

Under the Patronage of

*HRH Princess Alia Tabbaa*



Skills for Life: Improving Employment Outcomes for Youth

تعزيز فرص العمل للشباب

# AGENDA

Grand Hyatt • Amman, Jordan

*April 7–8, 2014*

## ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

Quality technical training and job placement support are not enough to maximize chances for youth employment. In fact, businesses in the MENA region and worldwide frequently cite the challenge of finding employees who present themselves well, problem solve, and show responsibility and initiative. They seek soft skills, including the ability to communicate clearly, to respect commitments, to work in teams, to organize and to lead.

This two-day conference will convene key stakeholders from Jordan and the Middle East and North Africa region to discuss the positive impact of life skills on youth employability and productivity, including the role that the private sector can play in promoting life skills in MENA's education and vocational training systems. The conference will draw on the experience of leading global and regional organizations working in the area of life skills, including the experience of the USAID-funded *Youth for the Future* program, which has built a cadre of over 200 qualified Jordanian life skills professionals and implemented a comprehensive life skills training program that has reached over 10,000 young Jordanians to date. In addition, the conference will present comprehensive research and a life skills toolkit developed through the World Bank's *Global Partnership for Youth Employment*.

### PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:



## DAY 1

### Call to Action:

*Using life skills to connect the region's educational system to market needs*

**8:30 – 9:00 Registration and Coffee**

### OPENING SESSION

**9:15 – 10:00 Welcome and Opening Remarks**

- Awais Sufi, Chief Operating Officer, International Youth Foundation
- Polly Dunford, Deputy Mission Director for Syria-related Programs, USAID
- H.E. Abdelaâdim El Guerrouj, Minister Delegate to the Minister of National Education and Vocational Training, Morocco
- H.E. Dr. Nidal Qatamin, Minister of Labor, Jordan

### MORNING PLENARY & INTERACTIVE LIFE SKILLS SESSION

**10:00 – 11:15 Regional Trends & Challenges in Life Skills: A Situational Assessment**

What current trends are shaping the role of life skills in youth productivity and employability in the region? This session will explore the opportunities, gap areas and the impact of life skills on positive transitions to adulthood, as well as share interesting findings about the current state of play for life skills in the region, including results of a regional mapping effort on life skills training that highlights key areas of needs, and other research findings related to soft skills requirements for entry-level jobs.

- Professor Ekhleif Tarawneh, President, University of Jordan
- Dr. M. Laura Sanchez Puerta, Senior Economist, World Bank
- Samir Hulileh, CEO, PADICO Holdings
- USAID spokesperson (TBC)

*Facilitator: Awais Sufi, COO, International Youth Foundation*

**11:15-11:30 Short Coffee Break**

**11:30-12:30 The Power of Experiential Learning**

Educators and employers alike are talking about the importance of life skills

for employability, but many practitioners have not actually experienced what this looks like in practice. Conference participants will participate in a life skills class and have the opportunity to hone their own skills. The session will be divided into 3 smaller groups to participate in a fun interactive life skills session with experienced trainers from the IYF Jordan *Passport to Success®* program. This will be followed by small group discussions to reflect on the importance of experiential teaching approaches to transformational life skills.

*Facilitators:*

- Sarabecka Mullen, Director, IYF Life Skills Programs
- Mays Al Shakanbeh, IYF Capacity Building Manager/ Master Trainer

**12:30 – 13:15**

**Youth Visions**

Hear directly from inspiring young men and women and their parents about the positive and transformational impact life skills training has made on their development. This interactive round robin discussion with a group of young people who have received life skills training through the Youth for the Future program will focus on the personal, social and emotional skills young disadvantaged Jordanians have acquired to navigate everyday life and make positive decisions about their future. The session will also highlight the role that parents play to support their children as they transition to adulthood.

**13:15 – 14:30**

**Buffet Lunch**

**RESPONDING TO THE NEED: PERSPECTIVES FROM EMPLOYERS AND EDUCATIONAL PROVIDERS**

After lunch, participants will break out into smaller group discussions to reflect on the morning's plenary sessions from the unique perspectives of both Educational Providers and Employers. The breakout groups will then reconvene to engage in a lively debate and develop a Call to Action for a stronger focus on mainstreaming life skills development to connect regional educational systems to market needs.

**14:30 – 15:45**

### **Breakout Session A: The Role of Educational Providers**

What can be done to encourage a stronger focus on life skills programming in MENA's educational systems? Distinguished experts representing some of the region's leading educational and vocational training providers will engage participants in an interactive discussion on what is currently being done to promote more life skills in education programs and where the gaps are. The session will also discuss how employers, representing the "other side" of the equation, can help push the education agenda in the right direction. Key topics such as the role of life skills in empowering students, reducing school dropout rates, and increasing self-confidence for students from challenging or disadvantaged environments will also be discussed.

- Ibrahim Safadi, CEO, Luminus Group
- Dr. Zaid Eyadat, Dean of International Studies and Political Science, University of Jordan
- Fouad Chafiqi, Director of Curricula, Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training, Morocco
- USAID representative (TBC)

*Facilitators: Rana Al Turk, IYF Jordan Country Director and Nadia Guerch, IYF Morocco Country Director*

**14:30 – 15:45**

### **Breakout Session B: Understanding the Employer Perspective**

Many companies express concern that they are not getting graduates with the skills they need. Why is that—and what should be done about it? Taking the perspective of the employer, the session will explore how education systems can best equip and prepare graduates for entry level jobs, and what role employers can play to support this process. Key topics such as the specific life and soft skills employers are seeking for entry level positions and the link between life skills, productivity and company performance will also be discussed.

- Hamada Abu Nijmeh, Secretary General, Ministry of Labor
- Issam Samara, General Manager, LG Electronics
- Mohammad Armouti, Operations Manager, Green Olive Food and Beverage Services, Al Kurdi Group
- Abdalsallam Qudomi, Assistant HRD & Training Manager, Americana
- Sahar Othman, Programs and Public Relations Manager, Sharek Youth Forum

*Facilitator: Mohammad Al Mbaid, IYF Palestine Country Director*

**15:45 – 16:00**

### **Coffee Break**

**16:00 – 17:00**

### **Call to Action: Aligning Regional Education Systems with Employer Needs**

The final panel of the day will reconvene participants from the breakout sessions to collectively share highlights and recommendations and build the platform for a Call for Action that is agreed upon by all. What systems-based approaches can the region's top educational providers and employers take together to better equip young Arab graduates for today's employment environment? How can life skills support the stronger entrepreneurial mindset Arab youth need to compete in today's market, where small- and medium-sized businesses are the engine of economic growth and a increasing source of employment? Reflecting on these critical issues, as well as the regional landscape for life skills highlighted in the morning sessions, participants will be energized and ready for Day 2's in-depth technical sessions, which will focus on specific areas for action to support MENA's growing life skills field.

- Dr. Maher Al Mahrouq, Director General, Jordan Chamber of Industry
- Qais Qatamin, Fund Director, King Abdullah II Fund for Development
- Prof. Dr. Tariq Al-Azab, Vice President for Technical Education, Al-Balqa' Applied University

*Facilitator: Bassem Nasir, IYF Regional Program Manager*

**17:00 – 17:15**

### **Day's wrap-up and explanation of Day 2 Technical Sessions**

## DAY 2

### **A Framework for Implementers:** *Effective practices for quality life skills programs*

**8:30 – 9:00 Registration and Coffee**

**9:00 – 9:30 Presentation of Day 2 Agenda and Technical Sessions**

**9:30 – 12:30 MORNING PLENARY: A Framework for Implementing Life Skills**

Taking a practical approach to exploring the main elements of a quality life skills program, this interactive session will present “Strengthening Life Skills for Youth: A Practical Guide to Quality Programming,” developed by IYF with World Bank support to provide practical guidance on successful life skills interventions with young people.

Facilitators will share key elements from the Guide and engage participants in a thoughtful discussion of “what works” when designing content, program structure, and training methodology for life skills training programs.

Participants will have the opportunity to break out into smaller groups twice to delve deeper into best practices related to topics such as: essential life skills competencies and engagement of stakeholders, creating an environment conducive to life skills learning, and monitoring and evaluating life skills programs.

Participants will discuss approaches for broader impact and sustainability, including avenues for certification and accreditation and possible mechanisms to encourage standardization of life skills approaches across the region, including the potential for regional framework for minimum standards.

This session is intended for all stakeholders including donors, new and seasoned life skills trainers, and employers or educational institutions who are looking to provide life skills training to youth.

*(There will be two 15 minute coffee breaks served at 10:45 am and 12:15 pm)*

*Facilitator: Sarabecka Mullen, Director, IYF Life Skills Programs*

*Facilitators for Breakout Sessions:*

- *Ruba Musleh, IYF Palestine Program Specialist*
- *Rami Abass, IYF Master Trainer, Egypt*
- *Angela Venza, IYF Program Director*
- *Katie Raymond, IYF Program Manager*

12:30 – 14:00

## AFTERNOON TECHNICAL SESSIONS

### TRACK ONE: PUBLIC SECTOR MODELS AND POLICY REFORM

#### Building Quality Life Skills Programs in the Public Sector

This session will look at effective models for institutionalizing life skills in public sector systems, both at the national and municipality level, including the role of policy reform to ensure systems-based approaches and long-term sustainability. The first half of the session will highlight two successful examples of pilots in Morocco and Jordan that have been taken to national scale. In the second half of the session, participants will explore the challenges and barriers to the widespread integration of life skills into nationally mandated curricula, especially in the TVET sector. Key considerations to ensure the long-term institutionalization of life skills, including the role of trainer incentive schemes, the development of life skills training units within ministries, and certification and continuing education for life skills trainers will be discussed. Together, the session participants will develop a framework for recommendations and action steps that can be taken to government policy makers to advocate for reform.

- H.E. Majid Habashneh, Director General, Jordan Vocational Training Corporation
- Ms. Nawal El Haouari, Advisor for Training to the Minister of Tourism, Morocco
- Mr. Abdulsalam Wail Y. Alsulaiman, Director, Child and Youth Programme, Arab Urban Development Institute
- Mr. Mohsen Ben Touati, Deputy Director, General Directorate for the Promotion of Employment, Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment, Tunisia

*Facilitator: Nadia Guerch, IYF Country Director*

### TRACK TWO: RESPONDING TO EMPLOYER NEEDS

#### Sector-Specific Approaches to Life Skills

Educators and employers agree that there is a growing gap between the skills that companies expect from their entry-level employees and the skills that these young people possess. This session will examine the effectiveness of sector-specific life skills models and how educators, government and businesses can work together to define the soft skills requirements for entry-level jobs in specific sectors to enhance employment outcomes for youth. The session will highlight successful models that integrate life skills into sector-specific employment training programs in the hospitality sectors in Jordan and Morocco. Speakers from the region's leading vocational training institutes will share their experience and specific design approaches, as well



as discuss obstacles to overcome in order to maximize training outcomes for employment.

- Senator Michael Nazzal, Chairman, Jordan Hospitality Association; Vice Chairman, Jordan Hospitality and Tourism Education Company
- Stuart Skinner, Senior Business Development Manager, City & Guilds

*Facilitator: Rana Al Turk, IYF Jordan Country Director*

### **TRACK THREE: CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR LIFE SKILLS PROFESSIONALS**

Qualified trainers are critical to effective life skills programs. Investing in professional development for life skills trainers is not only important to remain competitive and provide quality training services, it is also necessary to respond to the evolving demands of the life skills field.

#### **Enhancing Trainer Quality**

The first half of the session will provide an opportunity for life skills trainers to come together as a community of practice and reflect on specific learnings and areas to enhance their teaching skills. Feedback from master trainers and coaches indicates an urgent need for tailored professional development programs to enhance their technical skills, including facilitation skills and a deeper knowledge of core life skills topics such as critical thinking, health issues, and youth development. Discussion will also include how to implement strong quality assurance systems, including models for structured coaching and follow-up support; training content quality; and the sharing of useful resources and materials for evaluating life skills programs.

In the second half of the session, participants will explore professional approaches for broader impact and sustainability, including what steps need to be taken to strengthen the capacity of institutions that support adult education and continuous learning. Participants will also explore possible mechanisms and avenues for formalizing a life skills community of practice to support continuing education efforts for life skills trainers.

*Facilitators:*

- *Mays Al Shakanbeh, IYF Capacity Building Manager and Master Trainer*
- *Sarabecka Mullen, Director, IYF Life Skills Programs*

## TRACK FOUR: LIFE SKILLS AND CONFLICT SITUATIONS

### Helping Jordan's Host Communities Respond to the Needs of Vulnerable Youth through Life Skills

What can be done to diffuse tensions and reduce conflict amongst vulnerable youth in host communities? This session will discuss the challenges and opportunities that donors and civil society face working with Syrian refugees in Jordanian communities, particularly in the current working environment with limited work permits available for Syrian youth. This session will explore the role of life skills to empower youth at risk as positive change agents, as well as the role of key personal competencies such as problem solving, self-confidence, listening skills, and conflict resolution and negotiation skills to manage conflict in host communities. The session will also draw from best practices elsewhere in the region and will also highlight service learning and citizenship as a way to activate the role of marginalized youth in local communities.

- Michele Servadei, Jordan Deputy Representative, UNICEF
- Dalia Khalil, Executive Director--Egyptian Association for Educational Resources (E-ERA)
- James Orlando, Vulnerable Populations Specialist, USAID

*Facilitator: Mohammad Al Mbaid, IYF Palestine Country Director*

**14:00 – 15:00**

**Lunch and Break**

**15:00 – 15:30**

**Honorary Ceremony for Youth for the Future and Regional Life Skills Trainers**

**15:30 – 16:00**

**Closing Session**

The conference's final session will reflect on key messages and learnings from the two days and will outline the takeaways for action to build momentum and greater regional capacity for life skills programming.