

Sustainable Economic Development, Employment and Labour Market

More Job Opportunities for Palestinian Youth – Dual Studies

Background and Objective

Young people in Palestine see themselves facing an uncertain future. Around one third of the Palestinian population is between 15 and 29 years of age. The unemployment rate within this age group is close to 41% and as high as 54% among university graduates, for whom the job search takes a significant amount of time. Combined with the impact of the Middle East 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.

'We all benefit, because it's a win-win solution for the companies and the students at the same time.'

Nawaf Helou, Country Manager at Axsos Ramallah

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.

Project name	More Job Opportunities for Palestinian Youth – Dual Studies
Commissioned by	The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Palestinian Territories
Partners	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Duration	January 2015 – March 2023

Based on a successful dual study model developed in Germany, the newly designed Dual Studies Programme of Al-Quds University helps to bridge the gap between theory and practice. 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 private companies.

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.

Both the theoretical and practical stages of these bachelor 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. As such, the programme relies on the close cooperation between Al-Quds University and the Palestinian private sector.



First graduates of the Dual Studies Programme in information technology and electrical engineering, Al Quds University East Jerusalem, 2020



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

From the left: Jawwal Telecommunication company, Ramallah 2018

NAPCO (National Aluminum and Profiles Company), 2018

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 so doing, offering them better prospects for the future.

Achievements

- Since the Dual Studies Programme began in January 2015, more than 250 Palestinian partner businesses have joined the Dual Studies partner network at Al-Quds University.
- The first two study programmes (electrical engineering and information technology) have been launched in September 2015, business administration started in 2016, industrial engineering started in 2019, and digital business started in 2020. The dual curricula for these programmes have been developed in collaboration with private sector representatives and have been accredited by the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission (AQAC).
- Since the start of the programme, 96 students successfully graduated whereof 24 students graduated in information technology, 49 in electrical engineering and 23 in business administration. More than 56% of the Dual Studies students have signed an employment contract with a Palestinian company before or shortly after their graduation.
- In total, the programme plans to prepare 700 students for successful careers, at least one-third of whom will be women. Our goal is that graduates immediately find a job, preferably in the partner company where they were trained.

Covid19 Response

During the current academic year, the Palestinian universities went through an ongoing and tremendous change. To prevent the spread of the corona virus, Palestinian higher education institutions have moved from face-to-face learning to online learning. This was a fundamental shift in the academic process in Palestine, which required careful study and evaluation. With the support of GIZ More Job Opportunities Programme, the Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MoHE) conducted a comprehensive evaluation for the e-learning experience during the corona pandemic. MJO provided the needed resources to implement this assessment. The evaluation was carried out between June-July 2020, with the participation of more than 1,300 university lecturers and about 5,000 students from different Palestinian higher education institutions in the West Bank and Gaza. The main findings of this evaluation will serve as a reference for the current discussions of the Palestinian e-learning law, which is currently under approval.



A Dual Studies student at Al-Quds University. The university has launched an online learning platform for its students during the Corona Pandemic in 2020.

Published by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
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As of February, 2022

Photo credits GIZ PS/MJO Programme

Text GIZ PS/MJO Programme

GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication.

On behalf of The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)