

Youth inclusion through Ayla Oasis regeneration project



Summary

This initiative aimed to address youth unemployment in Aqaba, Jordan, by creating vocational training opportunities in the tourism and hospitality sector. The project focused on bridging the skills gap between local youth and employer needs, through the development and implementation of a youth inclusion model. The overall goal was to create sustainable employment opportunities, improve workforce standards, and contribute to policy changes within the national vocational training system.

Background

The tourism and hospitality industry in Aqaba, particularly through Ayla, had significant potential to create employment, with an estimated 4,500 new jobs in the sector. However, a key challenge existed: a mismatch between the skills of local youth and the needs of employers, primarily due to limited vocational training programmes in the region. This skills gap had contributed to high youth unemployment and underemployment in Aqaba.

The initiative aimed to position Ayla as a socially responsible employer, leading the way in inclusive workforce development. The project sought not only to address local challenges but also to influence national policy on vocational training, with the goal of creating a replicable model for the tourism sector across Jordan.

Our solutions

The initiative was structured around two key components aimed at addressing the skills gap and fostering sustainable employment for youth.

Youth inclusion model for Ayla

The first component focused on the development and implementation of a youth inclusion model for Ayla. An in-depth assessment of the local workforce was conducted to identify skill gaps and areas for improvement. Based on these insights, a recruitment and training centre was established to provide specialised vocational training programmes for the tourism and hospitality sectors. These programmes were developed in collaboration with employers to ensure alignment with industry-specific skills. Apprenticeships were also integrated into the training to offer youth valuable hands-on experience.

To further support youth employment, a comprehensive inclusion methodology and action plan was developed, involving key stakeholders in the process. Job matching services and career guidance were provided to help youth find suitable job opportunities. In addition, an awareness campaign was launched to promote the inclusion model and its potential to create long-term change. Partnerships were also formed with government agencies and donors to ensure the initiative's sustainability.

National policy engagement platform

The second component focused on creating a national policy engagement platform. This began with mapping the existing vocational training standards in Jordan and assessing how well they aligned with the needs of the tourism and hospitality sectors. A platform for ongoing dialogue was then established, facilitating collaboration between private sector stakeholders and educational authorities to improve vocational training outcomes.

In collaboration with the Skills Council, the project worked to strengthen vocational training standards and promote the adoption of effective work-based learning models. Capacity-building support was provided to enhance the Skills Council's ability to implement these changes. The progress of these reforms was monitored to ensure they led to meaningful improvements in the national vocational training system.

Outcomes

The project generated several key outcomes that will contribute to long-term impacts:

- Through the training programmes and apprenticeship opportunities offered, youth in Aqaba were exposed to potential career paths in the tourism sector.
- The collaboration between local employers and Ayla's recruitment and training centre helped align workforce standards with industry requirements, making youth more employable in the tourism and hospitality sectors.
- By creating a national platform for dialogue between the private sector and policymakers, the initiative contributed to discussions on improving vocational training standards, with the potential to influence national reforms.

While the project has laid the groundwork for future workforce development, including the establishment of training centres and partnerships, the full impact on youth skills development will continue to unfold as training programmes are implemented and assessed over time.

About People 1st International

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We're a trusted partner to employers, industry bodies, skills organisations, donor funders, NGOs investment banks and governments, with over 50 years' experience in skills development and technical vocational education and training.

Our practical, employer-led solutions are created in response to industry needs, using our unparalleled insight into the current and future skills priorities. We're passionate about transforming skills and our experts work collaboratively with industry, governments and stakeholders to provide tailored support and facilitate responsive solutions to workforce challenges.

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