



300 Palestinian Graduates Succeed on the Journey to Freelancing

SITUATION

Every year, more than 40,000 students graduate from Palestinian universities. Palestine faces one of the highest unemployment rates worldwide, so many grads finish school with an abundance of skills and talents but a lack of work opportunities.

For most graduates, finding success means finding career markets. As a result, remote work and freelancing are an increasingly viable way for young people in Palestine to jumpstart their careers and grow their skills.

Partners for Sustainable Development (PSD) in cooperation with Taawon and Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development wanted to implement a youth empowerment project to help 300 Palestinian graduates from different universities in Palestine. The aim of the project was to connect the graduates with job opportunities by raising their awareness of remote work and equipping them with the necessary skills to compete in the regional and international market.

Successful freelancing requires specific entrepreneurial skills that are rarely taught in high schools, colleges, or vocational training programs. As a result, the PSD needed the assistance of a company with proven experience in freelancing and remote fields, as well as the ability to design and deliver professional interactive training to young people.

SOLUTION

PSD approached MENA Alliances to help them design and deliver a training curriculum. MENA

Alliances drew on their decade-plus experience in the freelancing and outsourcing industry with clients from around the world to take 300 grads on the journey to freelancing. MENA Alliances' highly skilled team selected the most important topics for the graduates to learn, then designed, developed, and delivered a custom curriculum.

Training was implemented in three main phases. In the first phase, the experts assessed the PSD and graduates' goals, expectations, and their understanding of the industry. Then, in the second phase, MENA Alliances delivered a customized program equipped with the necessary tools, including presentations, videos, role-play scenarios, and exercises according to the findings of the assessments. In the final phase, MENA Alliances measured the impact of the training, and provided review sessions and consultative executive feedback reports to PSD.

MENA Alliances' expert-created curriculum, The Journey to Successful Freelancing, included six modules (as shown in Figure 1). The program started with understanding the "freelancing mindset" and how freelancing differs from conventional employment.

Then, graduates learned the requirements needed to become successful freelancers. Participants were also taught how to find their marketable skill(s) and how to price their work. After this, they used the curriculum to identify ways to build a credible reputation and promote a freelance business. They explored where to begin making a presence as freelancers and began writing and constructing their own profiles.

Most importantly, they developed a foundation to consistently generate client leads that translate into a sustainable income and sharpened their communication strategies to get repeat clients and beat the competition. Students were then introduced to the MENA Alliances Freelancer Toolkit, which could be used to simplify the process of managing projects, creating contracts, invoicing, tracking payments, and supporting accounting.

BENEFITS

- Approximately 47% of participants succeeded in finding work after the training.
- Working with MENA Alliances allowed PSD to meet its goals of raising youth awareness of freelancing and equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed to pave their way towards a more lucrative and fulfilling career path.
- MENA Alliances successfully managed the 2-day, 10-hour training for 12 groups (25 participants per group) at seven universities in the West Bank and Jerusalem (see Figure 2) within its time frame and on budget.
- MENA Alliances provided participants with a freelancing toolkit, resource guides for learning new skills online and finding work, and templates for proposals and contracts.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

MENA Alliances is known for its rich expertise in freelancing, outsourcing, training, recruiting and offering diverse online services such as IT, translation, and BPO services. Because of this, MENA Alliances was able to create a multi-faceted training that aligned with students of many different educational backgrounds.

MENA Alliances was able to tailor the training according to different levels of awareness and skills from one group to the next across each university.

Splitting the training into six modules helped the participants break down their success into a bit-by-bit process.

Another factor in our success was MENA Alliances' ability to develop interactive and practical training modules. Throughout the training, participants had the opportunity to complete exercises using freelancing tools.

Lastly, MENA Alliances was able to tap into their breadth of experience with US-based clientele to add a western client perspective to the training. This is an essential step in bridging the gap in business culture and market standards between the west and east, and creating an industry where we all work together more easily than ever.

ABOUT MENA ALLIANCES

MENA Alliances is a woman-owned business dedicated to connecting global companies with highly skilled, vetted talent from the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region. MENA Alliances has over 10 years of outsourcing and remote work experience, as well as expertise in translation and localization, computer vision, IT, training data for AI/ML models, and more. MENA Alliances partners with global, regional, and local clients to offer training and coaching models designed to integrate within existing program frameworks for nonprofit and for-profit organizations, universities, or government workforce systems. MENA Alliances is on a mission to create one million jobs for women and young people in the MENA region by 2025 through training and recruiting.

MENA ALLIANCES AT A GLANCE.....

- Access to more than 2000 highly skilled, vetted professionals in the MENA region.
- 10+ years of experience providing high-quality translation and localization, IT, and human-annotated data to support machine learning for speech, search e-commerce, and more.

MENA ALLIANCES MISSION

At MENA Alliances, we're working toward a world in which everyone with the drive, dedication, and skill has the opportunity to thrive. When everyone has the chance to reach their full potential, business is a better place, making a more profound impact. MENA Alliances is on a mission to create one million jobs for women and young people in the MENA region through training and recruiting.