

# COVID-19 and Youth Employment in Jordan and Palestine: Impacts, Opportunities, and a Way Forward

*COVID-19 and Youth Employment in Jordan and Palestine: Impacts, Opportunities, and a Way Forward* draws on youth and employer survey results to document the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on young people in Jordan and Palestine, with an emphasis on vulnerable youth including refugees in Jordan, youth in Gaza, and young women. The report also charts a path for workforce development organizations, funders, and policymakers to support the integration of youth in the labor market during the COVID-19 recovery through skills training and employment support services directed at the sectors most likely to grow during this period.



**Key study findings and approaches** for workforce development organizations, policymakers, and the private sector to help youth seize opportunities during the COVID-19 recovery:



Despite the difficulty of the pandemic, many in the private sector in Jordan and Palestine are optimistic about the potential for their businesses to grow in the coming years, both in revenue and staff size

## Approaches

- Partnerships with the private sector on youth onboarding programs
- Training for youth focused on the sectors most likely to grow
- Campaigns to increase youth interest in vocational jobs



The move toward online work modalities and the expansion of the ICT sector may create expanded opportunities for youth during the COVID-19 recovery

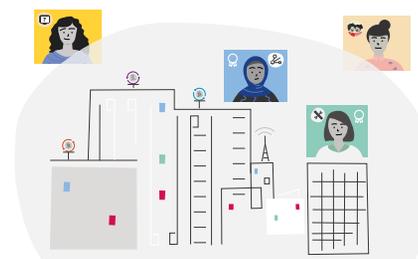
## Approaches

- Technical boot camp models aimed at specialized skills
- Building virtual freelancing skills of youth, especially in Gaza
- Creating technology hubs for young freelancers to work in teams and access needed technology
- English language training for youth

Challenges that youth, especially the most vulnerable, faced to joining and remaining in the workforce worsened as a result of the pandemic

## Approaches

- Soft and technical skills training
- Targeted, wraparound services for youth, including job placement services, mentorship, and apprenticeships
- Incubator services for youth startups
- Improvements to the enabling environment for entrepreneurship



Young women have faced additional challenges to participating in the workforce during the pandemic due to increased care responsibilities, skills mismatches, and job scarcity

## Approaches

- Technical skills training focused on non-traditional fields for women (e.g. mobile maintenance, vocational jobs)
- Market-informed self-employment training
- Apprenticeships
- Partnerships with the private sector to develop diversity recruitment strategies

## Select Recommendations from the Report

- 1 Youth workforce development programming in Jordan and Palestine should provide **targeted, wraparound services for youth, including job placement services**, alongside soft and technical skills training, in order to improve labor market outcomes for **vulnerable youth**.
- 2 Implementers should consider placing an increased focus on technical training involving **apprenticeship models** for **young women** in Jordan.
- 3 Implementers and funders should consider focusing on **technical boot camp models** aimed at producing **job-ready youth** in specific technical areas that are in most demand among local ICT companies, and that could also be applied in virtual freelancing.
- 4 Youth workforce development organizations should consider completing additional studies in order to identify **evidence-based approaches** to improve labor market outcomes for **youth with disabilities** in Jordan and Palestine. Sample size limitations prevented this study from generating detailed insights in this area.
- 5 Implementers and funders should focus on developing **virtual freelancing capacity** among **youth in Gaza** given the significant restrictions that exist for other avenues of employment.
- 6 Implementers and funders should consider **technology hub models** for virtual jobs that bring together youth to form **freelancing teams** rather than working in isolation. This approach would provide opportunities for youth to develop their teamwork and entrepreneurship skills and could help close the gap in **youth technology access**.
- 7 In Jordan, implementers of workforce development programming should prioritize training youth for jobs in sectors that are expected to grow during the COVID-19 recovery, such as the **ICT sector** – including **virtual jobs** – and **manufacturing**, in addition to **vocational fields**.
- 8 In Palestine, implementers of workforce development programming should prioritize training youth in sectors that are expected to grow during the COVID-19 recovery, including **ICT and virtual jobs, vocational fields, and healthcare**.
- 9 Implementers and funders should focus particular effort on **integrating women** into youth workforce development programming, particularly in **non-traditional fields** such as mobile maintenance and other ICT-driven fields as well as vocational work, while remaining attentive to cultural norms and practical considerations affecting women's job placement and retention.
- 10 Implementers should consider working directly with **private sector employers** to develop and roll out **onboarding programs** that help close gaps in the technical and soft skills of youth in order to increase their success on-the-job.

EFE's mission is to create economic opportunities for unemployed youth so they can create a brighter future for themselves, their families, and their communities.

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