



# ISLAMIC RELIEF USA

## GAZA PROGRAM OFFERS JOB SKILLS — AND A BRIGHTER CHANCE

“I graduated from Islamic University in Gaza in 2013 with a degree in Civil Engineering, ready to find a job,” said Bushra Abu Muaileq, in Tal El Hawa, Gaza. “I was crushed to find that even with this different specialization, it was still hard to find a job.”

Gaza has one of the highest unemployment rates in the world, at times reaching 50% within the general population, and sometimes up to 60% among youth and recent graduates. There is also a missing link between the formal education system and successful employment, meaning Palestinian youth from all backgrounds find it hard to find and retain jobs.

Bushra spent most of 2014 volunteering in the hope of finding a job, but her prospects seemed no better than they had in the beginning. Then a friend told her a post-graduate professional development program offered by Islamic Relief USA in partnership with Education for Employment. The program provides training and then links participants with private companies throughout Palestine to secure job placements. Bushra signed up.

“The training really helped to increase my competencies and skills beyond those I was taught at university,” Bushra said. “[The program] taught me relevant, important skills, which were applicable to everyday scenarios. It also taught me about safety in engineering, and professionalism, and about dealing with issues as a female site engineer, all of which prepared me for my new job.”

One hundred fifty-one youth graduated from the program, and 94 graduates were placed in internships or contract jobs within three to six months of graduation. Bushra was one of them. Soon after she finished the program, she was offered a site engineer providing lighting using solar energy.

“I am incredibly grateful to PEFE and Islamic Relief for this experience. Now I feel financially independent and I am able to cover my own expenses, which is incredibly liberating. What’s more, before my training, I used to worry about dealing with site workers, but I now feel I have the communication skills and the methodical thinking in order to overcome this anxiety.”

### The courses covered two subjects:

- Workplace Success courses, on soft skills like innovative, creative and critical thinking, management and leadership skills, and business English.
- Technical Training in Construction Management and Information Technology, on the technical skills demanded by the market and private companies. This course is delivered by AMIDEAST.

