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### **Challenges:**

Although Jordan has one of the highest literacy rates in the world, it also has a very high unemployment rate and needs to bridge the gap between traditional educational curricula and the skills that the job market is demanding. A number of long-term programs are underway to address this gap but it will be some time before the effects are felt. More immediate efforts are needed, as was recognized by the Al-Huson University College (HUC), one of Al-Balqa' Applied University colleges in the northern part of Jordan. Al-Huson approached USAID's Jordan's Economic Development Program (SABEQ) with a plan to address the gap through a career development center that would direct students towards career paths with more immediate job opportunities and to provide students with workplace skills to make them more attractive to employers. USAID approved the grant with the proviso that the team of professors partner with local businesses to ensure the program's relevancy and success.



### **Initiatives:**

Under Al-Huson's grant request to the USAID Jordan Economic Development Program (SABEQ), they established a Career Development Center, the first of its kind in Jordan. Opened in April of 2008, the stand-alone unit is staffed by professors from the University and provides training for students in work-place skills needed for career success, explore careers, pursue exploratory experiences, and gain professional employment that will link students with potential employees through internships and career fairs.

### **Results:**

In the 18 months since the grant was awarded, the Center has conducted over 60 work-place skills workshops for over 1,000 trainees, 380 students were counseled on career options, 600 students were placed in internships with local firms, and over 100 students found employment as a result of the Center's efforts. In addition to its own work in the University, the Center has been an excellent partner to the USAID projects in its efforts to job match, as well as participating in job fairs throughout the country and advancing the public-private partnerships efforts to improve the match between employers and job-seekers. Indeed, the model has been so successful that the Center was selected by the USAID project to help develop a similar career development center in the southern part of Jordan at another university.