MINISTRY OF ECDUCATION (JORDAN)

ICDL in Jordan – Upgrading the Education System Through ICT

Background and Policy Context

In 2001, UNESCO Cairo Office (UCO) and ICDL Jordan had extensive meetings with the Jordanian Ministry of Education (MOE) to introduce the ICDL programme. The reputation of UCO and the strong track record of the ICDL programme in Europe encouraged the MOE to adopt the programme as a standard among all teachers and its employees.

Later in the year, the Ministry of Education decided to adopt ICDL as part of the Government of Jordan strategy to upgrade the country's education quality through ICT. Two direct incentives for MOE employees to achieve ICDL certification were announced:

- ICDL certification was set as a requirement for teachers' and employees' promotions irrespective of their specialties.
- A 10% raise in salary was given to each teacher or employee after receiving the ICDL certificate.

Why ICDL was Chosen

Explaining the decision, the Minister of Education said:

"Despite the rapid change in technology, adapting it for full utilisation became a necessity. We have to firmly establish its fundamentals at schools and link it with the education process by considering it a vital element in the student's educational environment. To proceed along and guarantee the achievement of this aim, a special technique should be used for the preparation and the development process. That's where an urgent demand to train all MOE employees, especially teachers, to get their ICDL certificates arose. ICDL certification is the best way to determine the trainee's knowledge level in IT and assure his/her acquaintance of fundamental skills in technology and ability of applying those skills."

In 2003, the Ministry of Education further declared that any student receiving the ICDL certificate would be exempt from the compulsory computer skills course in all Jordanian universities and colleges, and would receive official credit hours, which could be added to the total credit hours required for graduation.

Description and Delivery Details

ICDL Jordan and UNESCO Cairo Office have trained a team of Quality Assurance (QA) Officers. This team is then assigned to supervise each ICDL testing session held at any Accredited Test Centre to guarantee a smooth continuation of the session and to handle any problems that may occur. Additionally, senior auditors of ICDL Jordan conduct regular audit visits to MOE centres to maintain the quality of software and hardware, and to make sure that the implementation of the programme follows best practice.

While the Ministry of Education of Jordan made every effort to provide the schools and testing labs with up-to-date computers and software in a relatively short period of time, ICDL Jordan also provides the best operational support possible. Technical support
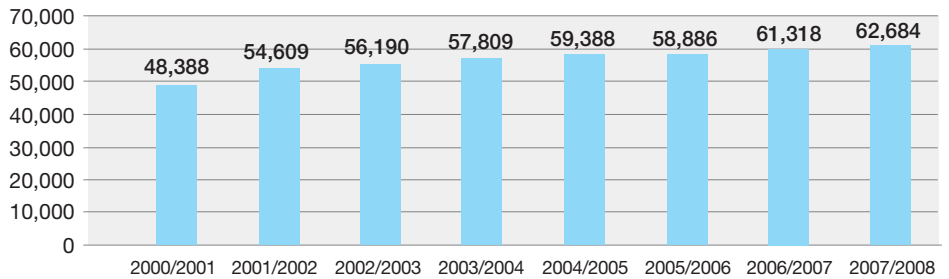
to all MOE centres is provided by ICDL Jordan immediately upon request, to prevent any session's suspension. Moreover, an online evaluation system is currently under development to be applied soon in all MOE centres to guarantee high quality in ICDL training and testing.

The collaboration among UCO, ICDL Jordan, and the MOE over the years led the programme to a great success. UCO and ICDL Jordan assisted the MOE to localise the courseware. Each candidate was then provided with the required training material, with UCO and the MOE bearing the costs. Skills Cards were provided to the MOE with a subsidy from UCO, which enabled the MOE to afford the expenses of training and first examination attempt of each ICDL module to all teachers and employees.
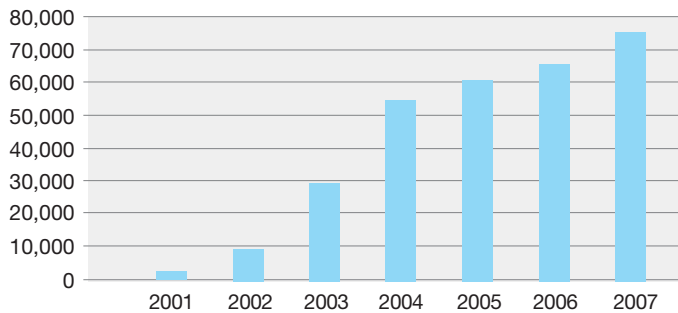
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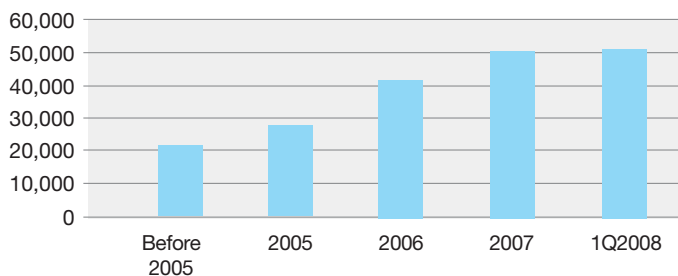Almost 80% of MOE staff have already registered with the ICDL programme.

No. of MOE Teachers

	2000/2001	2001/2002	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008
	48,388	54,609	56,190	57,809	59,388	58,886	61,318	62,684

Cumulative No. of Teachers Registered

Cumulative No. of Certified Teachers

Before 2005	21,500
2005	26,789
2006	42,305
2007	50,779
1Q2008	52,015

The benefit of the ICDL project in Jordan can be best illustrated through the teachers' feedback.

Ali, a 34-year-old 5th grade teacher, was so proud when he passed all 7 ICDL modules. He said, "I now prepare all the exams using Microsoft Office Word, which saves me a lot of time and effort". Ali believes that possessing the ICDL certificate improved his career and increased his skills.

Majeda, an 8th grade teacher in one of the schools, was also content about the change made in her teaching career after receiving the ICDL certificate. She said, "No more boredom in my classes. Students enjoy watching the slides I prepare using PowerPoint, and participate actively."

Another teacher, Suad, in her late forties, was so relieved after learning to use spreadsheets. She said, "There is no room for error now; I do all the grading and calculation using Excel." She also added, "It took me time and effort to learn the ICDL skills, but the idea of becoming digitally literate and being connected to the world made me persistent."

By adopting the ICDL programme, the Ministry of Education in Jordan was able to achieve the ministerial aims of driving innovation and adoption of ICT in the classroom, and to ensure a comprehensive and independently verified overview of their progress towards this goal at all times.