

Jordanian entrepreneur says award motivation to work 'for better society'

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Sami Hourani gives a speech at the TAKREEM 2018 Young Entrepreneur Award ceremony in Kuwait on November 17 (Photo courtesy of Sami Hourani)

AMMAN — Jordanian entrepreneur Sami Hourani was recently selected as the winner of the TAKREEM 2018 Young Entrepreneur Award, on November 17, which honours the accomplishments of Arabs in the fields of science, culture, environment, education, humanitarian aid and economy.

Founded in 2009 with the aim of “bringing Arab achievers to the forefront of the globe stage”, the accolade awards a total of nine Arab laureates per year, under different categories, according to TAKREEM founder Ricardo Karam.

Turning his back on a lucrative job in robotic surgery back in 2011, Hourani established the youth educational and training platform FORSA (“Opportunity” in Arabic) hoping to “make a difference in a country where youth unemployment and exclusion have become a major concern for policy makers,” Hourani told The Jordan Times.

Creating a one-stop-shop for education and capacity-building in Jordan, the portal creates a link between educational facilities, vocational training centres, companies and NGOs as well as eligible and motivated young talent.

Speaking on the platform when he was the minister of education, Prime Minister Omar Razzaz said that “FORSA represents a public good for society”, noting that “education and training opportunities need to come from outside the governmental channels if they wish to survive – they need to come from the youth themselves, and this is what this platform is doing”.

“The world, including Jordan, is racing to redefine the educational system and we need to learn how to adapt to this ever changing environment,” Razzaz continued, adding that “this can only be done through a sustainable continuous education that will enable us to face challenges as they come”.

But Hourani’s journey did not stop with FORSA, and only three months ago, the entrepreneur took a further step in his career and launched Souq Fann (or “Art Market” in Arabic) – an innovative e-commerce portal connecting Jordan’s artists, artisans and handicraft producers to help local vendors access new economic opportunities.

Dedicating his award to “the Jordanian people, all FORSA beneficiaries and His Majesty King Abdullah”, Hourani said that “being among the winners of the TAKREEM award is both an honour and a motivation to keep going forward”.

“For Jordan, for me and for my team, awards like this are an incentive to not stop, to keep on doing more and to improve the services we offer for a better society,” Hourani told The Jordan Times.

When asked about his goals for the upcoming year, Hourani noted that the FORSA team is currently working on the possibility of offering career counseling services online, while Souq Fann working on getting its users products into the international market.

Following Beirut, Doha, Manama, Paris, Marrakesh, Cairo and Amman, the 2018 TAKREEM Award Ceremony was held in the Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Cultural Centre in Kuwait, gathering over 1,000 professionals from across the Arab region, according to an event statement.

Previous Jordanian awardees included multimedia artist Samia Taktak Zaru, founder and director of the legal aid organisation Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development Samar Muhareb and educational expert Rawan Barakat.

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