

Helping bridge the digital divide in refugee camps

Al-Amari refugee camp receives
a computer lab from Birzeit University 2

Providing funding opportunities for student startups

IT Center of Excellence establishes a \$1
million investment fund 3

Mobile application development into school classrooms

School teachers use Google to create mobile
applications and games 4

My project starts with an idea

Increasing entrepreneurship awareness
among Palestinian youth 5

Empowering Future Technology Entrepreneurs

Reducing unemployment among young students
and recent graduates 6

Preparing emerging market Palestinian Entrepreneurs for investors

Reducing unemployment among young students 8

Keeping school children actively learning during summer

Innovative technology community outreach program 9

Getting children excited about science & technology

Robotic building and programming competition 10

TRAIN-TO-HIRE accelerated IT training program

An innovative employment acceleration program for IT graduates 11



Tel:
+970 2 2982072
Email:
info.nzitce@birzeit.edu

CONTACT INFO

To cultivate a nurturing
environment within the center
that promotes the productive flow
of critical thinking, creative ideas,
and innovation in IT and its various
applications.

OUR MISSION

To advance innovation and
creativity in future IT generations
in Palestine.

OUR VISION

Helping bridge the digital divide in Palestinian refugee camps

Al-Amari refugee camp receives a computer lab



Program Objectives:

- To inspire children, grades 8 through 11, to enjoy and celebrate science, math, and information technology.
- To connect middle, high schools, and the surrounding community with Birzeit University.
- Create fun, engaging, and effective learning environments for students away from the pressures of typical classrooms.
- Promote the development of life skills for school students: critical thinking, communication, collaboration and teamwork.

Program Activities:

- In-camp children learn programming with MIT's Scratch programming language and Google's App Inventor software.
- Birzeit University volunteers work as mentors and meet with in-camp children on a weekly basis.
- Research and peer-reviewed publications in social informatics.

More information:

→ <http://bit.ly/14pRRJs>

Impact Area:

- Fostering technology use in underprivileged areas
- School curriculum enrichment program
- Encouraging youngsters to pursue science and engineering

Outcome:

- A computer lab of 15 networked thin clients was established at the refugee camp.

- **Research results of this project published in ACM conference.**

<http://bit.ly/1397pMx>

Partners and donors:



Federal Foreign Office





Providing funding opportunities for student startups

IT Center of Excellence establishes a \$1 million investment fund

Program Objectives:

Birzeit University signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Mena Apps in June 2013, aiming to launch an incubator and an investment fund with a capital of \$1 million.

As part of Mena Apps efforts to promote investment in startups and provide funding opportunities for technology driven business ventures with special attention to student startups and campus enterprises, Apps signed the MoU.

The agreement also stipulates the creation of an enabling ecosystem that protects and supports entrepreneurs and investors alike, through creating a network of mentors "Palestine Mentors Network," who will work closely with entrepreneurs to guide and support them during the first few turbulent cycles of their business, in addition to setting-up an angle investor and seed funder network "Palestine Seed and Angel Investors," who will provide initial and vital startup capital for the startups to grow and prosper.

The investment fund will be managed by a board of representatives from Birzeit University, Mena Apps, and other business and investment professionals with international experience in managing incubators and investment funds.

More information:

→ <http://bit.ly/12GJwvK>

Impact Area:

- Encouraging students and graduates to pursue entrepreneurship
- Providing funding opportunities for student companies
- Connecting entrepreneurs with potential investors

Outcomes:

Establishment and mobilization of a network of professional mentors

Establishment of a seed and angel investors network

Partners and donors:



IT CoE brings mobile application development into middle school classrooms

School teachers use Google to create mobile applications and games



Twenty two Palestinian school teachers received over 60 hours of technical training

Program Objectives:

- To inspire Palestinian elementary and middle school teachers to create and use mobile applications and games to enhance their teaching methodologies.
- To enable Palestinian schools to leverage mobile technologies to transform the way students learn.

Program Activities:

- Over 60 hours of teacher hands-on technical training in:
 - Programming with Java
 - MIT's Scratch [<http://scratch.mit.edu/>]
 - Google App Inventor [<http://appinventor.mit.edu/explore/>]

Impact Area:

- Empowering Palestinian school teachers with mobile technology
- Integrating mobile technology into existing school curricula to enhance student achievement

Outcomes:

Over 60 hours of training in mobile application programming

A selection of 22 Palestinian elementary and middle school teachers mastered the skill of creating mobile games and applications

Partners and donors:



BTC

وزارة التربية والتعليم الفلسطينية
Palestinian Ministry of Education



My project starts with an idea

Increasing entrepreneurship awareness among Palestinian youth



Program Objectives:

The program targets aspiring students in their senior year by providing them with valuable resources, hands-on training, professional mentoring, and incentives to enable them to transform their business ideas into well-structured business plans for high-growth potential enterprises.

Viable business ideas will be supported through the provision of mentoring and coaching services. The Program aims to generate 15- 20 economically viable business ideas.

Program Activities:

- Entrepreneurship awareness and education
- Business and technical training.
- Business plan writing contest.
- Financial rewards and opportunity to venture capital for viable business ideas and successful entrepreneurs.

Impact Area:

- Increase entrepreneurship awareness among Palestinian's university students and fresh graduate.
- Encourage young people to see starting their own business as a career option after graduation.

Outcome:

The project engaged senior year students at 7 Palestinian's universities.

More than 500 students and fresh graduate received training and benefited from the program.

Partners and donors:



Empowering Future Technology Entrepreneurs

Helping to
reduce
unemployment
among young
students



Program Objectives:

The project aims at the development of a sustainable knowledge-based economy in under-served Palestinian communities, it will focus on empowering technology entrepreneurship by engaging students, professionals, and industry experts.

Through this project we will channel business model-to-market processes through providing needed support, capacity building programs and advocacy to aspire Palestinians entrepreneurs based on the fundamentals of the entrepreneurial process.

Program Activities:

- Offering 30 cycles of business model generation training at 6 Palestinian's universities.
- Offering a business plan competition to all students from all partner university which means all the regions of the west bank are covered.
- Winners of the business plan competition will have access to business counseling to advance their skills and the quality of their business plan to become more attractive to investors.

Impact Area:

- Reduce unemployment among young people through self employment and opening new job opportunities.
- Expand the volume of business in the local community.

Beneficiaries:

Young entrepreneurs, females and males from all over the west bank whose business idea related to ICT.

More information:

→ <http://bit.ly/1bVHkY5>

Partners and donors:





With the help of SPARK, 8 new small businesses were started in 2012-2013

Activities and results:

SPARK focuses on building the Palestinian youth in entrepreneurship skills which is a necessary step for attitude change towards job creation.

597 participants from six universities benefitted from the training: Birzeit University, Palestine Polytechnic University, Al-Quds University, The Arab American University-Jenin, An-Najah National University and Wajdi University college of technology.

183 business plans were submitted which to select the best candidates to be their support for the establishment of their own companies. Then 8 new small businesses were started since the beginning of the program.

A Success Story



Hayat Al Natsheh is a Palestinian entrepreneur who participated in the program and established Al Sanabel for Educational Games.

“SPARK helped me learn about the components of a successful business plan – which in turn, helped me develop and refine the business model for my company” – Hayat Al Natsheh



Preparing emerging market Palestinian Entrepreneurs for investors

Poverty alleviation through job creation.

Program Objectives:

- To contribute to sustainable economic development by stimulating entrepreneurship in Palestine.
- To get a significant number of new or existing businesses successfully started, registered, growing and/or financed.
- To maximize the income and the number of job created through these businesses.
- Access to international investor matchmaking services once their plan is ready for finance.

Program Activities:

- Offering coaching, training and monitoring services to new or existing business to provide them with the opportunity to develop their ideas into a viable business models,
- SMEs will be given the opportunity to pitch their business idea in order to access financing from other financial sources whether individuals or donor supported programs or institutional funds that NZITCE will be developing relationship with.

More information:

→ <http://bit.ly/LKDMgH>

Impact Area:

Poverty alleviation through job creation.

Target Group:

The starting or established Palestinian businesses with high potential of growth with a financing need of US\$10,000 to US\$5,000,000.

Partners and donors:



Keeping school students actively learning during summer

Innovative community outreach summer program



Program Objectives:

A 2-week 5-hour daily sessions held on Birzeit University campus designed for school students of 11-13 years old.

With the assistance of university student volunteers, week one covers introductory-level programming using Scratch.

During the second week, students learn the principles and laws of electricity by building projects from simple electronic components such as solar cells, electric motors, transistors.

Program Activities:

- Hands on training for school children in computer programming.
- Hands-on training for school children in electronics and electricity principles.

→ School children building their own electronic inventions



Impact Area:

Science, engineering, and programming.

Target Group:

Palestinian school students of age 11-13 living in refugee camps or disadvantaged areas.

→ Transforming light energy into electricity



Partners and donors:





**Getting children
excited about
science and
technology**

**Robotic
building and
programming
competition**

What is the competition:

The competition is comprised of 4 main sections: programming and design, teamwork, technical research, and field challenge.

Teams are evaluated on innovative robot design, teamwork, research design, and performance of the robot in the competition field. In addition, teams are interviewed by the judges to discuss the design and operation of their robot.

This year, teams used LEGO robots to complete senior citizen engineering solutions challenge.

→ School children putting their robotic prototypes to the test



Impact Area:

Inspiring young Palestinians to discover the fun in science and technology while building self-confidence, knowledge, and life skills

Target Group:

Palestinian school students of age 11-15 who are passionate about technology.

More than 150 Palestinian elementary and middle school students from 20 different schools in the West Bank participated in the annual robotics tournament.

Partners and donors:



TRAIN-TO-HIRE accelerated training program

An innovative
employment
acceleration
program for
IT graduates



The program in brief:

Train to Hire is a leading-edge training approach that provides companies with the competitive advantage of sourcing and hiring "job-ready" IT employees.

Companies providing information technology services and solutions can capitalize on the benefits of this program because of its very practical "hands-on" training delivery approach in which the theory lectures and the practical sessions are delivered in a 10:90 proportions respectively.

Most job offers often require that the applicants have enough relevant experience, specific skill sets, and deep knowledge in certain IT areas – which

graduates fresh out of universities usually do not have. This innovative employment preparation program at the IT Center of Excellence at Birzeit University, provides the prospective IT employees with an immersive experience of undertaking actual workplace job tasks - thus maximizing their potential to learn and master the essential knowledge and skills of the job.

Prospective employees (or recent graduates) who successfully complete the rigorous training program are transformed into **"productive employees from day one on the job."**

Impact Area:

Employment generation and acceleration for recent IT and engineering graduates.

Forging a closer link between academia and IT industry.

“ It's about forging closer links between academia and industry. The training focuses on practical knowledge and skills that go beyond what students gain in college because it equips them with the right qualifications needed for the job. ”

Samer Al Zain
Faculty member and program trainer



Target groups:

Recent engineering and computer science graduates wishing to secure a promising career in the IT sector.

Partners and donors:

