



A PATHWAY TO YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Youth internships programme in Jordan

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As part of the Youth Participation and Employment (YPE) programme, Oxfam's partner INJAZ works to bridge the skills gap between the educational system and the changing needs of the labour market in Jordan. Oxfam supports the INJAZ internship programme, which aims to integrate young people into private-sector companies in order to help inform their future career choices. For many young people who participate in the programme, their internship is a stepping-stone to full employment. This case study presents examples of young people who enrolled in the scheme, enhanced their skills, and found a job. Though the uncertainty caused by COVID-19 has affected the pace of recruitment, Oxfam and INJAZ are still working tirelessly to achieve the programme's mission.

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This case study was written by Lamia Raei, an external consultant appointed by the Youth Participation and Employment (YPE) Programme. Oxfam acknowledges the assistance of the YPE Programme Management Unit (PMU) and the Programme Team in Jordan in its production. It is part of a series of case studies written to inform public debate on youth participation and employment issues in the MENA region. The YPE programme is part of the Arab Danish Partnership Programme (DAPP) and funded by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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The information in this publication is correct at the time of going to press.

Published by Oxfam GB for Oxfam International under ISBN 978-1-78748-795-6 in August 2021.

DOI: 10.21201/2021.7956

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Cover photo: Islam is a youth trainee who took part in the Oxfam and INJAZ internship scheme. Credit: Nesma Alnsour/Oxfam.

1 INTRODUCTION

'I would recommend this programme to all young people. I would have never got my job without it.'

– Rand Mubaydeen, 25

With a broad network of private-sector partners able to provide critical insight into employer perspectives, Oxfam's partner INJAZ has extensive experience with linking the public, private and civil society sectors to bridge the skills gap between the educational system and the changing needs of the labour market. The organization provides Jordanian youth with job-readiness skills, as well as internships, fellowships, shadowing and mentoring, apprenticeships and on-the-job training that can boost their chances of joining the labour market.

As part of the Youth Participation and Employment (YPE) programme, Oxfam supports the INJAZ internship programme, which aims to integrate young people into private-sector companies to help inform their future career choices. Graduate jobseekers interested in working in private-sector institutions are selected through interviews at Jordanian universities. Successful candidates take a training course prior to their internship on communication skills, job-seeking skills, ethics at work and gender awareness.

INJAZ has a broad network of carefully selected national and international partners among the private sector non-government organizations, as well as cooperation agreements with key ministries. It works closely with this robust partner network, which guides the demand-driven design of its programmes.

In 2020, INJAZ created partnerships with 36 entities to host young interns. Eighty-three interns joined the programme and were assigned to private and non-government organizations, fourteen of whom were later recruited for full-time positions. Because it is tailor-made to the needs of the labour market, the Oxfam and INJAZ internships programme has enabled the recruitment of many interns, either by their host organizations or other employers.

2 A PATH TO FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT

For many young people who take part in the internship programme, their internship is a stepping-stone to full employment. Among them is Oroub al Amarieen, 22, who was encouraged by friends to join the Oxfam and INJAZ internship programme when she graduated with a Medical Laboratory

degree in 2020 and was seeking a job in her hometown of Karak. Oxfam and INJAZ provided Oroub with intensive training on how to approach the labour market, present herself in a professional manner and deal with challenges in the workplace. Through YPE, Oroub was offered an internship as a medical laboratory technician at Tahrir Laboratory in Karak.

'During my three-month internship, I learned how to conduct primary laboratory tests, draw a sample, give injections and communicate with patients. I worked full time, with close follow-up from the INJAZ team, to whom I submitted timesheets detailing my working days.'

'Towards the end of my internship, I learned about a vacancy at the laboratory. I applied and was selected for the job. The internship made it easier for my employers to choose me, being familiar with my performance. I'm currently on a probation period of three months, as per the Jordanian labour law. Once this end[s], I will receive a full-time annual contract.'

3 CHANGING CAREER DIRECTION

After her graduation with a biology degree, Rand Mubaydeen, 25, had an unhappy experience in her first workplace. When friends told her about the Oxfam and INJAZ internship programme, she enrolled to learn new skills and find a different job. She was selected for an internship at the Karak Creative Club, a non-profit organization that provides children and youth with arts programmes and skills development. 'I realized that working in the field of community development was more rewarding, as I often used to volunteer in community campaigns', she says.

Before starting the internship, Rand received INJAZ's YPE Employment Package training, run online during the COVID-19 lockdown. This taught Rand what would be expected from her as an intern. 'When I started my internship, I was assigned to organize workshops for children aged five to nine-. The workshops focused on teaching them English, providing sensory development activities, and a physical coordination programme.'

Towards the end of Rand's three-month internship, a colleague at the organization resigned. She applied for the post and was selected as a project coordinator for the 'Theatre for Change' project.

According to Rand, a key advantage of the internship programme is the systematic follow-up on the interns' work. 'I have received much training from other organizations, but all of them end their contact once the training is over. That's not the case with INJAZ. The programme allows trainees to start establishing their own professional network in the labour market. It also provided me with an opportunity to stay in Karak, rather than seeking opportunities in Amman. I would recommend this programme to all young people. I could have never got my job without it.'

4 HELP TO RE-ENTER THE LABOUR MARKET

Four years after graduating with a psychology degree in 2014, Ali Al Budour, 29, had to resign from his job in human resources in Aqaba for personal reasons and go home to Tafila. Ali learned about the Oxfam and INJAZ internship programme in 2019 through the INJAZ Facebook page. He enrolled in INJAZ's YPE Employment Package training in December 2019 and was soon offered an internship as an administrator at an energy company. In March 2020, the company shifted to remote working during the COVID-19 lockdown. Ali continued to work online, although after the internship ended, he was unable to secure a job at the company.

'I have contacted the company several times, as they were happy with my performance', he says. 'But the uncertainty of the COVID-19 situation is affecting recruitment. I am still in contact with the INJAZ team, who never stopped following up [on] my status, to explore other employment opportunities.'

Ali's case is one of many opportunities lost due to COVID-19. To avoid similar situations, Oxfam is supporting INJAZ to constantly monitor the labour market to identify emerging sectors in need of young employees. Despite being older and more experienced than most graduates on the programme, Ali maintains that support from Oxfam and INJAZ is extremely useful for people like him who have left the labour market and would like to re-join it. 'The training complemented my professional skills with additional knowledge, in terms of improving my management skills and my ability to function in a team.'



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