



CASE STUDY

Environmental Center Creates Jobs

The Wild Jordan Center promotes nature-based products while creating jobs



Photo: USAID/Chris Johnson

Wild Jordan promotes nature-based employment and crafts with a shop, café and other environment-based attractions.

The Wild Jordan Center offers a range of goods and services that promote the concept of protecting Jordan's natural heritage.

Challenge

To effectively drive its economy, Jordan must utilize its limited natural resources and its abundant human resources in the most effective ways possible. Many remote Jordanian communities rely on the nature-based employment opportunities and crafts, but these communities often do not promote or market their crafts, reducing potential employment.

Initiative

In July 2004 Queen Rania officially opened the USAID-funded Wild Jordan Center in Amman. Devoted to creating nature-based employment opportunities for poor rural communities, the center houses a large store that stocks a wide range of crafts and nature-based products. The center also offers a whole food café, a tourist information point, a conference room and training facilities to attract visitors.

Results

Wild Jordan has been extremely successful. The shop's sales of local community handicrafts have more than doubled, and inquiries and bookings for eco-tourism packages have returned to pre-September 11 levels. The Wild Jordan Café is well established on the Amman dining scene and attracts a wide range of patrons. Overall, the center has created hundreds of jobs and is making sustainable environmental development in Jordan a tangible reality. International conservation organizations like the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Birdlife International have visited the center, and regard it as a model of integrated conservation and development that the world should follow.