



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.) *

Bridge Outsource Transform Impact sourcing platform

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) *

Digital Opportunity Trust

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

digital skills; microwork; freelancing; gig economy; young women and girls; young refugees; online platform; vulnerable youth

6. What makes it a best practice? *

The initiative is highly market-driven. The programme design (curriculum, training material, digital skills taught, organisations onboarded on the platform) is informed by in-depth research on the needs of the Jordanian job market, conducted at the beginning of every year of implementation. The programme directly links training to employment opportunities. Graduate youth (mostly young women and girls) are onboarded on the B.O.T. platform for impact sourcing, where they have access to freelance, microwork opportunities (e.g. data collection, data entry, data analysis, translation) posted by private sector companies or NGOs. To perform these tasks, they have to apply the newly acquired digital skills. Access to these opportunities is particularly relevant for vulnerable youth, whose access to the formal labour market is limited by their gender, location (with most opportunities in Jordan being concentrated in the capital), refugee status, or a combination of all these factors. The programme has a strong focus on sustainability, as coordinators and trainers from government were trained on basic and advanced digital skills, management and monitoring and evaluation, to be able to autonomously replicate the programme in government centres and broaden its reach on a sustainable basis.

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? *

According to World Bank data, the pandemic has increased the unemployment rate to 24.8% in 2021, up from 19% before the pandemic hit. Youth unemployment (ages 16-25) stood even higher, with half of the active youth being unemployed. The national economy of Jordan is required to create 66,000 new jobs every year for the next decade in order to accommodate the growing workforce, which is expected to grow to 2.5 million people by 2025. There is an urgent need to diversify the economic engagement opportunities available, especially for young people entering the labor market.

Digital skills have proven to be essential in the COVID-19 pandemic and in long-term recovery and resilience of the young population. The private sector in Jordan believes these skills are crucial to succeed in a job market influenced by the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the pandemic, and the Jordanian government is investing in the Information Communication Technology (ICT) sector in the attempt to turn the country into the regional digital hub. This reveals the importance of digital skills and the ICT sector to improve job prospects for young people and generate the much-needed job opportunities. However, the most vulnerable young people, such as young women, out of school youth, and young refugees, lack even the most basic digital skills.

Through market-responsive training in basic and advanced digital skills, the programme aims to provide vulnerable youth – mainly young women and girls and young refugees – with key digital skills they need to succeed in the labour market. It also provide vulnerable youth with freelance opportunities posted on the B.O.T platform. Access to the opportunities offered by the B.O.T. platform is particularly relevant for vulnerable youth, whose access to the formal labour market is limited by their gender, location (with most opportunities in Jordan being concentrated in the capital), refugee status, or a combination of all these factors

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 2019, UNICEF Jordan started delivering the Digital Skills for a Better Future Programme through the Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship (MoDEE) and UNICEF's local partners. This programme is aimed to equip vulnerable youth, aged 17-24, with demand driven digital skills. The programme aims to reach women, marginalized communities, refugees, and youth with disabilities, and implemented in nine of the Kingdom's governorates.

The programme design is informed by in-depth research on the needs of the Jordanian job market, conducted at the beginning of every year of implementation. The research revealed private sector interest to outsource human resources to execute microwork. Microwork is a series of many small tasks which together comprise a large, unified project, and is completed by many people over the Internet. Tasks on demand from the private sector include surveying, data collection, data analysis, and data management, as well as telemarketing and mobile applications development. Market research also demonstrated young people's interest towards microwork, especially data management, as well as other digital skills such as graphic design, programming, big data analysis, website design, and professional video design. These findings, and the willingness to seize this untapped opportunity, informed the design of the B.O.T. platform, the first impact sourcing platform in Jordan, which aims to connect trained, unemployed young people from vulnerable communities, with microwork opportunities. Access to the opportunities offered by the B.O.T. platform is particularly relevant for vulnerable youth, whose access to the formal labour market is limited by their gender, location (with most opportunities in Jordan being concentrated in the capital), refugee status, or a combination of all these factors.

The market research also helped the implementing partner identify the competencies and skills that young people need to succeed and informed the design and constant adaptation of the programme's learning objectives, training modules and materials. The training envisages a basic digital skills training course which focuses on key computer functioning, the use of MS Office, as well as the Internet. Based on findings from the market research, a module on e-wallet was added to the basic digital training. The second level of the training focuses on more advanced skills that can facilitate youth access to different employment opportunities, whether freelancing, or full-time employment. Modules include microworks, web development and e-commerce, social media and graphic design, call centre, telemarketing, basic programming language and mobile applications development. Based on findings from the research and recent employment trends, modules on fintech and work ethics were added to the microworks training.

The success of the programme strongly relies on its partnership networks. UNICEF and its implementing partner exploited the strategic partnership with nine UNICEF Makani centres (four of which located in refugee camps), 16 MoDEE centres called 'Knowledge Stations', and three Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) to deliver the programme across nine governorates. Coordinators and trainers from Makani and MoDEE were trained on basic and advanced digital skills, management and monitoring and evaluation, to be able to autonomously replicate the programme and broaden its reach on a sustainable basis. Partnerships are also crucial for the

programme to secure job opportunities for participants, and for the success of the B.O.T. platform, to raise companies' awareness of microwork and incentivize them to advertise opportunities on the platform and hire young people to perform these tasks. The market research has revealed that private sector companies most likely to resort to the platform are from the banking, retail, automotive and pharmaceutical/healthcare sector.

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 the three years of the Digital Skills for Better Future Programme, 3,190 youth from 9 vulnerable governorates completed the Digital Skills training, including the Basic and Advanced training. 70% of them were young women, and 35% refugees. Out of these, 200 young people (76% female, 35% refugee) found internships and apprenticeships opportunities. 243 young people (69% female, 34% refugee) were onboarded to the B.O.T. digital platform, through which 91 (64% female, 43% Syrian) found 111 microwork opportunities such as data collection, data entry and transcription. This allowed them to generate more than 13,000 USD of income. This proves the strategic nature of the platform, and the remote freelance opportunities it offers, to secure employment for vulnerable youth who are usually excluded from the formal labour market.

In addition, a survey conducted with 437 programme participants revealed that 35% of participants have improved their career outcomes, in terms of better job performance, securing a promotion or a salary increase. 89% of surveyed participants believed their employability improved as a result of participating in the training, and 86% of them believed the acquired skills can help them improve their lives and communities for the better.

The programme trained 20 trainers and coordinators from the Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship (MoDEE) and 34 Makani staff on basic and advanced digital skills, as well as financial management and monitoring and evaluation, which is supporting current programme implementation and will facilitate its institutionalization and therefore sustainability.

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? *

Key to the transformative nature of the initiative is the freelancing nature of the job opportunities available on the B.O.T. platform. This indeed allows programme beneficiaries work from home and helps address key mobility issues faced by young women and girls and young refugees, especially those residing in camps. Another key success factor is the fact that the same organisation is delivering the training and running the platform, which ensures that - beyond the initial market research - programme curriculum is informed by market requirements in terms of skills and tasks, as revealed by the opportunities posted on the platform. However, one key challenge experienced by the programme relates to the lack of even basic digital skills among the targeted youth, especially Syrian refugees, who often struggled to complete the course. To address this challenge, UNICEF and its implementing partner tweaked the curriculum to incorporate the microwork skills training as a module of the basic digital skills training. This was to ensure that all core trainees are equipped with basic computer skills and microwork skills, enabling them to secure freelance job opportunities without necessarily having to undertake the advanced training. At the same time, the training material was adapted to match the learning needs and digital literacy levels of participants.

In addition, after delivering the entire programme online during COVID-19, programme implementers realized that a blended modality – combining online and offline delivery – works best as it allows participants to select their preferred modality. For example, face-to-face trainings have proved important to boost the level of engagement and commitment, but some young people (especially girls) prefer the online modality to avoid transportation issues and long commuting.

Finally, UNICEF and its implementing partner will try to secure longer internships for participants, which would provide them with better opportunities to apply what they have learned in practice and gain valuable skills and experiences.

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)? *

Other initiatives working on the issue of youth unemployment can learn from the market-responsiveness and flexibility of the programme. The programme design (curriculum, training material, digital skills taught, organisations onboarded on the platform) is informed by in-depth research on the needs of the Jordanian job market, conducted at the beginning of every year of implementation. The programme retains the flexibility to keep adapting its learning objectives, curriculum and training material to the needs of the market, as revealed by market research as well as engagement with private sector and NGOs conducted by the implementing partner as part of their work running the platform. Particularly effective, to ensure quick adaptation and course correction, as well as strong relationship between the skills taught and the needs of the market, is the fact that the same organisation runs both the training and the platform.

Another key learning from the programme is how it directly links training to employment opportunities. Graduate youth (mostly young women and girls) are onboarded on the B.O.T. platform for impact sourcing, where they have access to freelance, microwork opportunities (e.g. data collection, data entry, data analysis, translation) posted by private sector companies or NGOs. Microworks is one of the modules taught by the programme, which ensures graduates are ready to perform the tasks posted on the platform. The implementing partner conducts quality assurance of the tasks performed by graduates, to ensure clients are satisfied with the service, continue using it and spread the word.

Other programmes working with youth whose mobility and access to the formal labour market are limited, can benefit from learnings from the programme. Access to freelance opportunities is indeed particularly relevant for vulnerable youth, whose access to the formal labour market is limited by their gender, location, refugee status, or a combination of all these factors, and can now work from home, according to their schedule and parallel commitments.

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/unicef-launches-jordans-first-impact-sourcing-platform>