



SUCCESS STORY

Jordanian Women Engineers & Architects Manage USAID School Construction Programs

Seven women, pioneers in their fields, with a combined 140 plus years of experience now hold top positions in school design and construction management for USAID/Jordan



Aalia Aldeeri, 31 October 2019

[Architect Fadwa AbuGhaida, a Senior Project Director at Mostaqbal Engineers, said, "I was a young early 30s Architect and was told I could not be the Site Representative of an important large Amman City municipal project because I was a woman. I went to the Mayor and he gave me the job. The work ended successfully with the Prince complimenting me on my work at the Opening Ceremony. I have never looked back!"

USAID funds primary and secondary school design and construction in Jordan for the past 12 years. Currently two programs are underway, the Jordan School Expansion Program (JSEP) and the Schools for a Knowledge Economy (SKEP) valued at more than \$300 Million. To date more than 40,000 total student seats have been completed or are under construction at more than 175 schools with 48% or 18,000 plus seats for girls.

The work includes planning, design, procurement and construction management by five Jordanian A&E firms, a US based firm, the Ministry of Public Works and Housing (MPWH) and the Ministry of Education (MOE). Of these eight organizations, seven include female engineers and architects either as Program Managers and/or Deputy Program Managers

These women were in the first wave of engineering and architect students, 20 to 25 years ago and they pioneered women in STEM occupations in Jordan. They broke into male dominated professions and had to be success driven, strong-willed and smart to succeed. Their stories are legend. Senior MOE Architect Arig Mair said, "I had to prove myself in school and on the job. It was a constant for me – Prove yourself!"

Deputy General Manager Suhair Amarin of Medanat A&E said, "After completing school, I worked long hours. I came in early and stayed late. I separated myself from the boys." Architect Maram Ayyoub, Senior Manager at the MPWH said, "At school, the boys told us girls that even though we studied with them, we would be at home raising children." Dr. Jumana Hassani and Chief of Party, Samar Bahous said, "We were lucky to have received great support but there were events in our careers where our confidence was greatly increased." All speak of support they received and support they now provide.

These women are among the top thought/action leaders for USAID school programs. They paved the way for young women engineer and architects today and for female students still in school who might pursue STEM careers in the future.