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SUCCESS STORY

Shahd Douglass

A Jordanian Entrepreneur Traces Her Success to a USAID-Supported Youth Training



Like the rest of the Arab world, Jordan faces a “youth bulge” — a population of young people whose numbers are outpacing the employment opportunities being created for them. The challenge is also an opportunity, however, and that is why international donors, working hand-in-hand with the Jordanian government, have invested millions of dollars in mobilizing new graduates in the service of the country and its economy.

As part of its commitment to supporting young entrepreneurs in Jordan’s knowledge economy sectors, the USAID Jordan Competitiveness Program (JCP) has offered

training and job placement opportunities to hundreds of young Jordanians. Many of these have been students or freshly minted graduates — like Shahd Douglas.

“We had an intensive practical training in the most important aspects of organizing, financing, marketing and managing a small business,” Shahd says about her participation in the JCP Youth Entrepreneurship Program, which concluded in 2017. The program, implemented in partnership with the King Abdallah II Fund for Development (KAFFD), provided participants “with the ability to find and act upon opportunities to translate inventions or technology into new products,” Shahd adds.

Since her participation in the USAID-supported program, Shahd, who holds a graduate degree in public health and health education from the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST), has gone on to launch her own start-up. In 2018, her ICT firm, “TechTeb,” was awarded the Spirit of Tech-I award from the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and Global Innovation through Science and Technology (GIST).

Shahd attributes her success to her formative training through JCP: “We left the training with business ideas and with complete business plans,” she recalls. “And, of course, meeting other colleagues from different backgrounds who share the same [belief in the] power of change enhanced my experience.”