

UNIDO creates more than 6,000 youth jobs in Tunisia

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the US Agency for International Development (USAID), the Italian Development Cooperation and the HP Foundation recently launched the second phase of UNIDO's youth employment project. "Mashrou3i" ("My project" in Arabic) aims to create more than 6,000 jobs for young people in Tunisia over the next five years.



Image by 123RF

Currently, in the governorates of Central, Southern and Northern Tunisia, around 40% of young graduates are unable to find work. This situation is attributed to a range of factors, including the public sector's limited capacity to employ more young men and women, a lack of diversity in the private sector, and a mismatch between the skills required by the private sector and those offered by graduates.

The Mashrou3i project has helped to create more than 1,250 jobs to date, including by helping more than 160 start-up businesses mainly in the governorates of Kairouan, Kasserine, Kef and Sidi Bouzid. During the second phase of this public-private partnership, the project will be expanded to 14 vulnerable governorates of Tunisia and US\$14 million will be invested to provide direct support to aspiring and existing entrepreneurs through training courses, business coaching and technical assistance in Beja, Gafsa, Gabès, Jendouba, Kairouan, Kasserine, Kébili, Kef, Medenine, Sidi Bouzid, Siliana, Tataouine, Tozeur and Zaghouan. It will also help enhance the knowledge and capacity of local business support and higher educational institutions.

"This initiative will provide young men and women in Tunisia's most vulnerable governorates with skills required to be entrepreneurs and offer business coaching services to help them start their businesses or to be able to be competitive on the job market. We expect to reach more than 25,000 aspiring and existing entrepreneurs and create at least 6,000 additional jobs in Tunisia within the next five years," said Glenn Rogers, senior development advisor for USAID in Tunisia.

Philippe Scholtès, managing director at UNIDO, who attended the launch, added: “Unemployment among Tunisia’s educated youth remains a major challenge. Through such public-private partnerships we can pool and leverage our expertise and resources and support Tunisia on its path of inclusive and sustainable industrial development. By working together, we can ensure the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”

Flavio Lavisolo, head of the Italian Development Cooperation in Tunisia, added: “Our efforts aim to stimulate private and public investment, and help companies increase their competitiveness and overcome constraints to growth. This, in return, will secure new employment opportunities for people living in disadvantaged governorates, mainly for young women and men. The project is in line with the new priorities of the Italian Cooperation in Tunisia, which focus on regional development and job creation.”

Mashrou3i will leverage the HP Foundation’s Learning Initiative for Entrepreneurs ([HP LIFE](#)) Program, which provides free online IT and business skills training for people all over the world. HP LIFE will help young Tunisian entrepreneurs develop the knowledge and skills they need to start, grow and run successful businesses.

“The Mashrou3i project is a scalable social innovation model with proven results,” said Jihed Jahdour, managing director, HP Inc. Tunisia. “There is an urgent need for innovative solutions that provide access to quality education and enable economic opportunity for everyone everywhere, wherever they are in the world. The second phase of the project signals the continuation of our successful partnership to foster employment opportunities for young men and women in Tunisia.”

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