



unrwa technical and vocational education and training programme

The UNRWA Technical and Vocational Education and Training Programme (TVET) aims to empower Palestine refugee youth by providing the skills and knowledge that they need to become independent adults.

The vision of UNRWA TVET

The UNRWA vision for TVET is to have a pioneering and responsive system that is relevant, efficient, effective as well as being accessible, inclusive and sustainable. The UNRWA TVET system must empower Palestine refugees to achieve their maximum potential as well as to support the regional market and contribute to the overall development of the Palestine refugee society.

TVET in Numbers

UNRWA runs eight Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) and two Education Science Faculties (ESF) in the UNRWA five Fields of operation, with approximately 8,000 trainees each year. Since the inception of the TVET Programme, UNRWA has graduated approximately 123,000 trainees from UNRWA VTCs with

a high employment rate. The TVET programme has not only enhanced livelihood opportunities for the trainees themselves but also strengthened the livelihoods of their families; in certain cases, TVET graduates have even supported more than one family at the same time. In 2020, 4,491 trainees graduated from the UNRWA Vocational Training Centres: 2,713 males and 1,778 females.

UNRWA TVET Courses

Palestine refugee students can choose from three types of courses offered by UNRWA TVET:

1. Trade courses (vocational) of a one-year (skilled labourer level) or two-year duration (craftsman level). These are offered at post-preparatory level for those who have successfully completed at least years 9 or 10 of schooling, depending on the system in the Host countries.
2. Semi-professional courses of a two-year duration (technician level) are offered at post-secondary school level for those who have successfully completed year 12 of schooling.
3. Short-term courses: in addition to regular courses, short-term courses are available. These aim to prepare young Palestine refugees for employment in sectors where there is a high demand in the labour market.

A range of specializations at different levels are covered, such as: mechanics, building construction, plumbing, refrigeration, blacksmithery, carpentry electrical installations, auto electrical and electronics, communication systems, mobile maintenance, hair dressing and fashion design, graphic design, accounting, assistant pharmacist, nursing, medical records and physiotherapy.

The curricula of TVET courses are developed by the UNRWA VTCs in alignment with the curricula outlines provided by the Host country accreditation body, if present in the Field.

Programme Achievements

The UNRWA TVET programme is renowned for both its quality and its pioneering role in curriculum development adopting Competency Based Training (CBT) principles. This has been achieved through alliances with the industry, labour market relevance and the innovation of its staff.

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UNRWA Placement and Career Guidance (PCG) offers career guidance to UNRWA school students and placement assistance to TVET graduates. The PCG Unit provides overarching support to TVET students by linking them with employment opportunities in the labour market, tracking graduates and assessing employer satisfaction. In addition, an Agency-wide Electronic Placement and Career Guidance System (e-PCGS) was introduced to follow-up on and track the employment status of UNRWA VTC, UNRWA Educational Science Faculty (ESF) and Faculty of Educational Sciences and Art (FESA) graduates.

The Agency-wide electronic Student Registration System (e-SRS) supports the management of the students' registration process and other related functions, such as student assessment and grading, study plans and tuition details. The e-SRS (a website as well as a mobile application system) has been rolled out in the five Fields to enable all the students to login to their accounts from anywhere and view their personal and academic information, such as study plans, grading, marking sheets and the accumulated average grade.

The quality of UNRWA TVET is reflected in the results of students in the national exams in Gaza, West Bank and Jordan. In 2020, UNRWA graduates performed better than the graduates of local institutions.

TVET and Youth Programme Reform

The UNRWA TVET Strategy reflects the need to better respond to recent global trends in both TVET and in new and changing labour market demands, and is designed to better ensure the quality, relevance and responsiveness of course provision to labour market needs. TVET courses are regularly updated and good relationships with business, industry and potential employers are maintained.

The involvement of industry in UNRWA TVET includes developing TVET curricula, assessing TVET trainees, offering capacity building for TVET staff, offering on-the-job training for TVET trainees, participating in TVET studies, developing apprenticeship programmes, upgrading workshops and premises at VTCs and providing employment for TVET graduates.

The Employer Perceptual Survey seeks to measure employers' perceptions with regards to the quality of the UNRWA TVET programme and its graduates. Generally, the results of the latest undertaken survey indicate that the employers are satisfied with UNRWA graduates' professional skills.

UNRWA TVET Response to COVID-19

In March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) as a pandemic.

By mid-March 2020, all eight UNRWA VTC. The UNRWA TVET

programme immediately switched to remote learning with more than 8,000 TVET trainees continuing their scholastic year (2019 - 2020) from home.

The key pillars of the UNRWA TVET Emergency Response are:

1. Raising COVID-19 Health Awareness among TVET students and staff
2. Providing Psychosocial Support to TVET students
3. Enhancing access to remote learning/training for TVET students and instructors by procuring laptops and internet connection
4. Re-organising students' learning to suit the COVID-19 context
5. Building the capacity of around 500 TVET instructors on how to deliver online training
6. Monitoring and Evaluation of the Emergency Response

In all VTCs, the course requirements for the academic year 2019 - 2020 were completed and students were able to graduate. In 2020, the Agency-wide employment rate of VTC graduates, which had stood at around 80 percent in the previous four years, fell to 74.49 percent. This is thought to be due, in addition to the pre-existing political and economic challenges, to the complete lockdown of the labour market as a result of COVID-19. Despite the decline, the employment rate in 2020 is satisfactory, owing to the overall challenging socio-economic context of the COVID-19 crisis.

Moving ahead, UNRWA TVET is aiming to fully roll out its integrated Agency-wide online Moodle platform (iLearn) through which to facilitate remote learning for TVET students.

Making a Positive Difference

UNRWA TVET plays an increasingly important role in mitigating poverty. The aim is to improve and increase access to TVET for Palestine refugee youth, particularly those from vulnerable groups, which recently reached 34% of the total enrollment at UNRWA VTCs. Empowering Palestinian refugee youth with updated labour market skills is critical in times of instability and crisis. In particular, the challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis underline the heightened importance of providing access to quality technical and vocational education and training in line with SDG 4, in order to support expansion of economic opportunities (SDG 8) and poverty reduction (SDG 1) in Palestine refugee communities.

Moving forward, UNRWA TVET is looking to secure better job opportunities for its graduates through developing partnerships with more stakeholders, conducting research on labour market needs, upgrading training equipment and redesigning curricula to better meet the demands of the labour market.

For more information

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united nations relief and works agency
for palestine refugees in the near east

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UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 with a mandate to provide humanitarian assistance and protection to registered Palestine refugees in the Agency's area of operations, namely the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, pending a just and lasting solution to their plight. Thousands of Palestine refugees who lost both their homes and livelihood because of the 1948 conflict have remained displaced and in need of significant support for over seventy years. UNRWA helps them achieve their full potential in human development through quality services it provides in education, health care, relief and social services, protection, camp infrastructure and improvement, microfinance and emergency assistance. UNRWA is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions.