-Up Programme;
- Social Entrepreneurship: We Are Social Leaders;
- Employment: My Path to Employment; Communication Skills; Work Ethics; Skills of Success.





Extracurricular programmes include:

- Business Entrepreneurship: Enterprise Development Programme, the business incubation programme which provides ongoing support to outstanding student company teams as they navigate the challenges of developing their early-stage ventures;
- Social Entrepreneurship: We Are Social Leaders.
- Employment: Generations Dialogue (7iwar Al Ajyal); Link2Job.

For the majority of these programmes, enrolment is done through INJAZ. A partnership agreement with the Ministry of Education allows students to receive university credit for the Company Start-Up Programme. Since 2011, this programme has been mainstreamed and accredited within the German Jordanian University. In 2013, Mu'tah University piloted a model that embeds INJAZ soft skills workshops/programmes within accredited university programmes. The university is also considering offering the INJAZ soft skills programmes as modules for university credit.

The flagship Company Start-Up Programme seeks to build the entrepreneurial capacity of young Jordanians university students and promote self-employment. Launched in 2011, the programme operates in 38 institutions of higher education, both public and private. It comprises three dimensions: theory; practicality; and sustainability.¹³ Corporate volunteers deliver a course on the tools to build and sustain a business, providing students with the skills to take their business plans forward. Under the supervision of the volunteers, students

organize and register their own 'student company'. They conduct market research and investment appraisal studies, and define market needs. At the end of the project, students liquidate the company and divide profits among the stakeholders. During the programme, students enter a nationwide competition where they gain practical experience. During the competition, a judging committee evaluates the students' projects. In the second stage, participants are expected to gain problem-solving and presentation skills and demonstrate an entrepreneurial spirit. Winners of the nationwide competition are supported in the process of sustaining and growing their companies.

In the 2012-2013 academic year, 1,815 students graduated from the Company Start-Up Programme. Under the mentorship of 77 volunteers, the same number of individual student start-up projects were formed and developed, of which seven were legally registered with the Government as businesses at the conclusion of the programme. Through a partnership with the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation as well as a strengthened pool of private sector partners, the programme expects to create over 200 youth projects in 2014-2015.¹⁴

4.3. Innovativeness

The model developed by INJAZ – which is based on a collaborative network engaging government officials and institutions, the private sector, educators, volunteers and students – is an innovative method for building the skills of Jordanian youth and preparing them to meet the demands of the job market and private sector. Each of the stakeholders has an active role in the design

¹³ Center for Education Innovations (2014a).

¹⁴ Ibid.





and implementation of programmes, and the programme introduces a dynamic exchange between corporate volunteers and the youth. The Government of Jordan provides vital access to the target group by allowing INJAZ to work in and alongside public educational institutions. It also set forth the National Employment Strategy, which guides the strategic priorities and approach of INJAZ. Private sector partners, meanwhile, provide critical insight into employer perspectives, which guides the demand-driven design of INJAZ programmes and supply the bulk of the pool of volunteers who act as mentors to youth.

4.4. Cost and funding

INJAZ started operating with funding from the United States Agency for International Development. After becoming an independent non-profit organization, it established a donor base with significant contributions from the Jordanian private sector. Today, the operating budget for all its programmes (not only the university programme) is \$2.7 million, of which \$1.57 million constitutes programme costs and \$1.12 million administrative costs.

4.5. Sustainability

INJAZ was registered as a private, non-profit shareholding company in 2005 and currently operates with 75 full-time staff. It created a Board of Trustees and a Board of Directors to steer the organization. The latter is a committee of 11 members elected from the Board of Trustees who work with INJAZ executive management.

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is integral to the sustainability of INJAZ programmes and activities. The Board is composed of top

business leaders who commit both to contributing financially to INJAZ programmes and to offering their expertise. Members serve on different committees such as fundraising and growth, brand effectiveness, operations, programme development and finance. Each year, the Board elects 11 members to serve on the Board of Directors, who are more closely engaged and advise INJAZ operations.

Engagement with the public and private sector

The network of engaged private sector companies, which see the benefit of participating in the development of Jordanian youth, ensures the commitment and sustainability of programmes and activities through their financial and technical support, directly engaging with the youth and creating a dynamic exchange.

Every year, INJAZ works to increase the pool of partner companies and network of volunteers, strengthening its resources and ability to reach out to more youth. It runs awareness campaigns to promote corporate social responsibility and a culture of volunteerism. An example of this is the School Adoption Programme, through which companies commit to support one or more schools in improving their grounds, providing equipment and supporting delivery of INJAZ programmes.

Inclusion of curricular programmes in the public educational system

INJAZ curricular programmes have been introduced in the public educational system, thus ensuring their continuity. With the aim of building the capacity of teachers, educators and corporate volunteers, INJAZ conducts training sessions in partnership with the Ministry of Education.¹⁵

¹⁵ Bibi, D. (2012).





4.6. Replicability

INJAZ has exchanged knowledge of its model and programmes with over 12 countries in the Arab region as well as Uganda and Serbia.¹⁶ INJAZ Al-Arab, the product of this exchange, currently operates in Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, State of Palestine, Pakistan, Qatar, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and United Arab Emirates.

5. Evaluation of effectiveness

Between 1999 and 2015, INJAZ programmes have reached one million beneficiaries in all 12 governorates of Jordan, working in 223 schools, 40 universities and colleges and over 100 centres and social institutions, including vocational training institutes, community and youth centres, centres for youth with disabilities and orphanages. This has been achieved through the network of volunteers and partners from the private and public sectors, and in full coordination with the Ministry of Education and King Abdullah II Fund for Development.

In total, INJAZ mobilized 4,000 volunteers annually and has involved a total of 27,000 qualified volunteers from the outset. INJAZ is working to institutionalize volunteerism through the corporate social responsibility programmes of its over 300 private and public sector partners.

Improved access to jobs for university graduates

An external study conducted in 2012 by PKF Accountants and Business Advisors surveyed 373 young people who had completed one or more INJAZ university programmes between 2008 and 2012. The study found that 87 per cent of INJAZ alumni

were successfully employed within one year after their graduation, in comparison to the national figure of 30 per cent of graduates finding employment within one year. That means that 70 per cent of Jordanian graduates remain in 'waithood' for more than 12 months before finding employment. In comparison, only 13 per cent of the INJAZ cohort experienced a 'waithood' of more than one year before becoming employed.

The two courses that were most attended were 'how to be a leader' and 'skills for success' (over 60 per cent attended at least one of these courses).

Most students (~52 per cent) had taken two to three INJAZ courses while at university. Overall, finding a job after graduation was associated with the number of INJAZ courses taken, with those who have taken more than five INJAZ courses having an 78.3 per cent rate of job placement, as opposed to 60.7 per cent of those having taken only one INJAZ course. Although women had lower employment rates than men, the employment rate for women who had taken INJAZ programmes was higher than the national average for women's employment.¹⁷

Unfortunately, the evaluation did not assess success in finding jobs according to the specific courses attended.

Increased knowledge, skills and confidence

INJAZ also conducted an impact assessment study for the Company Start-Up Programme by comparing treatment and control groups through surveys which tested the knowledge, confidence and skills gained as well as increased willingness and trust in starting their own company. Two thirds (66 per cent) rated increased

¹⁶ INJAZ Programme Form.

¹⁷ PKF Jordan (November 2012).



confidence in their knowledge of functional and practical aspects for companies and how to start up a business, and 68 per cent registered improved behavioural skills and work-related skills (ability to solve problems and think critically).¹⁸

Monitoring and evaluation

INJAZ monitoring and evaluation plans are developed according to programme objectives, activity outputs and programme milestones. Programme objectives and targets are broken down into key performance indicators with targets and baselines.¹⁹ The specific data collection methods vary between the programmes, but they all employ pre-, mid- and post-implementation surveys and questionnaires distributed to participants, volunteers, partners and parents.

Throughout the programme, regular communication with the volunteers and visits to the programme sessions are conducted by the INJAZ programme unit staff and volunteer officers. Based on the outcomes of these processes, improvements and adjustments are made to the programme implementation, volunteer training practices and volunteer retention.



6. Strengths and opportunities

- Mobilization and engagement of the private sector in youth development.
- Positive impact of INJAZ curricular and extracurricular programmes on youth's skills and knowledge as demonstrated by the impact analysis and beneficiary satisfaction measurements gathered through the INJAZ certified quality management system²⁰ and external analyses such as the PKF study of INJAZ and non-INJAZ graduates.²¹
- Mobilization of the public and private sectors with the aim of instilling a culture of volunteerism.
- Strengthened social responsibility through the programmes implemented in schools, universities and social institutions, and increased engagement of the private sector as measured by the number of growing partners.

7. Challenges

The most important and significant challenge at the outset was establishing a pool of private sector volunteers and promoting the concept of volunteerism. Over time and with the expansion of partnerships and companies joining INJAZ, the challenge resides in scaling up the programme to a national initiative without losing the quality and consistency of work. Attracting and maintaining qualified volunteers has been addressed by establishing an interview process and by stressing the collective benefit of volunteerism.²²

Certain cultural issues were also encountered when working with the young people, but implementers were trained

18 Bibi, D. (2012).

19 INJAZ – QMS.

20 INJAZ is ISO 9001:2008 Quality Management System (QMS) certified.

21 PKF Study (November 2012).

22 INJAZ - Programme Form submitted electronically to the American University of Beirut team for this good practices documentation.



on how to address them. In some target communities, particularly outside of major cities, conservative social norms must be accounted for and addressed when recruiting participants to mixed-gender projects and programmes. Implementing staff and volunteers are also trained in how to navigate community perceptions with regard to sensitive cultural issues related to gender roles, employment and education.

Ensuring sustained support from the private sector can pose a challenge, particularly if the relationship is based solely on a financial exchange. INJAZ has addressed this by establishing collaborative partnerships in which the private sector counterpart takes an active role in the development of youth with the aim of contributing to the sustainable development of the community and economy.

A persistent challenge has been the recruitment of qualified volunteers for the hardest-to-reach areas. The INJAZ Volunteer Campaign was launched in 2011 to mitigate this.

8. Next steps and the way forward

INJAZ is planning the introduction of new programmes and the scale-up of existing ones with demonstrated high impact. Furthermore, it will scale up the sharing of institutional knowledge through consultancies and trainings. The organization seeks to become a regional hub of expertise in youth engagement, volunteerism and workforce development.

INJAZ will also intensify its volunteer recruitment and training strategies to secure a pool of qualified volunteers. In partnership with United Business Applications, INJAZ will

pilot and launch a volunteer management system, which will allow INJAZ volunteer officers to electronically manage volunteers throughout the 'volunteer life cycle'. The implementation of the electronic volunteer management system will centralize and streamline all INJAZ volunteer management activities and enhance the capacity of INJAZ to: communicate with volunteers and contact persons in partner institutions; track volunteer activities, trainings and hours; evaluate volunteer quality; and collect feedback.

The Tatawa ('Volunteer Jordan') initiative was officially launched in July under the patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hussein bin Abdullah and various business and social leaders. The Tatawa initiative addresses all ages and is a national-scale programme. Currently under development, the initiative seeks to create a culture of volunteerism in Jordan by engaging key stakeholders, the public, private sector and civil society. The King Abdullah II Fund for Development is developing an online portal to facilitate the connection between volunteers and opportunities, while INJAZ and the United Nations Volunteers Programme are developing capacity-building and educational programmes fostering volunteerism, social responsibility and social entrepreneurship. The portal will contain a bank of volunteers and volunteering opportunities, and will implement volunteerism programmes in schools, universities and colleges.

Finally, through the growth of its endowment fund, INJAZ will continue to progress towards sustainable financial independence by 2020.





9. Lessons learned and recommendations

- Maintain a comprehensive and staged intervention platform.

Because it takes years to form or change life and soft skills, positive attitudes and effective habits, INJAZ has adopted a comprehensive intervention approach that targets three main groups: adolescents in grades 7-11; university and college students; and youth enrolled in vocational training and community centres. The programmes for university and college students help them to develop entrepreneurial acumen and offer internships and job placement initiatives to facilitate their access to the job market. Youth in vocational training and community centres build their workplace skills and also benefit from job placement programmes. To date, only the university programmes have shown to be effective.

- Build the entrepreneurial acumen and ambitions of youth.

INJAZ has a series of programmes which foster an entrepreneurial spirit and support youth in developing functional social and business enterprises. Most of these programmes conclude with a local or national competition, and link youth with business and social leaders, incentivizing the youth and strengthening their future connections with the leaders. Entrepreneurial skills are highly transferable assets and will greatly improve participants' employability in many different professions.

- Build the soft skills of youth through interactive learning.

INJAZ programmes systematically employ a methodology of applied knowledge and practical skills-building through

an interactive and experiential learning environment. Regardless of the focus of the programme, the employed methodology is 'learn by doing'. The methodology develops students' skills in the areas of leadership, communication, accountability, organization, teamwork and critical thinking, and provides realistic workplace scenarios, enhancing the employability of the students.

- Support the development of Jordanian education providers.

Teachers and educators who volunteer to help deliver INJAZ programmes gain exposure to the interactive teaching methodology employed by the programmes and receive training by INJAZ. Indirectly, they can also benefit from the content of the soft skills and entrepreneurship programmes.

- Training must cover the programme material and methodology.

All INJAZ volunteers participate in content-based occupational training. They are trained on the programme material and activities as well as INJAZ best practices on programme implementation, volunteer recruitment and teaching methodologies in an interactive and participatory teaching method. The aim is to increase the number of trained volunteers and develop a more rigorous training.

- Engagement with the private sector.

A close collaborative relationship was established with the private sector since the outset, which has allowed the programme to leverage the expertise and networks of these partners. The private sector has been involved at various stages, from strategic planning to programme delivery, partnership outreach and development.

- Hands-on volunteer management is instrumental to successful programme implementation.

Standardized volunteer follow-up protocols and monitoring and evaluation systems are being put in place to obtain feedback from volunteers and assess their performance on a regular basis. INJAZ will launch an electronic volunteer management platform.

- Recognition and added value for volunteers is key to retention.

Retention of volunteers hinges on appreciation and recognition of their contributions, as well as provision of added value to dedicated volunteers through trainings and consultations to build their own skills and give them a voice in the design and improvement of INJAZ programmes. INJAZ organizes several appreciation and volunteer retention activities, e.g., the annual INJAZ Volunteer Appreciation Event, which provides certificates of completion.

10. Components to consider for scale-up in MENA

- Engagement with the private sector through the creation of networks of corporate volunteers.
- Delivery of INJAZ programmes and activities through the network of corporate volunteers and support from staff who also participate on a voluntary basis.
- Enrichment of the national educational system through the development of high-impact, participatory curricula and subsequent transfer of ownership to the Ministry of Education.

11. Resources

Selected coverage of INJAZ programmes and impact:

- Company Start-Up Program Success Stories
- “Aster Company”
- “JAWAB Company”
- Tabeetna Company”

12. References

Bibi, D. (2012). INJAZ Annual Report 2011/12. INJAZ, unpublished.

Interview with Mr. Muhannad Al-Jarrah, Executive Director, Partnership Unit (9 October 2014).

Brown, R.A.; Constant, L.; Glick, P.; Grant A.K. (2014). Youth in Jordan: Transitions from Education to Employment. RAND Corporation. Available at: http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR500/RR556/RAND_RR556.pdf

Center for Education Innovations (2014). INJAZ Young Volunteers Day [Online]. Accessible at: <http://www.educationinnovations.org/program/injaz-young-volunteers-day>

Center for Education Innovations (2014a). INJAZ Business Leaders Campaign [Online]. Accessible at: <http://www.educationinnovations.org/program/injaz-business-leaders-campaign-blc>

Center for Education Innovations (2014b). INJAZ Company Start-Up Program [Online] Accessible at: <http://www.educationinnovations.org/program/injaz-company-start-program>

Dhillon, N. (2008). Middle East Youth Bulge: Challenge or Opportunity? [Online] Accessible at: <http://www.brookings.edu/research/speeches/2008/05/22-middle-east-youth-dhillon>

ILO (2013). Global Employment Trends for Youth: A generation at risk. Geneva: International Labour Organization.

INJAZ. Quality Management System (QMS) - Monitoring and Evaluation at INJAZ. Unpublished.

Jarrah, M. (August 2014). Fostering a National Culture of Volunteerism: Tatawa Initiative. PowerPoint presentation at the UNICEF MENA Adolescent Development Regional Network Meeting, 18-21 August 2014.

Jarrah, M. (May 2014). INJAZ Prezi Presentation. Unpublished.

PKF Jordan (November 2012). INJAZ Impact Assessment Study.

INJAZ Programme Form.

Silatech (December 2013). Volunteerism Linked to Entrepreneurship Among Young Arabs.

Telephone interview with Mr Muhannad Jarrah, Executive Director, Partnership Unit, INJAZ (9 October 2014).

Websites

- <http://www.injaz.org.jo/>



Photo credits: INJAZ.