



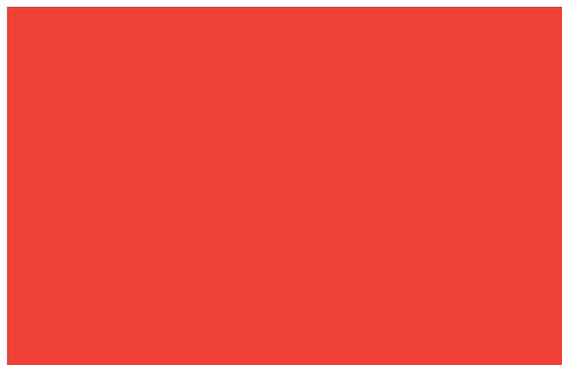
USAID

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH
SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PROJECT



GENDER EQUITY IN TOURISM JORDAN





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The tourism sector has historically been dominated by men, who occupy almost all jobs within this sector in Jordan. Also, despite prevailing high unemployment rates among women in Jordan, the number of women studying for or working in tourism careers is low.

Promoting gender equity and female empowerment are key factors for economic growth, and this is particularly vital to efforts to grow Jordan's tourism sector. The USAID Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism Project, as with all previous USAID tourism projects, takes a holistic approach to gender equity and female empowerment, and these elements are incorporated into all areas of the project's work.

By integrating women within hospitality student populations, launching gender campaigns to encourage women to enter tourism by showcasing the value and opportunity of working in the tourism sector, promoting women at the helm of tourism-based SMEs, and more, the USAID tourism project is setting the standard for increasing women's participation in tourism.

As a result, the number of women working in the tourism sector has been increasing over the past few years. Around 30% of entry level hospitality and tourism students now are women, a significant jump from the negligible numbers prior to the start of USAID tourism project support in this area. Also, extensive training is provided by USAID to develop the skills of Jordan's tourism workers, and more than 30% of those trained are women.

Over the past five years, the USAID tourism project has worked towards achieving gender equity within Jordan's tourism sector as follows:

- Including women in capacity building efforts to empower them and assist them in establishing a promising career path
- Increase enrollment of women in tourism and hospitality education programs
- Support the development of a national secondary school in Aqaba to offer the vocational education stream in hospitality and tourism for women. This was the first Secondary Vocational Education School in Jordan to offer the hospitality and tourism education to women
- Equip women with the skills needed to earn a living from tourism-related work
- Raise awareness among local communities on tourism and the jobs it offers to both women and men



FUNDUKIA SCHOOLGIRLS LOOK BEYOND TRADITIONAL ROLES TO FORGE NEW CAREERS IN HOSPITALITY

SUCCESS STORY

Afnan Khalil, a twelfth grader from Aqaba, has taken a pioneering step among other girls from her city as she begins an education in pursuit of the career she dreams about: to be a chef. She was one of the first batch of 16 young women to enroll in the newly established Fundukia Program at the Aqaba Secondary School for Females, which launched last year. This is Jordan's first public secondary school to offer the vocational education stream in hospitality and tourism for women, and this important initiative was achieved with support from the USAID tourism project.

Afnan's brother and sister work in the hospitality industry, however her parents were hesitant about her choice of the Fundukia program as they wanted her to pursue medicine. Afnan's two other sisters are doctors but she had noticed they were having a hard time finding good jobs, so she was determined to chase her dream of working in a hotel.

"I was lucky the new Fundukia stream was launched last year, as soon as I heard about it I knew it was for me. My parents weren't exactly unsupportive, but they thought it was odd to choose hospitality over being a doctor. I love the idea of working in hospitality and especially hotels. You get to meet people from around the world and learn about new places and cultures," Afnan explained.

The acceptance of Afnan's and other girls' families is in itself a true success, as these same young ladies faced major challenges gaining permission to enter the hospitality program to start with because of prevailing misconceptions about the hospitality industry. This shift in thinking was largely influenced by the numerous

school awareness visits conducted by the USAID tourism project throughout the school year for both students and parents, as well as the determination of the students themselves to study hospitality.

"Since my siblings work in hospitality my parents had a good idea of what it means so it was easier for them to accept me studying it. Some of the other girls have had a much harder time convincing their parents though; they don't think a hotel is a suitable place for women to work. The girls are really determined though and they are bringing them around to the idea. The awareness sessions helped a lot because the parents got to see firsthand what hospitality is all about."

"I know I made the right choice to study hospitality. After graduation I plan to study hotel management while working part-time in a hotel, so I will gain a degree and work experience at the same time. Then I want to attend La Roche Royal Academy for Culinary Arts as I have always wanted to be a chef."

Despite a conservative society reluctant to look beyond traditional roles and careers for women such as housewife/ teacher/doctor, Afnan and her fellow students at the Aqaba Fundukia School exemplify a generation of Jordanian women that are more aware and determined to forge careers and livelihoods for themselves in a growing industry that promises a bright future.

1. TOURISM EDUCATION FOR WOMEN



FUNDUKIA SCHOOL FOR GIRLS ESTABLISHED IN AQABA

The USAID tourism project has been supporting Ministry of Education plans to establish a new Secondary School Vocational Stream in Hospitality Studies (Fundukia Stream) in Aqaba for female students. The school is now running and the second batch of students have been enrolled and are studying at a temporary location until the facilities are ready. This will be the first secondary school in Jordan offering the Fundukia Stream for girls.

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR WOMEN

The USAID tourism project supported scholarships covering 50 percent of tuition fees for eight young women studying for a Diploma in Culinary Art at the Royal Academy for Culinary Arts between 2010 and 2012. In addition, the project funded 10 scholarships for female students to study for a hospitality diploma at JAU.

FACILITATING WOMEN'S ACCESS TO VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY

To encourage more young women to consider and undertake vocational training in tourism and hospitality, the USAID tourism project coordinated an induction program for women in the VTC hospitality and tourism programs. Through this they receive career counseling and meetings with parents are held, along with visits to hotels and resorts to meet women working in tourism.

In addition, the project organized handcraft production training for women at the National Institute for Handcraft Design, Production and Marketing that was established at the Salt VTC, which was funded and supported by the Women Empowerment and Employment Project (government funded).

JORDANIAN HOSPITALITY ALONG THE AJLOUN TRAIL



SUCCESS STORY

In the midst of the forested mountains of Ajloun in the north of Jordan, near to the Ajloun tourism trail, tourists can experience local culture at its best with a touch of warm authentic Jordanian hospitality. Um Ahmad, a mother of three, is running a small bed and breakfast out of her home, to welcome guests while earning an income for her family.

It was Um Ahmad's husband who decided to turn their home into a bed and breakfast to welcome visitors to the area. "Abu Ahmad wanted to turn our home into a guesthouse where we could host tourists and get to meet people from around the world. We also wanted to make a living out of this project and be able to secure our children's education," said Um Ahmad.

Sadly, her husband passed away suddenly in 2010. However, Um Ahmad decided to proceed with the project that her husband started and was so passionate about. It is also a means to support her family, for which she is now the sole provider.

Through grant support from the USAID Jordan Tourism Development Project, Um Ahmad was able to prepare her home to receive paying guests by furnishing two rooms with beds and closets, renovating the terrace, and adding a television, fridge and kitchen table to the common area. Um Ahmad was ready to start receiving tourists in 2011, providing them with meals and accommodation. The USAID tourism project's support to Um Ahmad continued with the renovation of her bed and breakfast façade, to make it more appealing to visitors. Guests can enjoy a variety of home cooked traditional Jordanian dishes for lunch or dinner, such as mansaf, and start the day with a homemade breakfast made with local and fresh ingredients.

"We received a group from Bahrain and they were amazed by the hospitality and the service we provided, and are now planning to come back," said Um Ahmad.

Following a media trip organized by the USAID tourism project in April 2013 to highlight the Ajloun Tourism Trail and nearby attractions and services, Um Ahmad's B&B became known by Jordanians as a pleasant weekend retreat. As a result she is now receiving more local – both Arab and foreign - guests.

The USAID tourism project's support to Um Ahmad is part of a grants program that was launched in 2010 to help develop small and medium-sized tourism enterprises along the Ajloun trail as part of efforts by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA), USAID Jordan Tourism Development Project and the Royal Society for Conservation of Nature (RSCN) to boost tourism in the area. The communities living in the area are thus being encouraged to run tourism enterprises that can contribute to improving their living standards while at the same time offering a variety of facilities and services that will enhance the visitor experience and directly involve the local communities in tourism.

There are 19 other projects that received USAID grants to support tourism-related businesses. The USAID tourism project also trained grantees in various related areas, such as safe food handling, hospitality skills, food and beverage preparation and presentation, menu design and pricing. Promotional material, including websites and brochures were also produced as to help them market their services along the trail.

Um Ahmad is always ready to give visitors a warm Jordanian welcome and serve up the great hospitality that the country is well known for, and she looks forward to receiving more guests.

www.umahmadsbnb.com

2. EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH CBO AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT



Several women's cooperatives throughout Jordan have been supported through grant funding, technical support, training and capacity building. Many of these were handcraft producers, as the handcraft sector is possibly the largest sector of women involvement in the tourism industry in Jordan. The USAID tourism project thus worked on many ways to improve this sector and improve the overall environment for women working in handcrafts.

Four women-operated projects set along the Ajloun Tourism Trail were supported. These businesses are as follows:

1. Bait al Mouneh, a local food production project that supports 15 women
2. Wisal's Bed & Breakfast, run by Wisal herself to bring added income to her family
3. Um Ahmad's Bed & Breakfast, run by the widowed Um Ahmad to support her family
4. Fatmeh Rest house – she is a single women supporting her mother, sister and nephews, her rest house was supported to enhance the level of service to offer lunch and breakfast , Fatmeh is also famous for her fresh Taboan and Shrak bread

In Salt, several small businesses that were part of the Salt Heritage Trail Development project were supported. These are:

1. Saltos Ceramics, run by Khaleda and her husband who employ 5 women at the workshop and have trained another 45 women
2. Zamanak Ya Salt Café, run by Nadia who turned her passion into a business and created a space that both locals and visitors could enjoy
3. Saidat Al Ata Soap Project, which employs five women.



In Petra, the following were supported:

1. The Nabatean Ladies Cooperative were given a grant that enabled the renovation of their showroom. This created a safe environment for the women who work there and their children as well as areas to showcase products and crafts.
2. Taybeh Women's Cooperative was supported to improve operations and introduce a new stoneware line that has already proved popular.

In Wadi Rum, the following was supported:

1. Burda Women's Cooperative was supported through a grant that helped the cooperative sustain its activities and enhance the products it makes through design and quality control training. In addition, support included the upgrade of a showroom to increase exposure and sales of their products. Marketing was further boosted through the launch of a website (www.burdawomencoop.com), and brochures produced in Arabic, English and French.

In Amman, the following were supported:

1. A showroom was established for the Society for the Development and Rehabilitation of Rural Women to display and sell the cooperative's handcrafts, which are handmade by the cooperative members – more than 500 women from rural areas all around Jordan - thus ensuring sustainable income to the association.
2. For the Jordanian Women's Development Association of the Deaf, a business and marketing plan for new products was developed, and silkscreen design training helped the women produce a new line of quality handcrafts.

3. INCREASING AWARENESS



The USAID tourism project and Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA) are addressing misconceptions regarding women working in the tourism sector, streamlining more women into tourism-related education programs and empowering women influencing policies and facilitating their participation in decision making.

The first step to launch this campaign was made with the formation of a women-in-tourism empowerment steering committee. This group will act as a consultative body for the project during its different stages and provide healthy grounds for introducing and discussing critical issues and trends that will help define the scope of the project.

The USAID tourism project also conducted awareness programs and gender equity training for 75 leading HR and department managers at hotels, restaurants and tour operators in Jordan to reach at least 150 employees in the industry to promote best practice gender equity and introduce equitable work practices.

YOUNG JORDANIAN WOMEN ENCOURAGED TO TURN CULINARY ARTS INTO A CAREER



Although the number of Jordanian women working in the hospitality sector in Jordan at the moment is small, more women are slowly taking up studies and careers in tourism and hospitality, as it becomes more acceptable to their families and friends and an attractive career option. Dana Al Sabbagh is one such person, and she has taken the first steps to realizing her passion for the culinary arts as she received a scholarship, funded by the USAID tourism project, to study for a Diploma in Culinary Arts from Royal Academy of Culinary Arts (RACA).

Currently women make up roughly 10% of the more than 41,000 people working in Jordan's tourism sector. This proportion is low and there is much scope for improvement, as tourism can offer many great career opportunities for Jordanian women. Throughout its work in various areas of the tourism sector, USAID tourism project actively supports greater involvement of women in tourism in Jordan. These efforts include encouraging young women to pursue tourism and hospitality studies and gain the qualifications needed for working in the industry. In 2010 ten young women from around Jordan, including Dana, received scholarships funded by USAID tourism project to study at RACA.

Dana's passion for cooking was supported by her family and two years ago her husband heard about the scholarships being offered to study at RACA, and knowing about his wife's passion for culinary arts, he rushed to tell her the news. "My husband and father really encouraged me to apply and I was amazed by their positive reaction," she said.

Dana is now finishing her final year at RACA and getting ready for her internship, which comes at the end of the diploma program, after which she hopes to find employment in the tourism sector.

"I have wanted to study culinary arts for a long time. Here I have learned that culinary art is a field that reaches beyond cooking; it is based on science and measurements, and is also about adding value and creating a memorable food experience," she explained.

According to RACA Director, Chef Anton Würsch, *"The Royal Academy of Culinary Arts' gratitude is endless towards USAID tourism project scholarships to its students since we firmly believe that dedicated women like Dana will make a prosperous difference in Jordan's culinary world. The combination of such support and our academic program will surely result in more women being successful in what is considered to be a highly competitive industry in the region."*

Interest in the hospitality field is increasing among Jordanian youth, including women, and Dana explains, *"Many women I know are now considering taking up hospitality education, and when they ask for my opinion I tell them that if they have a true passion to work in hospitality then they should go for it; it's rewarding and offers a variety of promising careers."*

For Dana, she is finally on the path towards her passion, and is eager to gain industry experience and eventually start a business. She says, *"I look forward to opening my own restaurant or pastry shop in the future, but before that I need to get enough experience and make some money."*

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