

# Retail and hospitality training for Syrian Refugees at Abdali Mall Training Centre, Jordan

People 1st  
International



The integration of over 1.3 million Syrian Refugees living in Jordan remains a significant social, economic and political challenge. Collaborative partnerships present a significant opportunity to develop solutions that overcome barriers, as this project demonstrates.

## Background

People 1st International delivered a programme of retail and hospitality training for Syrian refugees, funded by the European Bank for Reconstruction & Development (EBRD). We agreed with our partners in Jordan, and in the international community, that a medium-term strategy is needed which provides Syrian refugees and their host communities with sustainable livelihoods. The long-term vision requires improvements in access to formal jobs and skills provision, as well as continuing engagement of employers within the private sector.

## Our solutions

The partnership between People 1st International, EBRD, and local partners, JEFE and AMC, offered a unique arrangement to support the integration of refugees into the local economy in Jordan. Over a number of years, People 1st International has established solid partnerships between local employers and education providers, and under the Abdali Urban Regeneration project, a high-profile EBRD project to introduce work-based learning and employment opportunities for young people, had established the Abdali Mall Recruitment and Training centre.

The AMRTC provides training and career guidance for young Jordanians in retail and hospitality sectors, to support youth inclusion, in partnership with JEFE and other local training providers.

The project to support Syrian refugees was focused on economic social inclusion. The main aim was to extend the existing training and job brokerage activity in AMRTC to Syrian refugees, in order to share the impact of enhanced training and to increase the local skills base for businesses. The target was for 115 young Syrians (16-30 years old) to undergo a 4-6 week pre-employment training programme, to receive advice and support on applying for a work permit and to benefit from a job-matching service to support transition into employment in the retail and hospitality sectors. Consideration also needed to be given to gender equality and measurement of the programme success was based on this access to skills training and formal employment.

## Jordan

“Our partnership with People 1st International and the support of EBRD have enabled us to extend the opportunities offered through the Abdali Mall Training Centre, not just to local people but also to young refugees from Syria, giving them the chance to train for a career in retail and hospitality. At the end of the programme, 64% of those who went through the programme were in employment and that figure has now increased to over 75%. The success of the programme has meant that we are in a strong position to secure more donor funding to enable us to support young refugees, helping them to create sustainable futures for themselves and their families, while benefiting the community as a whole.”

Suhair Albargouthi, Human Resources Manager,  
Abdali Mall Company

## Outcomes & impact

The project successfully delivered outputs against a number of key objectives:

- Developed the Work Readiness Programme, including customer service and soft skills training, and trained 121 Syrian refugees; also delivered accredited trainer and certification programmes
- Included a manicure and pedicure programme to provide women with opportunities to train in a field that would suit their family commitments and cultural sensitivities
- Secured engagement of 23 employers and facilitated work placements for the majority of programme graduates\*
- Supported capacity building with the establishment of a Train the Trainer programme
- Set up job-matching and employment support services, including advice on work permits
- Working with local stakeholders, raised awareness and engaged prospective delegates through accessible campaigns, with a focus on social media
- Developed a sustainable financial model to attract further donor investment, with a second EBRD-funded phase in the pipeline
- Provided ongoing support and impact monitoring; delivered a series of recommendations to be implemented in the proposed 2nd phase.

\* Statistics following the final career fair and graduation ceremony on 26th April 2018 showed that 64% of participants were in work (against a target of 50%) and, as at July 2018, this had risen to 75%.

Employed: 75.4%

Immigration: 2.5%

Self Employed: 3.3%

Cultural Issues / getting married: 5.8%

Pursuing Education: 6.6%

Not yet in work: 6.4%

### Key objectives

Development and Implementation of the Work Readiness Programme

Employer Engagement

Capacity Building

Job Matching and Employment Support Services

Awareness Building

Sustainable Financial Model

Ongoing Support and Impact Monitoring

Watch a video about this project  
<https://youtu.be/QDKxLoYImtU>

## About People 1st International

People 1st International partners with industry, development banks, government agencies, NGOs and education providers to create sustainable approaches to workforce development. Providing consultancy, research and training solutions globally, we develop skilled, productive and inclusive workforces that help drive social and economic growth.

With over 50 years' experience in developing effective skills models and technical vocational education and training strategies, we use our unparalleled expertise to develop collaborative partnerships that foster positive change.

Building on our heritage as a sector skills council, we are proud to have worked in more than 50 countries to deliver responsive skills solutions that challenge social and gender exclusion, address the barriers to work and support continuous professional development.

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