

AN ANCHOR TO EXCEL

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BEING BORN IN PALESTINE

In an unequal world, your place of birth determines your opportunities, hindering the achievement of meritocratic communities.

Besides the main challenges associated with living under occupation and also because of it, being a young person trying to find a job in Palestine means facing a challenging macroeconomic context, high unemployment rates and an educational system that doesn't provide you with the skills required by the labour market. This results in around 40,000 university graduates per year, according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, that basically do not know what to do with the time they invested in studying and have to accommodate to whatever the market can offer (if they are lucky enough to find a job in the first place). Coupled with the absence of national workforce development schemes is also the high prevalence of nepotism, meaning that you will achieve what you want to achieve, as long as you know someone with enough power or influence.

The scenario becomes even more difficult for women: in the confines of a patriarchal society (aren't they all?), structural obstacles hinder women's entry into the formal labour force. Insufficient affirmative policies exist to encourage the hiring of women in a society that upholds traditional gender roles, making it difficult for women to work outside the home or pursue non-traditional careers. Institutional discrimination is prevalent as women often receive unequal pay compared to equally qualified men and face limited childcare options, perpetuating the belief that childcare is solely the responsibility of women.

WHAT TO DO WITH THIS HOPELESS SCENARIO?

"TAMAYYAZ", THE PROJECT THAT EMPOWERS YOUTH TO EFFECTIVELY ENTER THE LABOUR MARKET.

There are few settings where people are as conditioned by the place where they are born as in Palestine.

SHAREK IS HERE TO CHANGE THAT!



COULD THE TAMAYYAZ PROJECT BE THE ANSWER?

A locally adapted competency-based curriculum was created for Tamayyaz students, incorporating non-traditional teaching methods. This curriculum emphasizes 21st-century skills such as personal development, problem-solving, healthy lifestyles, workplace success, entrepreneurship, and service-learning. It also fosters cooperation, teamwork, communication, interpersonal skills, and decision-making.

The program offers two curriculum options: employability and entrepreneurship. In the employability track, students gain practical job experience through paid internships, receive mentoring to navigate the workplace and explore career paths. They also benefit from a mentor who provides guidance and support. Alternatively, in the entrepreneurship track, students receive training to launch and grow micro-enterprises. They develop concrete projects and receive support from Sharek's seed funding and mentorship from industry experts.



Made possible through the funding of the European Commission, the Tamayyaz programme aims to enhance civic engagement and employment prospects for youth in Palestine.

Asked whether more students follow the entrepreneur path or the employment one, the Tamayyaz project manager, Maher AbuHakme, explains that “students tend to take the safer path, internships and employment, because the Palestinian context is too risky and people tend to avoid risk by nature”.

The programme curriculum is also supported by career guidance, competency in English in professional contexts and practical skills needed for civic engagement such as leadership, project management, debating skills, dialogue and advocacy. This last component of the programme is especially crucial for Sharek and as such they encourage students to design and implement activities that offer creative solutions for the community's needs, with Sharek's financial and technical support.



AN INVESTMENT IN YOUTH

The readers might have forgotten what it feels like to step into the labour market for the first time.

Building your own initiative can also be frustrating when so many people are not willing to give youth a chance. But what if someone helped you navigate that world at the right time?

THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT SHAREK DOES!



Shatha Rehan was one of the Tamayyaz participants. She is a 21-year-old student at Berzeit University majoring in English language and Literature and aspires to build a name in the field of translation. She believes that, by doing so, she can achieve great things for her people: "Translation gets me to meet more foreigners and I think this way we get to deliver our message more clearly in other languages. This has huge effects on our conflict". Shatha argues that before participating in the programme, she didn't have "a real view of the Palestinian labor market" but that changed with Tamayyaz.

One could say that if the programme changed the life of at least one young person in the region, its duty would have been fulfilled. But in fact, Tamayyaz is leading to what could be a whole generation of Palestinians facing life with a new set of tools and beliefs, committed to changing the world around them. More than ten years after launching the programme, over 4,500 young Palestinians have gone through this experience and approximately 64% of the graduates obtained a full-time job three to six months after completing it, no matter what University they came from.

Dismantling the structural barriers that adversely affect young people in Palestine is at the core of this organization. There is an advocacy component to every Sharek project and Tamayyaz is not an exemption. While empowering youth economically, Sharek seeks to develop a sense of agency among youth.

There is a reason for that and Maher, a young Palestinian himself, puts it in clear words: "Tamayyaz for me is an investment in our youth. Youth is the raw material we have, as Palestinians we don't own anything else. If we build them correctly, we can have a better future".