

## **DUKEENGAGE IN JORDAN**

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

**Dates:** May 28 – July 23, 2020

(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, geopolitics, and social issues.

### **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

At the site, students will also be supported by:

- Sarah Idliel, Program 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.

### **Goals for Students**

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.

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

- **Al-Quds Center for Political Studies:** An independent, non-governmental research organization and think tank that aims to provide a deeper understanding of the challenges facing the process of political reform and democratic transformation in Jordan and in Arab countries. Their work contributes to deepening the values of "equal citizenship," the dissemination of tolerance and respect for diversity, and the promotion of the principles of freedom, justice, and the rule of law. Students will help with research on political reform in the Middle East and may also help in organizing center events.
- **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.
- **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.
- **Jordanian Red Crescent (JRC):** A part of the International Federation of Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies, 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 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.
- **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.
- **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. Students will assist and support JCLA advocacy projects and join the center for their field workshops.
- **Microfund for Women (MFW):** A private, non-profit company, MFW is considered one of the leading providers of financial services to low-income small business owners in Jordan with the goal of empowering them economically and socially so they become active members of society. Students' work will focus on research, data analysis, and teaching English.
- **Royal Botanic Garden:** A non-profit 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 as well as environmental and awareness-raising activities.

- **Sisterhood Is Global Institute-Jordan (SIGI-Jo):** A non-governmental, not-for-profit organization founded and led by Jordanian women. The main goal of SIGI-Jo is to promote attitudes and practices to mainstream women's issues. SIGI-Jo activities focus on empowering women and enhancing their participation in different spheres, increasing awareness of women's rights and the rights of young girls, improving protection services for women at the national and regional levels, and institutional capacity building for civil society groups locally and regionally. Students will be part of the team and help in the daily work and activities, including research and reporting.

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 are generally around 35-40 hours per week, Sunday through Thursday.

### **Program Requirements**

**Language Requirements:** 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 Requirements:** 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. 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. 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. 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.

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, Security, and Cultural Norms:** If you have special needs related to health, cultural, or religious practices, please contact the DukeEngage office, [dukeengage@duke.edu](mailto:dukeengage@duke.edu), to discuss whether or not your needs can be reasonably accommodated in this program.

For information related to how your religion, race, sexual/gender identity, ability or other aspects of your identity might impact your travels, we recommend starting with the [Diversity, Identity and Global Travel](#) section of the DukeEngage website.

We encourage students who have questions or concerns about health or safety in international programs to check Duke's [International SOS \(ISOS\) portal](#) for relevant information.

**Reflection and Enrichment:** 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.

Enrichment includes a brief excursion to the Badia area of Jordan, where students 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.

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. Each student has the opportunity to forge meaningful relationships with local Jordanians and immerse themselves in the community if they so desire.

### **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.

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.

### **More Information**

- Knowles, Warwick (2005). *Jordan since 1989: A Study in Political Economy*. London and New York: I. B. Tauris. (Chapters 5 and 7)
- Bint al-Talal, Basma (2004). *Rethinking an NGO: Development, Donors, and Civil Society in Jordan*. London: I.B. Tauris. (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. (pages 10-32)