



Knowledge hub
-
Collection of best practices

Summary of the best practice

1. Title of the best practice (e.g. name of policy, programme, project, etc.) *

Changing negative attitudes towards Technical and Vocational Training

2. Country or countries where the practice is implemented *

Jordan

3. Please select the **most relevant** Action Track(s) the best practice applies to *

- Action Track 1. Inclusive, equitable, safe, and healthy schools
- Action Track 2. Learning and skills for life, work, and sustainable development
- Action Track 3. Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession
- Action Track 4. Digital learning and transformation
- Action Track 5. Financing of education

4. Implementation lead/partner organization(s) *

Luminus Technical University College, Government of Jordan Vocational Training Centres,
Behavioural Insights Team

5. Key words (5-15 words): Please add key descriptive words around aims, modalities, target groups etc. *

social and behavioural change; technical and vocational training; public-private partnerships;
youth unemployment; vulnerable youth; stigma

6. What makes it a best practice? *

The programme is trying to reduce the negative attitudes held by the Jordanian society towards technical and vocational educational training, through a wide set of interventions tackling the issue through different angles. The approach includes social and behavioural research and campaign to address stigma around the sector; regular engagement with the private sector to ensure the curriculum is updated and responsive to the needs of the market; partnerships with public and private sector to ensure that government vocational training centres are upgraded and good quality in terms of infrastructure and equipment, technical content of the curriculum, linkages with the labour market, which can make them more appealing to a wider portion of the population

Description of the best practice

7. Introduction (350-400 words)

This section should ideally provide the context of, and justification for, the practice and address the following issues:

- i) Which population was affected?
- ii) What was the problem that needed to be addressed?
- iii) Which approach was taken and what objectives were achieved? *

Young people in Jordan view economic engagement as their main priority, but unemployment rates are increasingly high, the labour market is dominated by a substantial skills mismatch, and securing employment takes up to three years on average. Women and non-Jordanians face additional challenges: due to ingrained gender and social norms, women's unemployment stands at 27.5 per cent compared to 17.1 per cent for males - the fourth lowest female labour force participation rate in the world. In turn, Non-Jordanians, including Palestinian and Syrian refugees, are legally restricted to certain professional sectors only. An estimated 84 per cent of Syrian refugee youth are unemployed, and those who secure employment, often end up working in the informal sector, struggling with very insecure conditions and the risk of abuse and exploitation due to their status. The COVID-19 pandemic has only worsened this situation, with youth unemployment rates substantially increasing, especially for women and refugees.

The TVET sector is an emerging area of employment within the Jordanian economy. However, young people hold unfavorable attitudes towards the TVET sector and tend to enroll disproportionately in professions such as medicine, engineering, and law. However, these sectors are unable to absorb the high supply. Therein emerges an urgent need to increase the contextualized knowledge of young people regarding their educational and professional pathway opportunities to best prepare them for the transition to a productive and resilient adulthood.

The Government of Jordan has been implementing several strategies and initiatives to enhance and reform the country's TVET sector and more substantially involve the private sector, to increase the relevance of TVET training provision, bridge the gap between training and the skills needs of the labour market, and raise awareness towards as well as increase the appeal of the opportunities offered by the sector.

UNICEF Jordan is therefore supporting these government efforts through a comprehensive set of interventions that aim to tackle the issue through its different angles – with a specific focus on the most vulnerable youth, including young women and girls - including social and behavioural insights and campaigns; design and delivery of training informed by market research and private sector engagement; link between trainings and job opportunities; and assistance to the government to upgrade its vocational training centres.

8. Implementation (350-450 words)

Please describe the implementation modalities or processes, where possible in relation to:

- i) What are the main activities carried out?
- ii) When and where the activities were carried out (including the start date and whether it is ongoing)?
- iii) Who were the key implementation actors and collaborators? (civil society organizations, private sector, foundations, coalitions, networks etc.)?
- iv) What were the resources needed (budget and sources) for the implementation?

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In 2018, UNICEF Jordan launched a partnership with Luminus Technical University Jordan, one of the country's largest TVET providers, to provide youth with the skills required by the labour market – including in sectors that are open for the non-Jordanians. Training encompasses technical and vocational skills, as well as financial literacy, digital skills, English language, and leadership skills targeted to women. The market-driven nature of the programme aims to maximize the chances of young people securing employment upon graduating. First, UNICEF and its implementing partners conduct a market research and landscape analysis of the job opportunities available, and the skills needed within a particular geographical location. This then informs the training offered. Throughout implementation, UNICEF Jordan and its implementing partners engage the private sector in regular information-sharing and needs assessments, as well as involving industry leaders as trainers in the programme. This is to ensure that young people are aware of and equipped with the skills required by the job market, when they enter the workforce upon graduating from the programme. In addition, and in line with the inclusive nature of the programme, scholarships are offered to the most vulnerable students, such as refugees residing in camps and host community. Graduates who successfully secure a job can also receive professional coaching in the workplace, to help them navigate the new environment, address initial challenges, and develop the necessary soft skills.

The intervention also has an entrepreneurship component, focused on the vocational sector. It provides young women and girls from the poorest areas of the country with training in soft and entrepreneurial skills (e.g., social innovation and entrepreneurship, business planning, financial management, access to finance), seed funding, assistance with the procurement of equipment and material and registration and formalization of the business, continuous operational support (including follow-up visits, tracking of progress and training addressing specific needs) and tailored mentorship.

Responding to the national efforts to reform Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), UNICEF Jordan is also working to reactivate selected Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) and improve their capacity to provide youth with high quality, demand driven technical and vocational training, which is also aimed at making these institutions more attractive. In partnership with the Ministry of Labour, the private sector and existing academic and training institutions, UNICEF is facilitating sharing of know-how and resources between these actors; developing an innovative and updated curricula that is attuned to the future needs of the labour market, and able to stay updated and aligned with technological developments on a sustainable basis; and upgrading these centres in terms of their infrastructure, equipment and technologies.

In addition, in partnership with UNDP and the Behavioural Insights Team, UNICEF is applying behavioral science to strengthen the demand for TVET among Jordan's youth, and women and girls in particular. This includes conducting research to identify key barriers, drivers and facilitators affecting uptake of TVET at the

individual, community, social and system levels, and on this basis, applying behavioral insights to develop, test and potentially scale solutions to address key barriers.

9. Results – outputs and outcomes (250-350 words)

To the extent possible, please reply to the questions below:

- i) How was the practice identified as transformative? (e.g., impact on policies, impact on management processes, impact on delivery arrangements or education monitoring, impact on teachers, learners and beneficiary communities etc.);
- ii) What were the concrete results achieved with regard to outputs and outcomes?
- iii) Has an assessment of the practice been carried out? If yes, what were the results? *

In 2021, with funding from the Netherlands, KfW and the European Union, thanks to a successful outreach strategy and scholarship opportunities, 1,063 vulnerable students (50 per cent female, 15 per cent Syrian, 9 per cent Palestinian, 2 per cent with disabilities) enrolled in a mix of Higher Education and TVET courses from 7 different governorates. Besides TVET, the programme encompasses an enhanced Foundational skills module, including sessions on financial literacy, digital skills, 21st century skills, entrepreneurial skills and leadership, among other things. Courses are four, six or nine months long, focused on sectors that were identified as in demand, and provide students with both technical and soft skills that can enable them to thrive in the Jordanian labour market. Targeted sectors included the Beauty, Hospitality, Air-conditioning and refrigeration, Creative Media, Industrial Fashion Design, and Automotive sectors. Since 2018, UNICEF offered 2000 scholarships to vulnerable youth and achieved a 70% employment rate for graduates.

The entrepreneurship arm of the intervention has trained 385 vulnerable adolescents and youth (70 per cent female), which resulted in the launch of 133 women- and youth-led micro- and home-based enterprises. These businesses operate in a wide variety of sectors, depending on community needs and market opportunities, including tailoring, catering, agriculture, manufacturing, mobile maintenance, bicycle repair etc. These businesses have so far employed 386 young people aged 18 to 24 years, which in turn helped households (often female headed) from the country's poorest areas to meet their basic needs and achieve some form of income security, especially under the harsh conditions imposed by the pandemic. Amidst inevitable resistances and social pressure from the community, young women are raising awareness about the important contribution they can give to the local economy; are gaining confidence in their own capacities and developing skills that are key to their productive insertion in the labour market; are securing economic independence and resilience, with some of them using the income generated through their businesses to pay for their studies; and are serving as powerful role models for their younger siblings and other young women from the community.

As for the reactivation of government VTCs, conversations are currently ongoing between UNICEF, its implementing partners and responsible government entities to select the specific regions and sectors to focus on as part of the pilot, depending on needs and strategic nature of these sectors. In addition, VTCs have already agreed to embed UNICEF UPSHIFT, user-centric, and life skill curricula - or components of these - into VTC own curricula, to renew their content and ensure it is responsive to the market needs and able to provide youth with the necessary soft and technical skills. Skills such as problem solving, communication, teamwork and critical thinking, as well as social entrepreneurship and attention to community needs, were indeed missing from the VTC curriculum.

The social and behavioural change intervention has recently started and is in the research phase.

10. Lessons learnt (300 words)

To the extent possible, please reply to the following questions:

- i) What were the key triggers for transformation?
- ii) What worked really well – what facilitated this?
- iii) What did not work – why did it not work? *

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a detrimental impact on local businesses in Jordan, which made it more challenging for UNICEF and its partners to connect some beneficiaries with employment opportunities. Female and refugee students in particular face additional restrictions in terms of mobility and type of work they can engage in. In response to this, UNICEF strove to expand its network of potential employers and offered financial subsidies to help beneficiaries find placements that suited their needs. The pandemic also imposed restrictions on all job fairs, which usually represent a crucial opportunity for students to meet with potential employers, expand their networks, and gain a better understanding of the Jordan's labour market and its requirements. As a response to this, and in constant collaboration with UNICEF and its partners, organises a series of virtual job fairs, whose networking potential is inevitably more limited, but which nonetheless provided students with valuable contacts and information.

In addition, many refugee and orphan beneficiaries who already deal with complex needs, during the pandemic struggled with mental health even more. UNICEF has therefore been providing partners with training on Psychological First Aid (i.e., an evidence-informed approach to help children, adolescents, adults, and families in the immediate aftermath of a traumatic event), and referring beneficiaries to adequate mental health support.

Key to the success of the programme is a "Future Jobs" assessment, i.e. a review of growing sectors in Jordan, which are likely to absorb most workers in the next five years (for example: digital sector, new agricultural technologies, support health services, manufacturing), what skills and qualifications these sectors are going to require, and in which governorates these jobs are most likely to be created. For social and behavioral change interventions to be effective, UNICEF realised the importance of providing this information from an early age. This is why UNICEF Jordan Youth and Education sections are now collaborating to craft a pedagogical resource that will support teachers to provide career guidance to primary and secondary school students, in a digestible and age-appropriate format.

11. Conclusions (250 words)

Please describe why may this intervention be considered a “best practice”. What recommendations can be made for those intending to adopt the documented “best practice” or how can it help people working on the same issue(s)? *

The intervention can be considered a best practice due to its comprehensive nature, which is tackling the problem of stigma towards the TVET sector, especially for what concerns young women and girls, through several angles and in partnership with a multitude of actors. The engagement with the private sector, achieved through the preparatory market research which informs the entire programme, as well as through continuous consultations and engagement in curriculum design and delivery, is key. Social and behavioural change insights should be embedded in all components of the intervention, and by involving younger age groups as well as families and members of the communities beneficiaries come from, as this is where most social pressures and resistances towards TVET come from. Equally important is the partnership with the government - through providing technical support on the upgrading of the curriculum, infrastructure and equipment, as well as partnership arrangements - to feed into the national TVET strategy and reform and make sure that a broader segment of the population is reached and UNICEF efforts to renew the sector and make it more appealing are institutionalised and sustainable. Finally, highly important are the partnerships with other UN agencies and UNICEF sections, such as Education, as this can help increase the breadth and depth of the intervention, for example to ensure that younger students are targeted by the intervention and pedagogical resources are age appropriate. Partnerships with UNICEF Child Protection, in turn, is allowing UNICEF Youth Jordan to target victims of child labour - or their older family members - and refer them to TVET courses, to try and provide families with different pathways to and sources of livelihood

12. Further reading

Please provide a list and URLs of key reference documents for additional information on the “best practice” for those who may be interested in knowing how the results benefited the beneficiary group/s. *

<https://www.unicef.org/jordan/press-releases/over-400-youth-graduate-amaluna-unicef-supported-vocational-training-programme>