

## Sustainable Economic Development, Employment and Labour Market

# More Job Opportunities for Palestinian Youth I (MJO I) – Dual Studies Component

### Background and Objective

Young people in Palestine see themselves facing an uncertain future. Around 22% of the Palestinian population is between 18 and 29 years of age. The unemployment rate among university graduates within this age group reaches nearly 50%. Depending on the field of study, it takes an average of up to two years for graduates to start their first employment. Combined with the impact of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, this situation leaves a very substantial section of the population frustrated and lacking perspective. Tackling this widespread joblessness is therefore one of the most pressing issues in Palestine.

Although many Palestinians struggle to find work, businesses are, at the same time, having problems finding suitable candidates to fill their vacant posts. This is partly due to the inadequate university curricula which are not sufficiently meeting the requirements of the local economy and labour market.

The training of academic experts is frequently lacking a practical edge. As a result, graduates generally have strong theoretical knowledge but, as employers see it, they lack the practical and soft skills required in the workplace.

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*‘We all benefit because it’s a win-win solution for the companies and the students at the same time.’*  
*Nawaf Helou, Country Manager, Axsos, Ramallah*

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Based on a successful dual study model developed in Germany, the 2015 established Dual Studies Faculty at Al-Quds University helps to bridge the gap between theory and practice.



Project name	More Job Opportunities for Palestinian Youth I (MJO I)
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	East Jerusalem, West Bank
Partners	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MoHESR)
Duration	January 2015 – June 2024

Being the first of its kind in the country and sub-region, the programme offers an innovative approach to Palestinian higher education, combining academic studies with on-the-job training under real life conditions in participating private companies.

### Approach

The aim is to bring about the integration of theory and practice and to link university studies more closely with labour market needs. Until now, five study programmes have been launched at the Dual Studies Faculty: Electrical Engineering, Industrial Engineering, Information Technology, Business Administration and Digital Business Management.

Both the theoretical and practical stages of these bachelor’s degrees are being developed and applied in cooperation with a wide range of partner businesses in order to ensure that the curricula meet their needs and deliver the competencies they require.



Nearly half of the Dual Studies students at Al-Quds University are female



On-the-job training in the Dual Studies partner companies

From the left: Jawwal Telecommunication Company, Ramallah NAPCO (National Aluminum and Profiles Company)

As such, the programme relies on the close cooperation between Al-Quds University and the Palestinian private sector.

In the long term, the Dual Studies programme approach will benefit partner businesses and the Palestinian economy, opening employment opportunities and the job market for young people and, in doing so, offering them better prospects for the future.

## Achievements

Since the Dual Studies programme started in January 2015, more than 250 Palestinian partner companies have joined the Dual Studies partner network at Al-Quds University.

The first two study programmes (Electrical Engineering and Information Technology) were launched in 2015, Business Administration started in 2016, Industrial Engineering in 2019, and Digital Business Management in 2020. The curricula for these Dual Studies programmes have been developed in collaboration with private sector representatives and were accredited by the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission (AQAC).

Currently, there are 506 registered students (47% of them being females). Already 185 students have successfully graduated. More than 69% of students have signed an employment contract with a Palestinian company before or shortly after their graduation (46% of them being females).

Together with the management of the Al-Quds University, a concept has been implemented for the sustainable continuation of the programme.

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