

MASHROU3I

Fostering Youth Employment through Job Creation and Entrepreneurship Development in Tunisia

CONTEXT

The Tunisian revolution brought into focus the need for governance and employment creation. However, in the three years following the revolution, the economic and social situation has only marginally improved and general unemployment remains high, reaching **over 30% among young university graduates**.

Unemployment rates and the duration of unemployment are even higher in the South, Central and North West regions, especially among women. These regions remain highly dependent on agriculture, which provides mostly seasonal, low-skill and low paid employment, which is unattractive to highly-educated young people. Combating unemployment in these regions requires the development of new opportunities for youth through the creation and growth of enterprises.

STRATEGY

In 2013, UNIDO launched a new initiative in Tunisia that aims at encouraging youth employment through entrepreneurship and enterprise development in four vulnerable regions: Kairouan, Kasserine, Le Kef and Sidi Bouzid. The **US\$ 2.9 million project**, supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Government of Italy and Hewlett Packard (HP) enhances the knowledge and delivery capacity of local business support institutions and provides direct support to entrepreneurs and enterprises through technical assistance, trainings and business coaching.

In the four targeted regions the project will provide direct technical assistance to 80 small and medium-sized enterprises that demonstrate growth and employment potential, conduct a deep-dive business coaching programme for **40 start-ups and**

assist 140 aspiring entrepreneurs in the preparation of bankable business plans. Through face-to-face trainings **1,400 entrepreneurs** will learn how to apply the innovative IT tools and concepts of HP's Learning Initiative for Entrepreneurs (HP LIFE) e-Learning to their own business projects. An additional **2,000 students** will be trained through HP LIFE e-Learning workshops and events held in universities.

AT A GLANCE

Impact: More jobs for young men and women are created in the private sector of the governorates of Kairouan, Kasserine, Le Kef and Sidi Bouzid

MDG: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, specifically "achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people", promote gender equality and empower women, ensure environmental sustainability

Thematic area: Poverty reduction through productive activities

Donors: US Agency for International Development (USAID)
Government of Italy, Hewlett Packard (HP)

National Partners: Ministère de l'Industrie, Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Formation, Ministère du Développement et de Coopération Internationale, Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche scientifique

Budget: Total US\$ 2,930,565

Project duration: January 2013 – June 2015

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The project further aims to strengthen business support institutions and entrepreneurs in the field of environmental management through the provision of a green business plan, an HP LIFE e-Learning energy efficiency course and the Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technology (TEST) methodology. Ultimately, the project aims to generate at least **1,600 direct and indirect jobs**.

The project approach is in line with the strategy of the Government of Tunisia to promote private sector development through enterprise creation and growth in the regions of Tunisia where youth unemployment is particularly high.



INTERIM RESULTS

- In the scope of the HP LIFE e-Learning programme implemented by the project **22 online entrepreneurship training courses** in French and Arabic were launched.
- **16 local trainers** were certified on HP LIFE e-Learning
- More than **480 aspiring and existing entrepreneurs** and **300 students** have already received HP LIFE e-Learning trainings organized by UNIDO in the four regions
- More than **5,000 Tunisians** have already accessed the HP LIFE e-Learning online courses.
- A further **68 HP LIFE e-Learning beneficiaries and aspiring entrepreneurs** have received assistance by business coaches to help them convert their project ideas into bankable business plans.
- National and regional surveys on skills required by industry have been carried out, with **over 500 companies** contacted via an online survey and **200 face-to-face interviews** conducted with local companies in the four regions.
- A manual for guiding young entrepreneurs in their enterprise creation journey has been developed, as well as a green business plan and energy efficiency training content for young entrepreneurs.
- The Digital Entrepreneurship Platform, a youth-led content based platform (www.dep-youth.org) is being strengthened and has the active involvement and participation of **8,000 young women and men**, and over 25 national and international partners that provide content and support to young Tunisian entrepreneurs.
- Given its innovative and regional dimension approach, the project was showcased at several entrepreneurship conferences and events in Tunisia.
- In Tunisia, the project has been branded "**Mashrou3i**" ("My enterprise" in Arabic) and a website, as well as a project Facebook page have been developed that provide detailed project information and regular updates. www.facebook.com/Mashrou3i.tn

