One of the main challenges, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, that Jordanian youth face is with connectivity. Young people, particularly in rural areas, either have poor internet connection, no internet, or lack the devices needed to stay connected. They also lack the digital literacy skills necessary to tap into the potential of the country’s growing Information and Communication Technology sector, which accounts for **12 per cent** of Jordan’s Gross Domestic Product.

The **Youth Learning Passport**, launched in June 2020, offers a scalable and innovative solution. It provides a critical bridge to help disadvantaged youth—especially girls, refugees, and adolescents with disabilities who are most at risk of long-term unemployment—access digital learning and training. This is the first version of the global Learning Passport platform to launch in the Middle East and in Arabic. Founded through a partnership among UNICEF, the University of Cambridge, and Microsoft, the Youth Learning Passport in Jordan is free of charge and can be used both online and offline. It offers adolescents a wide range of content, including courses on basic and advanced digital skills, coding and software development, life skills, social entrepreneurship, financial literacy, technical and vocational options, such as jewelry making and carpentry, as well as the English language. By prioritising digital skills development and empowering youth, the government is placing young people in front and centre of Jordan’s post-COVID-19 economic recovery.

**RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED**

With the technical and financial support of UNICEF, the Youth Learning Passport in Jordan currently has around 9,000 enrolled users, **68 per cent of whom are girls**. Key lessons from implementation include:

- **Reaching disadvantaged youth with digital and other skills**
  - While the Ministry of Education has established several digital
platforms—including Darsak—in line with the formal curricula, the Youth Learning Passport aims to close education gaps by helping hard-to-reach youth access learning and training. It adds value by focusing specifically on content to develop digital and other skills needed to unlock future work, learning, and entrepreneurial opportunities.

- **Training for the effective use of digital tools** – As of February 2021, UNICEF has trained 3,000 Ministry of Education liaison officers via the Youth Learning Passport on distance learning and remote delivery of training. Additionally, UNICEF trained all of Jordan’s Ministry of Youth (MOY) facilitators on UNICEF’s 21st century skills programmes.

- **The power of partnership for accessibility and affordability** – UNICEF’s forging of partnerships with private-sector technology and telecom companies, such as Microsoft and Zain, has been instrumental to bring digital learning to more Jordanian youth, including those most at risk of falling behind. Microsoft has brought technological solutions that enable offline access, including through a mobile app. Its offline mode also enables those with low internet bandwidth to access all the materials and download content. Telecom, Zain, has zero-rated access to the Youth Learning Passport website and mobile app so that youth have access without charge.

**NEXT STEPS**

2021 will see the Government and UNICEF Jordan scale up the Youth Learning Passport to expand student learning and teacher training opportunities. UNICEF is partnering with the ILO, MOY, MOL and MODEE to create and include more technical and vocational training, career counselling and guidance materials aligned with the newly established Sector Skills Council. Additionally, the Youth Learning Passport will be integrated in the new Mehnati platform, which is currently under development. Mehnati is laser focused on employment and brings together the Sector Skills Council, training service providers, and learners engaged in technical and vocational training.

**Cost effectiveness:** Providing more education, knowledge and skills to individuals of a country increases their productivity and employability, which in turn increases the overall income and development of the country. UNICEF has contributed to the Youth Learning Passport through the provision of dedicated staff time, estimated at US $50,000. Through a partnership with Zain zero-rated access to the Youth Learning Passport website and mobile app is provided without charge. So far, the digital platform has served to connect 9,000 disadvantaged youth. UNICEF aims to leverage their investment in the Youth Learning Passport to bring on board additional donor support.