



**YouMatch**

Global Initiative on Innovative  
Employment Services for Youth

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Case Study

# Job Fairs in Palestine



**Providers**

The job fairs are initiated, organised, implemented and monitored by the Public Employment Services of the Palestinian Ministry of Labour in partnership with the private sector, and in cooperation with the Ministry of Education.

The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development supports implementation with the Programme “TVET and Employment Promotion Programme (TEP)”



**Target Groups**

The job fairs address both sides of the labour market:

- The organised private sector, companies and employers who are looking for skilled and motivated staff.
- TVET graduates and young job-seekers with the skills in demand but without formal graduation certificates



**Objectives**

The top priority of job fairs is employment (wage employment and self-employment). Job fairs aim at placing as many TVET graduates and job-seekers as possible into vacant entry-level wage employment, and at introducing young people to alternative career pathways into self-employment or entrepreneurship.

They also support placements into company-based internships of two to three months duration or into further training to increase job-seekers’ employability and employment prospects.

High placement rates require organisers to cooperate with the demand-side of the labour market: Highlighting the relevance of human resources management to employers and increasing their readiness to invest in recruitment and company-based training (internships) is less of a side-objective than it is a pre-condition.

Institutional learning and networking may be considered another objective. The joint job fair preparation and implementation is used to increase dialogue and collaboration between private sector, TVET sector, and Public Employment Services.

Job fairs implemented by the employment offices in Palestine under the new approach, clearly focus on placement. Information and training are also important, as applications must be targeted to ensure success. Job-seekers need to be well prepared in order to engage with the ‘right’ employer and to convince them in a short time.



**Intervention Approach**

To increase the stable employment of TVET graduates and job seekers, each job fair focuses on the most important local economic sectors and related technical training programmes. Fairs thus have different sectoral foci.

Unlike traditional job fairs in Palestine, the current activities are organised to respond to employers' demands for labour. Private sector needs are investigated prior to the selection of the relevant economic sector: Official surveys are reviewed, the Local Employment and Training Councils (with active employers' representation) and chambers of commerce are consulted, and field visits to employers are conducted.

To achieve ambitious employment outcomes in a difficult labour market environment, the job fairs need to have a good filtering mechanism in place, which increases the efficiency of matching supply with demand and facilitates the placement of job seekers in the labour market.

Preparation of job fairs entails pre-selection, registration, and preparation of youth as well as strategic work with selected employers (through field visits and informal "business dinners" with the local business community).

A rigorous monitoring system is in place to measure the number and types of placements. The registration of job-seekers allows for a thorough follow-up (tracer surveys). Follow-up surveys help identify the needs of participants who could not be placed.

Organisers discuss evaluation results with all partners to continuously improve the quality of the fairs (from the perspective of both, young jobseekers and employers) with every round of implementation.



**Activities**

After a long intense preparation, the actual event is short, focused, and intense:

- Young participants are registered upon entry
- A 30-minute opening ceremony is used for ice-breaking and engaging job-seekers and employers early by having a round of open-ended questions: Employers and job-seekers are asked what they are looking for during the fair and what they are expecting of each other.
- The core of the event is the organised, hence very targeted, 'speed-dating' appointments of job-seekers with employers.
- Initial satisfaction of job-seekers and employers is measured with a first feedback-evaluation form completed on the spot during the fair. A second evaluation is later conducted to supplement this first feedback with precise output data (e.g. number of interviews, number and types of contacts).



**Resources**

- Time resources: About eight weeks of preparation are required for
  - three to four stakeholder meetings before the event for planning, organising, and managing implementation. About the same number of meetings take place after the fair for evaluation and for following up placements;
  - addressing the private sector: Identifying vacancies, inviting institutions (associations, chambers, etc.) and companies; defining target sector, preparing and sending out vacancy note forms, field visits to companies, conducting "business lunches" (informal meetings with employers for awareness raising, information, and networking).
  - Reaching out to students and job-seekers: collecting graduates' profiles from TVET schools and other education or training institutions, meeting with graduates & filling in skills forms, selection and registration of participants, preparing selected participants;
- Logistics
  - Venue
  - Employers' booklets, e.g. a brochure displaying which employers are exhibiting and where to find them.



**Resources**

- Banners and roll-ups
- Audio system, speaker’s podium,
- Cleaning and decoration,
- Outreach and invitation management
  
- Preparation of job-seekers for the event and for meeting employers (interview techniques, CV writing, self-marketing, job-search strategy)
  
- Private sector contributions. Apart from actively engaging in the fairs, the private sector covered expenses for the venue and for networking events.



**Results**

- The two-level evaluation gives details on the job fair’s outcomes. It comprises immediate feedback from employers and job seekers at the event plus an inquiry on successful placements after the job fair day. Results are encouraging. During the first three job fairs conducted in autumn 2016:
- 918 registered job-seekers and more than 200 companies with more than 400 vacancies participated;
  - 461 job-seeking participants found internships;
  - Another 76 participants found wage employment or started drafting business plans;
  - A service gap for 97 low qualified young people was identified; further support interventions (technical or life skills training) have been planned.

**Tips for Practitioners**

Implementation Steps for preparing, implementing and following-up the job fair:

**Preparation**

1. Establish the coordination committee responsible for organising the event (Ministry of Labour, Public Employment Services, Ministry of Education). Clarify roles and responsibilities; specify tasks, cross-institutional drafting of the work plan with milestones and appointments for stakeholder-meetings.
2. Collect information about unemployed TVET graduates & job-seekers without formal qualification (but with the related skills and competencies);
3. Jointly identify the most relevant economic sector of the city and the governorate.
4. Conduct visits to companies to identify interested enterprises. Invite them to apply to participate in the job fair. Filter those who offer vacancies, internships, or other services relevant to students, graduates, and job-seekers. Smaller enterprises may send one person, representing a group of businesses.
5. Conduct a registration event for unregistered job seekers in the selected economic fields. The event shall include some entertainment activities, soft skill training and labour market information. Invite youth to the employment offices where they meet with staff for one appointment or several, receiving some career guidance and preparing their CVs.
6. Establish strategic dialogue with employers: Conduct informal “business dinners” with employers in close coordination and planning with the Chambers of Commerce in the regions; promote benefits of in-company training.
7. Visit employers to collect required competence profiles (have them choose a maximum of 5 technical and a maximum of 5 soft skills from a prepared list).

**Implementation**

8. Prepare logistics (venue, budget, equipment, transport, etc.)
9. Pre-select three to four job-seekers per vacancy by matching skills with job profiles and schedule appointments for job-seekers with companies accordingly.

10. On the day before the event check arrangements and state of equipment; make sure that all exhibitors are present and have found their place and put up their desks; check if registration desk is ready with all lists, name-tags, evaluation forms, contact lists and other copies; check catering; trouble-shooting, evaluation forms.
11. Conduct job fair (one-day-event); trouble-shoot problems; make sure that employers and media have everything they need and feel comfortable; gather first feedback of job-seekers and employers.

**Follow-up**

12. Conduct second evaluation (questionnaires, surveys) a few days after the fair to get precise data on the number of interviews conducted and types of contracts settled.

The Follow-up stakeholder meetings are to celebrate the achievements with all participating stakeholders. Looking jointly at the monitoring outcomes and survey results from different angles allows for institutional learning