

Jordan: Engaging children and parents in career development enriched by employer engagement

In response to concerns over youth unemployment, skills mismatches and gender labour market segmentation and in alignment with the [Ministry of Education's Education Sector plan \(2018-22\)](#) and the [National Strategy for Human Resources Development \(2015-25\)](#), the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is experimenting with new approaches to career guidance in partnership with the UK-based Education Development Trust ([EDT](#)).

The Future Ready programme consists of a series of related interventions delivered over 12 weeks designed to provide Grade 9 students (age 15-16) with a range of career guidance interventions. The provision is designed to support student during the final academic year prior to the end of compulsory schooling and provide students with insights into the desirability and feasibility of continuing on selected education pathways, undertaking vocational education and training or entering the labour market.

Future Ready: Programme Activities

Future Ready Programme Activities	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3
Five group careers education and guidance lessons	2	2	1
Two Math lessons enriched with careers/work learning	1	1	
Two English lessons enriched with careers/work learning	1	1	
One employer rotation engagement event ('career carousel') with five employers		1	
Two mentor sessions to develop student work and career action plans		1	1
Technical and Vocational Training (TVET) visits or talks at school (for those who may choose a TVET pathway option)		1	
Job shadowing (work experience) for students expected to leave education at age 16 only			1
E-learning portal with all resources	Ongoing		
Parent handbook and at home activities	Ongoing		

Future Ready follows a whole school and community model, engaging parents, employers, school principals, teachers, guidance counselors, and students with the aim of challenging gender stereotypes, improving the perception of the vocational sector, and developing 21st-century skills. During the pilot phase (2022-23) eight schools were engaged: four schools in the Jordanian capital of Amman (three girls' and one boys' school) and four other schools in Zarqa (three girls' and one boys' school).

This case study draws on interviews with teaching staff in two of the pilot schools:

Dayhat Hassan for Girls. Founded in 1993, Dayhat Hassan for girls serves more than 1,400 students by offering grade 9 to grade 12 classes for Jordanian students and grade 1 to grade 10 courses for Syrian refugees. Sixty-two Grade 9 students were randomly selected to participate in the Future Ready pilot programme.

Alquds School for Boys. Founded in 2017, Alquds school for boys serves more than 1,100 students offering morning and evening classes for students who study and work. Eighty 15-year-old students were randomly selected for the 12-week pilot programme.

Encouraging and enabling parental conversations with students about their future careers

School staff reported that an important objective of Future Ready was to engage parents in the programme. In Jordan, parents play an influential roles in helping their children to develop in the context of complex cultural norms. In Alquds School for Boys, the schools worked with local communities to build support for the programme, actively explained it at social gatherings and appointed parent ambassadors to champion the new approach to career guidance. In Dahyat Hassan for Girls, the school realized a need to adapt to parents' preferred communication styles to increase the likelihood of engagement. For example, the school transferred some of the content from the e-learning platform to WhatsApp voice notes, increasing parents' engagement and buy-in.

Changing attitudes about gendered employment

As PISA 2018 results for Jordan show, the career ambitions of young Jordanians are highly concentrated and also strongly shaped by gender.

	Girls			Boys	
1	Doctors	20.8	1	Doctors	18.9
2	Teachers	15.1	2	Engineers	18.0
3	Lawyers	10.2	3	Teachers	6.3
4	Engineers	6.3	4	Police officers	5.3
5	Nursing and midwives	5.3	5	Aircraft pilots and related associate professionals	4.9
6	Pharmacists	4.6	6	Non-commissioned armed forces officers	4.3
7	Dentists	3.4	7	Lawyers	3.4
8	Writers	3.3	8	Business services agents not elsewhere classified	3.1
9	Police officers	3.1	9	Sportspeople	2.7
10	Translators, interpreters and other linguists	2.6	10	Dentists	2.4
Total		74.7	Total		69.2

A prominent theme of delivery in Dahyat Hassan School for Girls was student exposure to career paths where women are underrepresented. For example, female students had the opportunity to watch a video in the e-learning portal to learn from Khawla Al Sheikh, the first female plumber in Jordan, and learn how she pursued her career in plumbing, adapting to local patterns of demand. In response to parental concerns that such employment might be socially or culturally unaccepted and not financially rewarding, the school arranged for students to meet with women working in the profession to provide first-hand insights into the nature of the career. In Alquds School for Boys, the programme is also served to broaden the career interests of students, for example through one week boot camp at a hotel

which provide an introduction to careers related to the culinary arts – a profession in which men are typically underrepresented.

In scaling up the programme, Future Ready will expand to the three regions of Jordan, the North, Central, and South - supporting 25 schools in 2023-24 with the expectation that, in three years, the programme will reach 85-100 schools and will eventually offer the programme in all state/public secondary schools in Jordan.

For more information about the Future Ready programme, visit: <https://www.edt.org/middle-east-and-asia/programmes/future-ready/>.