

DUKEENGAGE IN JORDAN – SIT STUDY ABROAD

This program is organized by SIT Study Abroad in collaboration with DukeEngage.

Program Dates: May 31-August 3

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

Service Focus

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

Service themes:

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

Program Leader(s)

- 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 such diverse topics 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.
- Jessica Lindoerfer, Custom Program Manager, SIT Study Abroad: Ms. Lindoerfer works with institutions across the United States to develop international study and immersion programs around the world.
- Maha Houssami, Arabic Instructor and lecturer, Department of Asian & Middle Eastern Studies, Duke University. She is the DukeEngage in Jordan Faculty Fellow.

At the site, students will also be supported by:

- Ms. Dema Al Oun, Students Affairs
- Ms. Rawan Samaen, Homestay Coordinator
- Mr. Abd AlKarim Lasasmeh, Administrative Assistant

Overview

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, and 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 in 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.

Service 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 during future programs:

- 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.
- The Amman Chamber of Industry: Works to promote the interests of industry and meet the needs of the growing industrial sector in Jordan through technological and administrative marketing; making Jordan more competitive in regional and global markets. Students will participate in research and study on economic topics.
- Jordan River Foundation: 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.
- Food Bank: a nonprofit, non-governmental organization dedicated to ensuring that all people are fed and clothed. Its focus is on social justice. Participants will help in food and clothes distribution as well as website management.
- Madrasasti: an initiative begun by Queen Rania to repair and restore schools and improve the education system. Participants will work at educational initiatives that help students during their summer break.
- Higher Council for Science and Technology (Water and Food program): independent governmental institution involved in several community development and environmental conservation programs within Jordan. Volunteers with this program will help write proposals and reports as well as assist in developing environmental awareness programs and marketing materials, or work with the local agricultural cooperative, or teach English.
- 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.

- Women's Federation for World Peace: a humanitarian non-governmental organization operating in many countries around the world. It has established several centers and projects in Jordan, which students will support, ranging from microfinance projects for Jordanian women to English classes and food distribution for Iraqi refugees.
- 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.
- Collateral Repair Project (CRP): a grassroots refugee aid organization located in East Amman, a neighborhood home to a growing number of urban refugees from Syria and Iraq. Programming focuses on providing emergency assistance and community building workshops. Monthly food vouchers, medical support, fuel, and clothing are among the many services covered through the organization's emergency assistance program. Likewise, THE CRP community center in Hashemi Shamali is home to several support groups for teens and adults, as well as English classes, a women's craft co-op, yoga classes, and more. Participants will assist by developing and leading these programs.

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 25) 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.

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 four-day rural homestay in the Badia area of Jordan, living with a Bedouin family who is 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. Students travel on their own to visit their carefully selected Bedouin family. 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.

It is important to note that in 2017, Ramadan falls at the beginning of the DukeEngage program in Jordan. SIT staff 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 two or three weeks of the service placements will be affected by Ramadan, although SIT may schedule excursions during this period as well.

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

Transportation: 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 cell phones to ensure ease of communication within the country. The phone will come with some calling credit, and students will have to charge their phone with credit as the program progresses. Cell phone costs are extremely manageable, cell phone carriers and wireless providers are readily accessible and easy to find should a problem arise. 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. Past participants have brought their laptops to Amman, although this is not required.

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.

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).

Curricular Connections

Coursework on statistical analysis, graphics design, social media and writing grants or proposals are 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.