

Focus on Jordan

Effective training techniques in Jordan include emphasis on learning by doing, visual rather than text reinforcement, strong teacher leadership, and redundancy to reinforce learning. **BY JEAN ABINADER**



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To talk about training in Jordan is to confront difficult challenges that are only getting harder to solve. The labor situation is compounded by three factors:

1. Job migration dominates most high-tech jobs, which are moving to the UAE and other Gulf countries where the pay is better, working conditions more supportive, and there are enough employers if you have the right skills.

2. There are approximately 100,000 foreign nationals, primarily from Egypt and South Asia, who are doing jobs Jordanians did just 30 years ago, from semi-skilled and unskilled tasks in construction, agriculture, and maintenance to domestic help. Their low pay scale and willingness to work long hours is welcomed by Jordanian employers concerned with their bottom lines.

3. The educational system is not keeping up with market demands. The technical, vocational, education, and training (TVET) sector is under-resourced, with limited capacity to produce skilled graduates ready to compete in a limited labor market. This deficit is compound-

companies to work with international donors to equip locals and Syrians with market-ready skills. Many Jordanians and Syrians already have some knowledge of English, so that makes it a bit easier, but that doesn't mean they can comprehend training manuals or upper-level educational texts.

Some quality government and private community colleges have solid curricula and instructors, but the demand for their services is inconsistent, and donor funding could become problematic without demonstrated results. There are plenty of subsidies to support job readiness; anyone coming into the market needs to know the terrain.

For example, there are conditions in the Jordanian economy that diminish the threshold for successful outcomes: low minimum wage, poor public transportation, variable health care, and cultural considerations regarding work environments and types of work. A case in point is a model textile factory that employs only Jordanian women trained for six months, given day care, dormitories, a clinic, transportation, a fair work schedule and salary, and other factors. It has never been able to retain more than 25 percent of its Jordanian employees. They just didn't like working in a factory, despite the favorable conditions.

Effective training techniques are similar to those of other Arab countries: emphasis on learning by doing, visual rather than text reinforcement, strong teacher leadership, building positive relations with students and their families, and redundancy to reinforce learning. Certifications and recognition along the way are much appreciated.

Opportunities exist for training companies to work with international donors to equip Jordanians and Syrian refugees with market-ready skills.

ed by the stress on the public system—which has middle-class parents increasingly turning to high-priced private alternatives—and the weight of supporting hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees, 80 percent of whom live in towns and cities.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

What does this mean for the training professional or company entering Jordan? Today, there are tens of millions of dollars being spent to support its economic growth to stabilize the impact of the Syrian refugees and the drain on the host communities. This has created multiple opportunities for training

FACTS TO KNOW

- More than 50 percent of the population is under age 30.
- The highest unemployment rates are among university graduates.
- Women are well-educated and competitive.
- Education is highly prized.

That said, without job opportunities, Jordan will continue to only have short-term subsidized solutions. **f**