

## **DUKEENGAGE IN JORDAN**

Supporting local development in the changing Middle East. *This program is organized by SIT Study Abroad in collaboration with DukeEngage.*

**Program Dates:** May 30 – July 25, 2019

(Dates subject to change up until the point of departure.)

### **Service Themes**

- Immigration/refugees
- Environment/conservation
- Education/literacy
- Geopolitics

### **Program Focus**

Supporting the efforts of local organizations in and around Amman, Jordan, focused on educational, environmental, economic, health, refugee, and social issues.

**Curricular Connections:** While all students are welcome to apply, this program may be of particular interest to students studying Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, Cultural Anthropology, Economics, Environmental Engineering, Environmental Sciences (and Policy), Global Cultural Studies, International Comparative Studies, Political Science, and Public Policy Studies. (See below for additional details about connecting this program to your academic work.)

### **Program Leaders**

- Dr. Raed Al-Tabini, DukeEngage Jordan Program Director: Dr. Al-Tabini has managed a variety of development projects in the Middle East and North Africa on diverse topics such as community-based rangeland rehabilitation, management of scarce water resources, and development of sustainable livelihoods in agro-pastoral communities. He is the academic director for the SIT Study Abroad program, Jordan: Water Innovation Lab.
- Jennifer Cinti, Assistant Director of Custom Programs, SIT Study Abroad.
- Abdullah Antepi, Chief Representative of Muslim Affairs, Senior Civic Engagement Fellow. Antepi is the DukeEngage Jordan Faculty Fellow.

At the site, students will also be supported by:

- Mr. Abd AlKarim Lasassmeh, Administrative Assistant.

### **Program Overview**

DukeEngage-Jordan students will examine crucial issues in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, a moderate Arab state coming to terms with political responsibility, social change, and the effects of regional conflict. Jordan has made enormous strides recently in health care, literacy, democratic and economic reform, and discussions on women's and children's rights. However, it remains challenged by a lack of natural resources, environmental concerns, economic and social issues, and the impact of Palestinian immigrants and refugees, who now make up more than half of the nation's population. More recently, large influxes of Iraqi and Syrian refugees in Jordan are changing the demographic and physical landscapes of the capital. With revolutions occurring all around the region, Jordan has also become a haven for yet more visitors.

Jordan's unique characteristics make it an ideal location to allow students to make tangible contributions to the communities in which they will volunteer. There are many organizations that dedicate themselves to bettering the communities they serve, whether at a grassroots level or from an administrative government body.

### **Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes**

By the end of the DukeEngage-Jordan program, students will:

- Develop civic responsibility through active community involvement;
- Increase awareness of current societal issues in Jordan; and
- Broaden their global awareness and cross-cultural communications skills.

### **Partnership Opportunities**

There are multiple opportunities for student projects in Jordan. Some students may be working on women's empowerment; community development; environmental and conservation issues; or support to refugees, orphans, and foster children. In addition to their work at individual organizations, the entire DukeEngage-Jordan 2016 group worked together on water distribution projects at a refugee facility hosting 60 Syrian families.

These are examples of organizations in which students have worked in the past and may expect to work in the future:

- Jordanian Red Crescent (JRC), a part of the International Federation of Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies, was established in 1947. Its mission is "to alleviate the suffering of victims and the vulnerable of natural disasters and armed conflicts and to protect their dignity and rights in a manner that preserves their lives, safety, security, and well-being." Participants will work with refugees in health and educational activities.
- The Hashemite Fund for the Development of Jordan Badia: Established in 2003 following a decree by his Majesty King Abdullah II with the objective of developing the Jordan Badia, or, the arid areas encompassing much of Jordan's land. The overall aim of the Fund is to improve the socio-economic conditions in the Badia by building the capacities of local communities, and by implementing well-planned projects in various relevant sectors. The strategy of the Fund includes both direct and indirect involvement in development activities taking place in the Badia. Students will help with grant-writing and will teach English in rural areas (Badia).
- Centre for Strategic Studies at Jordan University: Provides government bodies and organizations in the public and private sectors with high-impact studies of politics, foreign policy, economy and society of countries in the Middle East region. The center also performs high accuracy polls. Participants will help with research on political and economic topics.
- Royal Botanic Garden: A nonprofit organization, founded in 2005, covering 44 acres of land. The mission of the RBG is to conserve native biodiversity at the habitat level, establish a center for scientific research and environmental education, serve as a demonstration site for sustainable development, and provide a unique ecotourism destination. Moreover, the RBG aims to be internationally recognized as a leader in research on arid-land ecosystems and the challenges associated with desertification. Students will help with data entry and management, environmental and awareness-raising activities.
- Jordan River Foundation: A nonprofit, non-governmental organization chaired by Her Majesty Queen Rania. The organization fosters the development of sustainable social, economic, and cultural programs that empower Jordanian communities and individuals with a focus on supporting women and children. Participants will work on sustainable development projects and children's education.
- The Jordan Media Institute: An educational institution that seeks to promote higher standards for journalistic education both regionally and locally by providing educational opportunities and advanced media training. Students will help with report-writing, training, and grant-writing.
- International Union for Conservation of Nature: The Jordanian branch of the world's oldest and largest global environmental organization. IUCN is focused on conserving biodiversity, fostering sustainable development, and supporting field projects around the world. In Jordan, Students will support IUCN's focus on water issues and climate change impacts.

- EDAMA Association: A Jordanian business association that seeks sustainable solutions for energy and water independence while moving Jordan towards a green economy. The association also drives applied research, development, and commercialization of green technologies while advocating policies that will help make Jordan a model of energy, efficiency, water conservation, and environmental stewardship. Students will assist and support these research and advocacy projects.
- Molham Volunteering Team was established three years ago by a group of dedicated and talented Syrian youth. These young men and women sensed the suffering of Syrians displaced to neighboring countries, namely Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey. They refused to remain idle in the face of tragedy, and were determined to help alleviate the pain and to lend a helping hand to war victims and refugees. Using every resource available to them, the volunteers strive to provide food, shelter, and medicine to Syrians in need. As the Syrian crisis escalated and the numbers of displaced Syrians multiplied rapidly within Syria and abroad, Molham Volunteering Team grew and expanded to assume the responsibility of supporting them. The Team now includes 100 volunteers from all around the world, who work together like a beehive to ensure that aid is delivered to those in need.
- CARE is a global leader within a worldwide movement dedicated to ending poverty. They are known everywhere for their unshakeable commitment to the dignity of people. CARE works around the globe to save lives, defeat poverty and achieve social justice. CARE seeks a world of hope, tolerance and social justice, where poverty has been overcome and all people live with dignity and security. Their focus is to put women and girls in the center because we know that we cannot overcome poverty until all people have equal rights and opportunities.
- Tamkeen seeks to enhance social protection for marginalized groups and victims of human rights violations, regardless of social origin, race, color, sex, language, religion or other status. Their main aim is to combat all forms of discrimination, trafficking in persons, torture and ill-treatment. Tamkeen promotes and protects the rights of victims through offering legal aid and support, organizing and implementing customized training programs, workshops and seminars, reviewing and analyzing national legislations, developing lobbying and advocacy strategies to fulfill our objectives on local, regional and international levels through a network of stakeholders, advocates, activists, and state-and non-state actors.
- Justice Center for Legal Aid: Established in 2008, JCLA is a Jordanian not-for-profit and non-governmental organization registered with the Jordanian Societies Registry. Since 2008, JCLA has grown from one legal aid clinic in Amman to become the largest legal aid provider in Jordan, providing legal aid services at 21 clinics located across all 12 governorates. Each month, JCLA assists approximately 375 beneficiaries through legal consultations, provides legal representation to approximately 150 beneficiaries across 200 cases, and reaches approximately 3600 vulnerable people through its awareness sessions
- The Royal Marine Conservation Society of Jordan (JREDS) was founded in 1993 by a group of concerned responsible people, aspiring to protect Aqaba's marine life from further degradation. In August 1995, JREDS registered under the Ministry of Interior as the first and only Jordanian non-profit, non-governmental organization dedicated to preserving and protecting the marine ecosystem. JREDS works to prevent the destruction of the Gulf of Aqaba by promoting sustainable management of natural marine resources, raising public awareness, encouraging community participation, and conducting environmental monitoring. Over the last decade, JREDS, with the support of its 250 members, a staff of 14 people, 3 international and 100s of local volunteers in Amman and in Aqaba, has developed and expanded its 3 program areas, under which 16 projects and initiatives are currently operating.

Students will be placed into programs depending on their own interests and the community's needs, and based on information provided in the DukeEngage application. Working hours at the organizations is generally around 35 hours per week, Sunday through Thursday, except during Ramadan (which ends June 4, 2019) when the pace of work slows significantly and there may be less work to be done.

**Program Requirements:**

**Language:** There are no language prerequisites for this program. Students will all participate in about 20 hours of language training prior to starting their volunteer work. For students who have studied Arabic, this program provides an opportunity to practice the language.

**Coursework:** No specific coursework is required for this program. However, coursework on or experience with statistical analysis, graphic design, social media, and grant- or proposal-writing is helpful for service placements. Arabic language courses, or courses in Middle Eastern history, politics, or culture, will help students prepare for the experience of living in Jordan.

**Other Skills:** Our community partners value students with computer skills specifically for web design and social media outreach. However, any experience with office software like excel is also highly sought after. Our programs tend to be very heavy in research and writing so students should be prepared to employ analytical and writing skills.

**Personal Qualities:**

The following qualities are keys to success on the DukeEngage-Jordan program:

- **Honesty and ethical behavior:** As participants in a program hosted by SIT Study Abroad, these qualities are of paramount importance, as students are a reflection of our institution during their program.
- **Ability to work independently in a foreign environment:** All participants will be working full-time in an environment and climate very different from what they are used to at home. Especially during Ramadan, the work environment may lack structure and students may need to use initiative and innovation to work independently.
- **Open-mindedness and flexibility:** Success on the DukeEngage-Jordan program requires a willingness to try new things, work closely with people of varied backgrounds, and adapt to a new environment.

**Curricular Connections**

Coursework on statistical analysis, graphic design, social media, and writing grants or proposals is recommended for service placements. Arabic language courses, or courses in Middle Eastern history, politics, or culture, will help students prepare for the experience of living in Jordan.

**Program Details**

**Description of Community:** Students will have the opportunity to experience many types of neighborhoods in Jordan. They will be able to contrast both rural and urban living. Most homestays will be located in East or West Amman, which represent the middle-class areas and are located within 15-20 minutes of the SIT program center. All students will live near or with at least one other student so that they may travel together.

While conservative, Jordanian society is experiencing some rapid social changes, especially in Amman. These changes, however, are happening more at a consumerist level than at a level deep enough to affect society's values, social attitudes, and cultural norms. It is important that students respect the country's cultural choices, some of which might be different from what students are used to in the U.S. Once aware and mindful of these attributes, Jordan is comfortable and welcoming. SIT maintains precautions and requires students to abide by certain guidelines in order to avoid problems.

**Housing and Meals:** Students will live in homestays, though there may be a few nights in hotels/hostels based on group travel. In addition, students experience a brief excursion to the Badia area of Jordan, where they will meet Bedouin families who are either nomadic or semi-nomadic. This excursion provides students with the opportunity to experience firsthand the daily life, culture, and traditions of a Bedouin community, one of Jordan's most distinct and well-known groups. In conjunction with the Badia excursion, students also take part in a "Southern Excursion" in which they visit Petra, Wadi Rum, Aqaba, and the Dana nature reserve. Housing varies from hotel accommodation to group camping

depending on location. During this time students are exposed to life outside of Amman, and therefore are able to paint a larger picture of Jordanian culture through their experiences and travels in the south.

Food is an important aspect of daily cultural life. Students will take their breakfast and dinners with their homestay families. Each week a stipend will be provided for lunch at the volunteer organization. During orientation and excursions some meals will be taken as a group and therefore covered by SIT.

If you do not eat certain types of food for cultural, religious or personal reasons, please contact the DukeEngage office, [dukeengage@duke.edu](mailto:dukeengage@duke.edu), to discuss whether or not your dietary needs can be reasonably accommodated at this program site.

It is important to note that in 2019, the first week of the DukeEngage program in Jordan falls during Ramadan, the Muslim holy month during which many Jordanians fast from sunup to sundown. SIT staff will provide a thorough orientation to prepare students for the experience. Students are not expected to fast during this period. SIT will ensure that students know the best places and times to eat during this period. The workplace environment is naturally affected by Ramadan – the pace of work slows and changes – and SIT will brief students on what to expect and how best to be a sensitive and productive colleague during this time. The first week of the service placements will be affected by Ramadan, although SIT may schedule excursions during this period as well.

**Transportation:** DukeEngage provides transportation to and from service placements and all scheduled program activities. Students will be given a stipend for transportation during their fieldwork; taxis are safe and easy to use. SIT will provide transportation in a private bus when the group is traveling together.

**Communication:** Students will be provided with a basic local cell phone for program-related and emergency communication. Internet is extremely accessible in Jordan. SIT Study Abroad has a computer center and some homestay families have internet at home. Hot spot USBs are easily obtained should a homestay family not have an internet connection. There are also many places in Amman that provide free wi-fi.

**Local Safety and Security; Cultural Norms, Mores and Practices:** DukeEngage strongly advises all applicants to familiarize themselves with the challenges travelers commonly encounter at this program site in order to make an informed application decision. We recommend starting with these two resources:

- The International SOS (ISOS) portal for up-to-the-minute travel, health and security advice ([Log in to the Duke ISOS portal](#) with your Duke NetID)
- The [Diversity, Identity and Global Travel](#) section of the DukeEngage website

**Opportunities for Reflection:** Students are required to check in with the program director frequently. There will be scheduled sessions each week for students to discuss their work, what they are learning, and any other questions that may arise. Our program director and assistant director will also be visiting students weekly at their work sites.

**Other Opportunities:** Students will be able to find time to pursue their own interests or have a moment alone during the program. Most free time will be on the weekends and evenings after dinner. Students will have their own room or private space in the homestay should they wish to spend time alone. Open water swimming is not a sponsored activity in any DukeEngage program.

SIT matches Duke participants with local students as language partners, and makes connections with other Jordanian youth volunteers. In the past SIT has hosted a Ramadan *iftar* (evening meal to break the fast) for Syrian refugees, and has arranged additional cultural and social opportunities for interested Duke participants. Each student has the opportunity to forge meaningful relationships with local Jordanians and immerse themselves in the community, if they so desire.

### **More Information**

- Warwick Knowles (2005) *Jordan since 1989: A Study in Political Economy*, I.B. Tauris London and New York (Chapter 5 and 7)
- Bint al-Talal, Basma (2004) *Rethinking an NGO: Development, Donors, and Civil Society in Jordan*. London: I.B. Tauris. ISBN-13: 978-1860649257 (pages 41-97).
- Antoun, Richard T. (2000) "Civil Society, Tribal Process, and Change in Jordan: An Anthropological View" in *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 32 (4): 441-463
- Muasher, Marwan (2008). *The Arab Center: The Promise of Moderation*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. ISBN: 978-0300123005 (pages 10-32).