

### YOUTH TRAINING PROGRAM GRADUATION CEREMONY

BASSMA Organization for Social Development held the graduation ceremony of its "School-to-Work Transition" training program, on June 17th, 2009 at the YWCA in Ain El Mraisseh. The program was funded by the World Bank through the Youth Innovation Fund, and formulated to support young people during the transition into working life. In attendance were YWCA & Dar El Amal students and administrators, the BASSMA project team, as well as members of the press.

The event included heartfelt speeches by BASSMA's president, trainer, and participants from both institutions. To finish, certificates of achievement were presented to the participants, and everyone celebrated their accomplishments while enjoying delicious refreshments generously provided by Socrates catering. The eight-week course used training material adapted to the realities of the Lebanese job market, and was reviewed by Human Resources experts. It aims to deepen the youth's understanding of work, and then develop the skills that will lead them to have fulfilling careers. The second phase of the program matches the participants using BASSMA's network of employment providers for immediate results. Preliminary findings are very promising, as 73 % of participants from the first recruitment round found gainful employment one week after the course ended.

The program's success lies in the interactive format of the course and the rapport that the trainer is able to establish with the participants. Through open dialogue, role play, and instructive lectures, the classroom becomes a safe space for personal and professional growth. Having experienced such encouraging results, BASSMA intends to widen the scope of this program and target 200 additional people to help them realize their full potential. The closing ceremony marked the successful completion of the first cycle of the training, and set the bar for the progression of the project in the near future.

