

MUJAWARAT

A dialogue based adult learning
approach in Palestine

Disclaimer

This report was prepared under the ETF joint activity with DVV International.

It is an unedited working document based on limited data collection in 2023 and 2024.

The contents of the report are the sole responsibility of the ETF and do not necessarily reflect the views of the EU institutions.

© European Training Foundation, 2025

Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.

CONTENTS

CONTENTS	3
INNOVATION ID	4
SETTING THE STAGE	5
PROFILE OF THE INNOVATION	6
Phase 2: Professional Classes/ Social Community Initiatives	8
Phase 3: Second Mujawarat (Stage 2): A roadmap/ Sowing Seeds and Watering	10
Phase 4: Implementation of Roadmaps or Community Initiatives	10
Phase 5: Third Mujawarat (Stage 3): Tracing Impacts/ Snaps and Harvest	11
INNOVATION IN ACTION	12
Development of the practice	12
Implementation of the practice	12
Outcomes of the practice	14
INNOVATION REVISITED	17
INNOVATION IN BRIEF	19
CREDITS	20

Innovation ID

Country: Palestine

Education sector: Non-formal adult-learning

Field of education and training: social and emotional learning such as self-awareness, critical thinking, agency, civic education and self-/economic/social empowerment; and career learning

Setting: Face-to-face

Dimensions:

- ✓ New learning approaches
- ✓ Increasing social inclusion of learners
- ✓ Increasing the competences (skills and knowledge) of the learners needed for the labour market in the 21st century
- ✓ Empowerment of individuals to act in a self-directed way, and develop agency
- ✓ Changing mindsets e.g., related to disability, gender, VET, self-employment, “my community” etc.

Expected outcomes of the practice:

- ✓ Increased learners’ employability
- ✓ Enhanced personal and professional competences
- ✓ Increased motivation for learning
- ✓ Increased participation in the community and improved community life

Number of learners involved: 45 in the year 2022 and 40 in the 2023/2024

Number of educators involved: 3 in the year 2022 and 3 in the year 2023/2024

Setting the stage

Mujawarat is a learner-centred, non-formal learning approach based on dialogue, critical reflection of the community of residence, of own competences, and includes experiential learning to facilitate (re-)engagement with learning, work and/or community life. The approach aims at empowering disadvantaged adults and enhance community life quality. It was developed and implemented by the Institute for International Cooperation of the Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V. (DVV International), the German Adult Education Association¹, as part of the 'Adult learning and education for development and community empowerment' project funded by the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) in Germany.

The present case study is based on activities of the Al-Yamoun Youth and Adult Education Community Centre. The objective of the Centre is to provide social, cultural, and economic services and to engage community members in activities that will (1) promote and support community development, (2) respond to the community challenges and needs, and (3) reduce poverty and unemployment among adults in the local community. The centre targets all groups of the society. Currently it focuses on young people, graduates including of universities, and job seekers. Most of the participants are women and women with disabilities.

The most important vocational and crafts training programmes offered by the Centre, based on the growing demand of the community to both men and women, are food processing, honey processing, embroidery, tailoring, sewing, beauty salon training, and small enterprise training. Overall, the centre works to ensure a sustainable environment for continuous learning for individuals, including by ensuring cooperation with other education providers and government agencies, to ensure quality in lifelong learning.

The Community Centre is located in Al-Yamoun village - Jenin in the north of the West Bank², in a community with weak economic structures, high unemployment especially amongst young adults, poverty, and limited job opportunities. It is considered one of the biggest villages in the Jenin Governorate and is mainly known for its agriculture, specifically the production of olives and figs³. The learning initiative Mujawarat is designed for this context and aims at offering a strong support network to learners that facilitates self-directed learning and livelihood management. By continuing support also after graduation, improved impacts of learning are ensured, which also creates benefits for the community.⁴

The objective of Mujawarat is to empower individuals personally and economically, increase community participation as well as to improve the community life through improving and strengthening the professional and personal skills, knowledge, attitudes, and social networks of adult learners, as well as by promoting social inclusion, considering the personal needs and abilities of the learners as well as the needs, challenges and opportunities of the community.

¹ DVV International's work in the Middle East focuses on the development of innovative educational programmes, the qualification of adult education specialists, the establishment of adult education centres and the improvement of the political and legal framework for adult education. Relevant projects are being implemented in Jordan and Palestine.

² <https://www.facebook.com/alyamouncenter> while DVV International worked in three Adult Education Centres in Palestine: Al Yamoun Adult Learning Centre, Arrabah Adult Learning Centre, both located in Jenin, and Al-Karmel Adult Learning Centre located in Hebron

³ <https://www.welcometopalestine.com/destinations/jenin/yamun/>

⁴ Reflection Interview with Staff and Trainers, Interview with Learners

Profile of the innovation

Mujawarat – roughly translated as ‘Neighbourhood of Hope’ – is based on Popular Education⁵ and the work of the Palestinian educationalists, Khalil Sakakini⁶ and Munir Fasheh⁷. Fasheh was also the first one to introduce the term Mujawarat in a context of learning. According to Fasheh, a ‘[Mujawarat] can only be lived; it requires physical presence and face to face conversations. It happens at the communal level, where learning takes place in freedom, not fear. It can only happen with trust, honesty, mutual nurturance, among people who are ready to really listen to one another with full attentiveness.’⁸. Fasheh believes that everyone’s reality, story, experiences and memories build the foundation of the meaning people give to learning. The concept of the Mujawarat builds on the ‘great potential which results from sharing those stories in an appreciative learning environment.’⁹.

Mujawarat is based on five core competences of social and emotional learning¹⁰, namely¹¹:

- Self-Awareness: The abilities to understand one’s own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behaviour across contexts.
- Self-Management: The abilities to manage one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviours effectively in different situations and to achieve goals and aspirations.
- Social Awareness: The abilities to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts.
- Relationship Skills: The abilities to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups.
- Responsible Decision-Making: The abilities to make caring and constructive choices about personal behaviour and social interactions across diverse situations.

After finishing Mujawarat, learners should have gained enhanced personal competences, an enhanced awareness and understanding of their own values, needs, strengths, and weaknesses, greater empathy and communication skills, and an improved ability to take responsible decisions. Learners are also empowered to shape their own learning journey based on their personal experience, motivation, and goals.

The learners participating in Mujawarat have often experienced hardship in various ways. Mujawarat aims to provide a friendly space for dialogue and reflection, raising ‘hope in their souls, strengthening their determination and stimulating the minds towards more inspiring and positive steps to explore new fields of learning and community participation’.¹² By co-developing a new perspective with people for their lives and confidence that they can indeed create positive change, Mujawarat supports social mobility.

Each Mujawarat takes place in three distinct stages:

⁵<https://www.dvv-international.de/en/adult-education-and-development/editions/aed-762011/popular-education-and-reflect/popular-education-and-pedagogy>

⁶ <https://sakakini.org/about/who-is-khalil-sakakini/?lang=en>

⁷ <http://www.campusincamps.ps/projects/the-house-of-wisdom/>

⁸ <https://shikshantar.org/articles/gift-culture-mujaawarah-neighbouring>

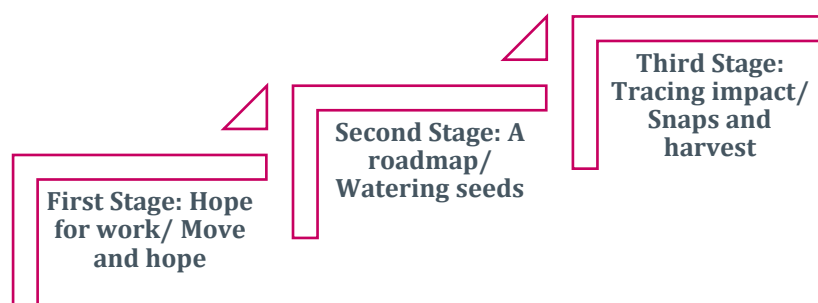
⁹ Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (DVV International): *Insights into Neighbourhoods of Hope*

¹⁰ DVV International (2021): *A Guide for the Community Learning and Community Engagement Path*, p.11

¹¹ The five core competences of social and emotional learning are derived from the CASEL Framework: <https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/what-is-the-casel-framework/>

¹² DVV International (2021): *A Guide for the Community Learning and Community Engagement Path (google-translated from Arabic to English)*, p.10

Figure 1: The Three Stages of the Mujawarat – employability track/community track¹³



Mujawarat follows an approach of practical, hands-on learning through experience. The final outcomes are increased employability for wage employment, self-employment or enhanced competence to run community initiatives which respond to challenges of communities. Mujawarat starts off with empowering individuals through dialogue, critical reflection of community life and self in the context of two different tracks, adult learners can choose:

- The **Personal Empowerment Track**, which aims at enhancing personal and professional skills of learners to support learners in finding a job or develop their own business to generate income (“employability track”).
- The **Community Empowerment Track**, which aims at supporting learners in identifying community needs and to plan, organise, and implement initiatives that benefit the community (“community track”).

Both tracks of Mujawarat consist of five phases as outlined below, and both tracks benefit the individual and the community, as a key characteristic of Mujawarat.

Phase 1: First Mujawarat (Stage 1)– Hope for work/ Move and hope

The first Mujawarat aims to create a learning environment that encourages lifelong learning, focusing specifically on (1) getting to know the participants and nurturing hope in them, (2) encouraging participants to learn about themselves and their community, (3) enhancing participants’ concepts and values of cooperation, solidarity and community participation, and (4) identifying and choosing the most appropriate topic for further learning.

This first Mujawarat lasts for about 7 hours and takes place in an open space, outside – ideally in nature. All learners come together, regardless of age, gender and/or other differences. One of the aims of Mujawarat is to create a friendly neighbourhood/ village atmosphere, engage in conversations with each other and disconnect from daily life. Boundaries between men and women are broken down and all learners are supported in feeling comfortable in the group. Mobile phones and similar distractions are not allowed to ensure entire focus is put on the group and experience of the day, that is characterised by interactive discussions and learning activities, and by preparing food and eating together.

More concretely, phase 1 starts with an introduction of the facilitators¹⁴ about Mujawarat and to the Adult Education Centre (vision, mission, objectives, centre’s regular training programmes and opportunities). After getting to know each other, the learning journey starts with a short self-assessment that focuses on identifying the learners’ expectations and needs, as basis for the next steps. The learners are also asked to write a letter to each other, with messages of hope. This is important as Mujawarat is based on stories and dialogue, sparked through different prompts by the facilitators. All activities involve

¹³ DVV International (2021): *A Guide for the Community Learning and Community Engagement Path*, p.5

¹⁴ Group of people who are responsible for facilitating the learning process of the adult learners and provide to them guidance, orientation and technical/personal support when needed. They are responsible for planning of the three phases of Tafakur.

discussion and reflection. Learners discover and explore skills such as self-awareness, self-management, time-management, decision-making skills, relationship-skills, and communication skills.

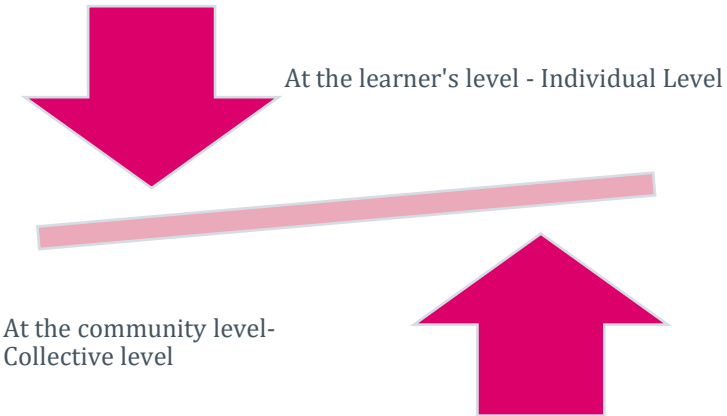
The learning environment is characterised by a culture of openness to express, to listen, and to ask questions in the frame of a collective dialogue. This is done in small groups (3-4 participants), in pairs and in the larger group (more than 5 participants). Normally, an ice-breaking activity is used to help the learners get used to the new approach and to get to know the facilitators and other learners. This ensures that they feel comfortable to speak out, express their feelings and emotions and actively engage in the learning process.¹⁵

For instance, learners walk along a path in pairs and explore different proverbs, they discuss their meaning and how each proverb relates to some of their own experiences. Pairs join each other to form small groups and to expand the conversations. Conversations in the **personal empowerment track** focus on the views of individuals about their own skills, strengths, goals and learning, while conversations in the **community empowerment track** are focused on society, on the individuals' roles/responsibilities within society, on what could be changed, how desired change can be achieved and why this change is needed at the community level.

Further activities include, exploring the participants' individual learning needs based on career/ business aspirations. For the **community empowerment track**, exploration of the specific needs of participants with regards to communication, outreach and social mobilisation is the main focus next to identifying the needs of their community and the potential of community initiatives to address those needs. This builds the basis for learners to choose the most appropriate skills training offers for the next phase of their learning journey. A tool is used (scaling/ grading), which is part of the Participatory Rapid Approach, to identify the professional courses from which the group of participants may benefit.

In sum, this phase aims at supporting the learners to become aware of the reality around them (opportunities around them, challenges they may face, personal strengths and assets of their local communities) at two levels, as illustrated in Figure (3). The first phase is the entry point to further professional/vocational trainings as well as personal development.

Figure (3): The Two Levels where Mujawarat Creates Change



Phase 2: Professional Classes/ Social Community Initiatives

After completing the first Mujawarat, learners continue within their track – either the community empowerment track, or they can choose among the professional trainings offered at the Al-Yamoun

¹⁵ Description based on Exploratory Interviews with staff and trainers

centre within the personal empowerment track. Throughout six days (18 hours of intensive learning), learners are engaged in developing different types of competences, based on their needs.¹⁶

Personal empowerment track - Professional trainings

Learners were able to select between the following trainings at the Al-Yamoun centre¹⁷ (see Table 1):

Table 1. Overview of professional classes offered by Al YAMOUN Centre during 2023 – Mujawarat professional classes

<i>Al Yamoun Adult Education Centre in Jenin – North of the West Bank\ Palestine</i>
Pastry and Dessert-Making
Food Processing
ICT Training Program
Beauty Training Program
Embroidery and Hand Craft Training Program
Tailoring and sewing
Honey Making
Drawing on the Glass

The professional classes offered are based on the learners' and their communities' needs and respond to the needs of women and adults with disabilities. Such classes aim at providing adult learners with the competences needed to find or create their own job opportunities, which will support them to be economically empowered, even with only small income generation. The professional trainings follow a work-based learning approach including work simulation and complete action technique. Using practice-based learning activities supports learners to build practical and methodological skills, as well as gain confidence in task performance which facilitates direct application of skills for income generation.

The duration of the professional training programs depends on the needs of the learners, but on average they last for a period of 6 months and are led by highly experienced and professional trainers.

Community Empowerment Track

*“The personal development and community empowerment project aims to improve the quality of life of young people and adults by empowering them professionally or socially, strengthening their social and personal skills”.*¹⁸

Learners in the Community Empowerment Track engage in trainings on how to plan and implement initiatives that benefit their local community. During this phase, learners work on initial planning which includes identification of community needs and developing planning and communication skills. Initiatives therefore benefit both, the learners and the community. Different methods are used to develop initiatives,

¹⁶ Description based on Reflection Interviews with staff and trainers

¹⁷ Reflection Interview with Staff and Trainers

¹⁸ Trainee who did not complete the Mujawarat phases at the time the case study was done

such as brainstorming with other learners, community leaders and influencers as well as with learning facilitators. The participatory approach aims at ensuring that the solution for the identified challenge is adequate and meets the community needs. Subsequently, learners start the process of full planning and organising of the initiative together with the Adult Education Centre.

Phase 3: Second Mujawarat (Stage 2): A roadmap/ Sowing Seeds and Watering

After learners have participated in professional trainings in any of the two tracks, they come back together for a second Mujawarat. The activities of this Mujawarat help learners identify their strengths and areas for improvement, based on reflections of their experience with trainings attended. This builds the basis for developing personal roadmaps outlining how individuals plan to reach their goals. Roadmaps are created in the form of a river to represent the paths, learners envision. Support is provided to learners of the Personal Empowerment Track to consider demands of the community and local labour market¹⁹ in their roadmaps, and to learners of the Community Empowerment Track to discuss their initiative with community members and in particular community leaders and to finalise their plans for the initiative.

Phase 4: Implementation of Roadmaps or Community Initiatives

Learners who chose the Community Empowerment Track implement the initiative that they have developed in the previous phases. For instance, a group of learners of the Al-Yamoun centre decided to focus their initiative 'Our roots have lights' on elderly people. The initiative brought together elderly people with limited social interaction, that rarely leave their house, and invited them for joint cooking and eating, and engaged them in conversations and traditional games.²⁰

Learners who chose the Personal Empowerment Track implement the plans reflected in their roadmaps. During this period, trainers were in regular exchange with learners to assist them where needed and encourage them. At the same time, learners could also still participate in professional trainings offered by the centre.

The professional trainings offered by the centre in this phase focus mainly on topics relevant to the learners' and the communities' needs identified in the first phase through the self-assessment. Trainings are rather specialised in terms of content, and therefore implemented by external experts. Examples of Mujawarat 2023 include:

- Communication, leaderships, negotiation skills
- English Language skills
- CVs writing and conducting professional interview skills
- Gender Equality
- Marketing including Digital Marketing
- Building social and professional networks including networking with the local labour market (including with relevant units of the Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Social Development, which might assist in job searches, as well as with universities, etc.)
- Building new attitudes e.g. towards gender and disability.

¹⁹ Reflection Interview with Staff and Trainers

²⁰ Reflection Interview with Staff and Trainers

Phase 5: Third Mujawarat (Stage 3): Tracing Impacts/ Snaps and Harvest

The last Mujawarat takes place 3 months after the second Mujawarat and gives a unique opportunity to learners to reflect on their goals and their roadmaps/initiatives to see what they have achieved, where their main challenges were, and how to improve their plans and/or adapt goals. This instead based on first experiences with implementing their roadmaps or initiatives. This can result also in engaging in further learning or completely revising plans. Trainers continue to follow-up on learners' progress and offer support where needed. Learners are in regular exchange with each other and trainers as a supporting group, including through WhatsApp and emails.

After 6 months, learners and trainers meet at the Centre to assess progress. Learners in the Community Empowerment Track invite community members to this meeting in order to, both, celebrate the achievements of the initiative, and to reflect on challenges, unforeseen changes and to discuss together how the results of the initiative can be further improved. For the Personal Empowerment Track, the Centre organises a bazaar where learners may display and sell their products or services.

Innovation in action

Development of the practice

DVV International initiated Mujawarat in different Community Centres and has continuously enhanced it since then by using inter alia pre-intervention assessments, post-intervention learning assessments, and partial learner tracking. In addition, by the end of 2023, the Al-Yamoun centre conducted a full tracing study for the two tracks. To construct this case study, the ETF in close collaboration with DVV International and a local expert,

- Organised a 1-day workshop with learners and facilitators to identify context-sensitive competence elements of employability with facilitators and participants from three centres²¹. The following working definition for this initiative has been developed based on literature review:

‘Employability is defined as the knowledge, skills and attitudes (competence) as well as availability of social networks empowering individuals to access and sustain decent work and successfully manage transitions within and between learning and decent work, within the limitations of contextual factors – like jobless growth, access to support services (from active labour market measures, to career guidance and social services etc.), quality of the education and training offer, labour market conditions and trends at national, regional and local level such as aging/demographic shifts, digitalization, globalization, offshoring and climate change as well as cultural aspects such as those related to gender, age and ethnicity.’

The workshop results were used as basis for the development of a quantitative research questionnaire for learners and one for facilitators that fits the needs of the context and can be used to capture the perceptions of facilitators and self-perceptions of learners on the learning progress made thanks to Mujawarat. In addition, qualitative questions, where included to capture the experience of learners with the learning activity.

- Rolled out questionnaires amongst selected groups of learners and facilitators to capture the effects of the learning initiative;
- Conducted interviews with selected facilitators and the centres’ principals to collect additional information on the learning approach.

Implementation of the practice

Rather than simply transferring knowledge through a theoretical and teacher-centred teaching approach where the trainer takes on the role of an instructor, Mujawarat is based on a participatory and dialogue-based methodology. Coined by Paulo Freire²², Popular Education is a very interactive learning approach, which “promotes student involvement in the construction of knowledge through practice”.²³ Popular Education aims at empowering learners to take control of their own learning. Denouncing the banking model of education, Popular Education is based on the idea that teachers and learners are in constant dialogue; everyone teaches, and everyone learns. Learners should be able to make decisions about what they learn and start that process from their own experiences. Dialogue, according to Paulo Freire, is an essential necessity for liberation. The guide of DVV International Palestine to implement

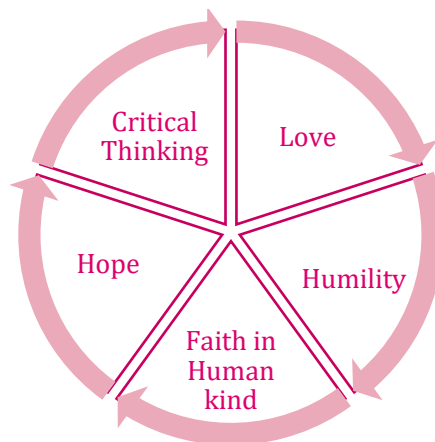
²¹ The three centres are in which Mujawarat is implemented and where the workshops took place are: Al Yamoun Community Centre for Youth and Adult Education (Municipality of Al Yamoun and MoE), Arraba Community Centre for Youth and Adult Education (Municipality of Arraba and MoE), Al Karmel Community Centre for Youth and Adult Education (Municipality of Al Karmel and MoE)

²² See <https://www.freire.org/paulo-freire> for more information

²³ <https://www.dvv-international.de/en/adult-education-and-development/editions/aed-762011/popular-education-and-reflect/popular-education-and-pedagogy>

Mujawarat specifically refers to the five foundations for dialogue that Freire identifies in his Pedagogy of the Oppressed (see figure 4)²⁴:

Figure 4: The five Foundations for Dialogue that Freire Identifies



These foundations are critical elements in the design and implementation of Mujawarat. Popular Education and dialogue-based education have also been widely used across Latin America, but in the Palestinian context it is a new and innovative approach.

One of the elements mentioned repeatedly by learners, facilitators, and organisers of Mujawarat is the '**neighbourhood/ village atmosphere**'²⁵ that is purposefully developed during the first Mujawarat and continues throughout the entire learning journey. Through the participatory and dialogue-based approach, learners gain the confidence to actively participate within the group. They further receive continuous guidance and support to develop their own roadmaps and action plans, and, where possible, support to developing their own project or initiative. WhatsApp-groups connect learners and facilitators and offer an informal space for questions and support. The fact that facilitators remain in touch with learners even after the end of the training process and meet up regularly, gives additional confidence to the learners to start their own project, knowing there is guidance.

The **motivated and strong teams of staff and management of the Community Centre** were an important asset in the successful implementation of the programme. The proper planning, organization, and commitment of all team members has ensured that the entire process could be contextualized, upgraded²⁶ and implemented smoothly, confidently, and according to plan. The teams also ensured that the trainers for the professional trainings are highly qualified and ensured that learners enjoy a high level of support. Some trainers usually work in vocational institutions, and some of them received a training of trainers (ToT) training program abroad.²⁷ The Centre is also very **well networked within the community as well as with the local labour market**. It collaborates with the public and private institutions, with community-based organisations, civil society organisations as well as individuals.²⁸

The lack of equipment and tools posed a challenge, but to ensure that all learners have the opportunity to practice, the centre ensured that at least 2-3 learners have one tool (e.g. sewing machine) which they could use together or in turns. The centre also mentioned that **access** to training was difficult for some of the (potential) learners living far from the Centre. Some learners dropped out because of transport/distance and others had to bear significant travel expenses. One further limitation mentioned by both staff as well as learners is the **limited duration of the training programs**. Staff and learners mentioned that the courses offered are not long enough to acquire the necessary competences to take up work in that area. The length of the training program is dependent on the budget available. If there

²⁴ Freire, Paolo (1970): Pedagogy of the Oppressed: Chapter 3
²⁵ Reflection Interview with Staff and Learners
²⁶ Upgraded to cover all adult learning centres at national level
²⁷ Reflection Interview with learners
²⁸ Reflection Interview with learners

was more funding, longer courses could be offered that would likely attract more learners. For instance, Al Yamoun centre has succeeded in making a further step where two of the courses became advanced: both the sewing course and the bee keeping course became steady courses at the centre that are provided each year, and were developed to a three-level course, building upon each other and allowing for development of more advanced skills.

With more financial resources, the Centres could also extend the offer of different courses/trainings to be able to meet the diverse needs of learners. In contrast, the **short trainings can in fact be seen as taster trainings**, to allow for the development of interest, which needs to be followed up with more technical trainings to equip the learners with competences needed in the labour market. To this end, there is a **need to widen the scope of taster training offer** as well. Strategic partnerships and networking with VET providers (public, civil and private sectors) or Higher Education providers could be set up to allow for more taster options which would also already create entry points for further formal learning.

Outcomes of the practice

Enhanced professional and personal competences

The main outcomes of Mujawarat are enhanced personal and professional skills. The professional trainings and community initiatives offer an opportunity for learners to get out of their house and engage in personal, social and professional learning, which in turn equipped them with the skills needed to generate an income for themselves and their family or to run community initiatives. While notably the sum of respondents to a questionnaire that was distributed amongst learners and facilitators was very low given that only a hand full of learners and facilitators were questioned for this pilot initiative, results still show a positive trend in relation to the effectiveness of Mujawarat:

The results of the questionnaire showed that 83.33% of the learners' improved their professional and personal competences. One learner said: *"During my [university] graduate study, I had the chance to be involved in different trainings, but the professional classes which I participated in at the centre were so interesting and relevant to what I was looking for"*²⁹. Another one indicated that *"the training helped me start my own business in food processing"*³⁰.

During a workshop conducted in Ramallah on August 1, 2023, aimed at understanding the value of Mujawarat, many learners indicated that the trainings they participated in, supported them to identify their strengths and helped them keep up hope in the challenging situation Palestine is in. This result was underlined by the findings of the facilitators' questionnaire. Facilitators believed that 75% of the learners enhanced their professional and personal competences as a result of their participation in Mujawarat.

Several success stories of learners reflect this: For example, the story of a housewife, who participated in different professional trainings focused on food processing said: *"It was not easy for me after my master degree in Mathematics to participate in the centre, and get involved in a food processing class, but now, I do encourage other adults to build their professional skills and follow a VET track to be able to create the needed job opportunity"*.³¹

The enhancement of professional and personal skills is supported by the results of the pre- and post-assessments conducted by facilitators aimed at understanding the changes in learners' thinking patterns and self-understanding and understanding of their communities, as well as the local market trends. The assessment DVV International had introduced focuses on four areas: (1) readiness and willingness to work, (2) ability to compete in the labour market, (3) social learning based on dialogue, and (4) changes in the learners and family economic situation. Based on a dialogue and supported by a semi-structured questionnaire, the facilitators score all learners. The measurement is based on weighted categories and

²⁹ Interview with learners, 2023

³⁰ Interview with the learners, 2023

³¹ Interview with one learner from the center

subcategories. The assessment results show that learners have improved capacities (e.g., problem solving, ability to identify own needs and strengths), acquired various skills (e.g.: communication, leadership, entrepreneurship, negotiation, marketing and digital marketing skills, CV writing skills, job interviewing skills), and achieved better economic conditions.

Enhanced employability

The enhanced professional skills have allowed learners to set up their own project or business or find full time/part-time employment – whether this means working on sewing projects from their house or finding work in an established business due to the hands-on skills acquired. Mujawarat helped learners acquire realistic planning and organization skills related to own projects and business ideas/start-ups. Some learners even created job opportunities for other learners, and several of the learners have shared their personal success stories.

The findings of the learners' questionnaire revealed that 88.88% of them increased their employability. The self-employment opportunities were mainly focused on pastry making from home or beekeeping and honey production. Some quotes of learners show the added value of Mujawarat for them:

*"I benefited from the whole training and Mujawarat, I now have my own business in apiculture (beekeeping)."*³²

*"It is really important for a female to have her income source, where she is not obligated to ask her husband for money. Mujawarat helped me to be economically empowered after I opened my kitchen."*³³

*"I have started working from home and taking some orders."*³⁴

*"I participated in one of the most interesting classes I have ever been, which is the traditional food processing, now I created job opportunity not only for me, but also for my sister who is responsible for marketing my product."*³⁵

*"Thanks to this course, I am working in my own business, which makes me feel like an active individual in the society. This training exceeded my highest expectations, furthermore, I made a lot of friends in this centre. I feel like I have a new family."*³⁶

*"Without this center, I wouldn't have been able to know how I start my own business. This is thanks to Mujawarat."*³⁷

Also, facilitators identified positive personal changes as a result of the learning process:

*"All the participants in our courses have different success stories. Even if they don't have a project at the level of the family. They succeeded. They know themselves better than in the past, even in terms of confidence building. That is also important in the initial period."*³⁸

*"I could see the change happening amongst learners since they start their participation."*³⁹

By spending extensive time to discover the learners' skills and needs and relate them to the actual needs of the local community, there is a higher chance of success, as learners can implement projects based on their personal skills, competences and abilities, which are relevant to what is needed in the local context and local labour market. This added value of Mujawarat was confirmed by questionnaire respondents.

³² Interview with Learners, 2023

³³ Interview with Learners, 2023

³⁴ Interview with Learners, 2023

³⁵ Interview with a Learner, 2023

³⁶ Interview with Learners

³⁷ Interview with Learners, 2023

³⁸ Reflection Interview with Staff and Trainers

³⁹ Discussion with Alyamoun Center Director, 2023

Overall, upon completion of Mujawarat, questionnaire results, based on the answers of 18 learners, show that 38.89% of the learners agreed, and 50% fully agreed with the statement that their motivation for ongoing learning increased substantially. This, highlights Mujawarat's contribution to fostering a mindset of continuous learning. This heightened motivation emerges as a pivotal factor aiding individuals in meeting their personal and professional objectives.

The questionnaire delved into learners' awareness of labour market dynamics, with 83.33% of the learners agreeing that they are able to recognize challenges and opportunities both on a personal level and within their communities, whereas 11.11% of the learners said they could already do this before the training started. This awareness empowers individuals to make informed decisions, align their aspirations with labour market realities, and contribute meaningfully to their local economies. 77.78% of the learners agree that they can identify their strength, learning needs and challenges related to their knowledge, skills, attitudes and social networks needed to find employment after the training. Only 27.78% of the learners indicated that they could do this already at the start of the training.

The questionnaire also showed that learners developed several skills during the programme, such as communication skills, time management skills, entrepreneurial and leadership skills and digital skills. 44.44% of the learners agree and a same percentage fully agrees with the statement that their employability has increased substantially due to their participation in the Mujawarat. This outcome holds significant importance, highlighting the effectiveness of Mujawarat in equipping learners with a diverse set of competences. The emphasis on 21st-century skills, encompassing digital literacy, critical thinking, and collaboration, aligns with the evolving demands of modern workplaces and shows the added value of Mujawarat to support career readiness.

All of this suggests that Mujawarat is successful not only in addressing immediate job-related requirements but also in nurturing a broader skill set that enhances learners' employability. Mujawarat also played a pivotal role in reshaping participants' attitudes toward issues such as disability, gender, and the environment with respondents stating positive shifts in mindsets and behaviours, indicative of the program's broader impact in fostering inclusive and progressive perspectives.

In essence, Mujawarat seems to be a pivotal force in enhancing participants' employability, fostering a motivation for engaging into continuous learning, increasing awareness of labour market dynamics, and facilitating the acquisition of a diverse skill set. Participants emerge not only with job-specific competencies but also with the ability to think critically, communicate effectively, and collaborate in dynamic team environments. This makes Mujawarat stand out as program that goes beyond traditional training. It serves as a catalyst for personal development, addressing not only immediate employment needs but also nurturing a mindset of continuous improvement and adaptability. The program's success lies in its ability to create a positive ripple effect, enhancing employability, motivation, awareness, and skill sets, and contributing to the overall resilience and competitiveness of its participants.

Increased motivation to pursue further education (Increased motivation for learning)

Many of the learners expressed their willingness to participate in further professional education and training and learn more advanced content in order to further improve their skills, and with that their employability and opportunities.⁴⁰ Mujawarat therefore builds the basis for adult learners to re-engage with learning, motivate them to see the value of learning for them and their community. This can be a real game changer in the need for increasing adult learning participation. 11 of the 25 learners have taken up additional classes at the local, governmental VET centres to expand and upgrade their vocational skills and to receive a certification that helps them advance on the labour market.

The questionnaire results confirmed that many of the learners perceived an increased motivation to continue learning due to Mujawarat. The facilitators believed that 75% of their learners were motivated to continue learning as a result of their participation in the Mujawarat sessions.

⁴⁰ Workshop conducted with the learners, facilitators and centres' directors, 2023

Innovation revisited

Dialogue-based methodology rooted in Popular Education

The pedagogical approaches used for the Mujawarat learning process present a new learning experience for all learners but in particular (1) recent graduates, as it locates the learner in the centre of the learning process, considering the individual differences among them, as well as for (b) women who, as per data collection results, have so far been focusing on raising their children and caring for families with approximately 4.7:1 hours of unpaid care work conducted by women compared to the unpaid care work conducted by men in Palestine⁴¹. While (3) young university graduates have a high level of theoretical knowledge, they have not usually experienced practical and interactive learning that engages them. The data collection revealed that 7 learners saw the education system in Palestine in a very critical way as it relies on theory rather than on practice, which is considered one of the main challenges faced by graduates in Palestine, as they graduated with mainly knowledge and limited skills. In addition to that, the approaches used to train teachers follow the same teacher-centred logic, so there is no way they can learn a different pedagogical approach⁴². The inability of the education system to adjust to the changes and requirements needed for changing labour markets is a major challenge. This highlights once more the added value of Mujawarat.

Personal awareness/ Discovering own needs in relation to community needs

Mujawarat has a strong emphasis on supporting learners' self-awareness and critical understanding of themselves in the context of their community, of current conditions and local market trends. The first phase of Mujawarat is geared towards exploring the learners' own (1) strengths and weaknesses, (2) abilities and competences, and (3) interests and needs. This is unique, as learners are empowered to choose the most appropriate learning path for them - within the opportunities Mujawarat provides – in relation to needs of the community of local labour markets.

The first phase of Mujawarat focuses on life skills, for example building self-awareness, critical thinking, self-confidence, goal setting, planning and organizing skills, problem solving skills, communication skills, leadership skills and creating the basis for decision-making. This supports the learners in setting their own goals and directions for the continuation of their learning path. During the second Mujawarat, the learners follow up on their roadmaps based on the taster learning activities they engaged in within the professional track or their community initiative activities within the community track. They reflect on their achievements and objectives. As such, they shape their own learning journey based on their personal experience and motivation.

It is the **combination of life skills and employability skills learning in relation to community needs that makes this programme unique**. While there are other vocational institutions and other community centres that offer professional trainings, Mujawarat integrates learners into the design of their own learning journey, ensuring that the content is as relevant to their personal as well as community needs.

Strong support structure throughout the learning journey

One of the elements mentioned repeatedly by learners, trainers and organisers of the Mujawarat approach is the friendly 'trusted'⁴³ atmosphere that is purposefully developed during the first phase of Mujawarat and lasts throughout the entire learning journey. Through the participatory and interactive and inclusive approach, including icebreakers, learners gain the confidence to actively participate within the group. WhatsApp groups connect learners and facilitators and offer an informal space for questions and support when needed (personal, social and professional support).

⁴¹ *The Role of the Care Economy in Promoting Gender Equality. Progress of women in the Arab States, UN Women, 2020*

⁴² *Result of the centralized workshop, 2023*

⁴³ *Reflection Interview with Staff and Trainers, 2022*

“The facilitator played a central role in my learning journey, as she held my hand whenever I needed her to provide me with support in my personal and professional life.”⁴⁴

The fact that facilitators remain in touch with learners even after the end of Mujawarat gives additional confidence to the learners to start their own project or apply for a job in the labour market, knowing there is guidance and support.

Embedded in the community

Another asset of Mujawarat is that the centre is well connected to stakeholders in the community and labour market, such as community-based organisations, civil society organisations and individuals, but also universities and colleges, the private sector and governmental organisations, the main players in vocational education and training and community influencers and leaders. The stakeholders participate in the community initiatives and learners stay connected with them to be able to follow up with them after finishing Mujawarat, e.g. in support of their product marketing. For instance, the Al-Yamoun Centre organised a bazaar, where learners can present their products and services, and invited different stakeholders.

A well-networked centre increases the trust of learners and is an added value for the learning process that serves their personal development as well as their future employment and training opportunities. In this regard, the centre described itself as the ‘home of the learners’⁴⁵, connecting learners to experts, to vocational training centres, to the job market or other community organisations. Moreover, the learners assured that, the centre keeps trying to provide its graduates with job opportunities through connecting with various stakeholders⁴⁶. However, the centre always clearly states that Mujawarat is about employability enhancement and personal and community empowerment to build the fundamental basis for employment or self-employment, it is not an employment agency.

⁴⁴ Interview with the learners, 2023

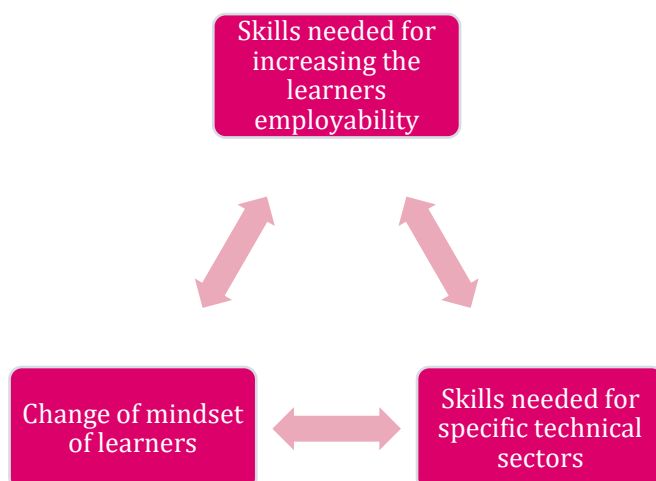
⁴⁵ Interview with the center director, 2023

⁴⁶ Workshop results, 2023

Innovation in brief

Mujawarat was developed by DVV International Palestine and implemented in three Adult Learning Centres in Palestine to empower disadvantaged groups through offering opportunities to develop personal, social and professional competences to increase their employability and/or support the improvement of community participation and community life (see figure 5).

Figure (5): Pillars of the change which Mujawarat aims to create



The Mujawarat approach offers a different and new learning experience to adult learners in the most disadvantaged communities. It is based on a participatory and dialogue-based methodology. The approach creates an atmosphere in which learners feel at home and at ease to express themselves, as a learner expressed: *"I start going to the centre whenever I know that a new class opens, I feel in the centre as it is my home"*⁴⁷. This helps the learners to define their expectations and speak about their needs and pave their future directions.

The success of Mujawarat is supported by the way the centre is integrated in the community, creating a strong sense of belonging and the ability to address individual and community needs. The strong connection with the community also offers opportunities to the learners after they complete Mujawarat. Finally, the relation with the centre doesn't end with the completion of Mujawarat. The centre keeps tracking learners to be informed on their progress and need for guidance, in order to provide them with adequate support.

The approach is especially valuable for disadvantaged groups further away from education and employment. For instance, many countries have set up Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs) to reintegrate unemployed or inactive adults into the labour market. Still, it is difficult to integrate certain groups and provide job opportunities for them, and achieving the principle of no one is left behind. Mujawarat can be an effective approach to reach out to the most disadvantaged groups, including women and persons with disabilities, and to empower them and facilitate readiness for (re-)engaging into learning within ALMPs. **Putting Mujawarat timely before formal learning opportunities funded by ALMPs can help increase adult learning participation and activation.**

⁴⁷ Interview with learners, 2023

Credits

The current case study is based on data collection during the cohort of 2022 and the outcomes of the data collection and analysis process conducted in 2023. In 2022, the data has been collected through a questionnaire submitted to each of the centres, two focus groups with the management of each centre and facilitators involved in Mujawarat (one at the start and one at the end) and an interview with the learners of each of the centres.

In 2023, the data has been collected through two types of questionnaires: a learners' questionnaire, and a facilitators' questionnaire, capturing the learners' self-perception and facilitators' perception of the learners' learning progress related to employability. In addition, a workshop was held in Ramallah with the learners, facilitators and centres' directors, and interviews were conducted with some of the centres' learners (see figure 6 for more details on the methods used).

The aim was to capture the learning practice and share it with others for inspiration and peer learning. The questionnaires were conducted only with Al-Yamoun Community Centre, while the workshops and interviews were conducted with Al Yamoun Community Centre for Youth and Adult Education (Municipality of Al Yamoun and MoE), Arraba Community Centre for Youth and Adult Education (Municipality of Arraba and MoE), and Al Karmel Community Centre for Youth and Adult Education (Municipality of Al Karmel and MoE).

Figure (6): Methods used in the data collections of the 2023 research

