



FIRST PERSON

Young Designer Gets Career Boost

USAID-sponsored competition gives Jordan's youth a platform to shine



Al Zaghal stands beside his winning poster. Photo: USAID/Jordan

“When I walked in I was so happy to see my design all over the place.”

—Murad Al Zaghal

Like so many young people in Jordan and around the world, Murad Al Zaghal was in need of opportunities to express his creative voice in a way that contributed to his personal growth. By participating in USAID's International Youth Day 2011, 19-year-old Al Zaghal got a boost to his confidence and abilities while pursuing his passion for design.

As a young designer studying architecture at Hashemite University, Al Zaghal was unsure of his choice of major and of his design abilities. In the summer of 2011, that changed. In keeping with this year's theme of “Partnership and Participation,” USAID organized a design competition with a local partner, the Interclub House, an educational and vocational training center. Al Zaghal was encouraged to participate in the contest, and his modern, sophisticated poster won.

“When I walked in and saw my design all over the place, on the backs of t-shirts, and people taking pictures next to the posters I designed, it was really an amazing feeling,” says Al Zaghal. He adds: “I never saw my work displayed on such a large scale. It made me feel it was a good choice to pursue design, and I thought, ‘what if I had designed the whole building?’”

Along with the exposure he received, his creative esteem has soared. USAID awarded Al Zaghal with a graphics tablet that allows him to hand draw images and graphics on his computer. He is now far better equipped to pursue his passion.

This year's USAID-sponsored International Youth Day encouraged the talents and creativity of 400 youth representing 10 universities and organizations in Jordan.

USAID-funded projects, which support millions of Jordanians, were displayed to encourage the active participation of youth in such critical areas as health, economic development, job creation, and sustainable resource management.

Seventy percent of Jordan's population is under age 30, and nearly two-thirds of working-age youth are unemployed. The Government of Jordan has made the positive participation of youth in all aspects of life a high priority, and USAID recently initiated an integrated set of programs to address youth and poverty.