

Humans are developing each and every day, but lately, it has felt as though we have been regressing more and more often. Our planet is dying, and the clock is ticking on the fight against climate change; time is running out. So, we must all ask ourselves the question: 'What can we do to help?' The most valuable effort any of us can make is to start small, from within our communities; through collaborations and partnerships, and slowly but surely, spread our message to anyone ready and willing to make a change.

Team "Illuminate" is made up of 7 students of the Modern Montessori School in Amman, Jordan. An initiative that focuses on providing less fortunate schools in Jordan with a cleaner source of electricity and energy, namely; solar energy. We believe in the positive impact and effect that this change can bring upon these less fortunate schools. It can cause students to be more focused and involved in classes, as they are surrounded by a more comfortable learning environment. This issue is especially prevalent in the more southern areas of Jordan, who face extremely hot weather conditions for most months of the year, resulting in costly electricity bills, and frequent power outages due to outdated systems.

After weeks of planning and careful consideration, our team collectively agreed to focus on the following Sustainable Development Goals. SDG Goal #3: Good Health and Well-Being, SDG Goal #4: Quality Education, SDG Goal #7: Affordable and Clean Energy, SDG Goal #11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, SDG Goal #17: Partnerships for the Goals.

There were seven of us working on this project. Each one of us had a specific role and tasks that helped us achieve the greater goals of our project. Our team leader, Noor Nasser, organized and gave out everyone's roles, and worked on communicating and setting up meetings with potential sponsors and supervisors. Next is Noor Abdullah, who worked with the research team, and was in constant contact with possible partners or sponsors, she worked on this alongside Nernar Nakhleh, and they were both in charge of handling the awareness campaign and talking to grade 5 students of our school about the importance of renewable energy. Roadaeen Abbasi is the head of financing and also helped with getting into contact with any possible partners. Malek Al-Khatib was the head of the researching team, and worked with Noor Nasser and Nernar Nakhleh on the writing team. Lastly, Alexander Ardekani and Laila Alia; who were in charge of running the social media accounts of the team, as well as being in charge of design. Noor Abdullah was responsible for compiling the content and editing the final video.

Jordan is a country where the use of renewable energy sources is not as widespread as it should be. Due to a difficult financial situation, it is not practical for Jordan to fully invest in a renewable energy system. It is for that reason that we decided that this project would certainly have an impact on the Jordanian community. In particular, solar energy seemed like the reasonable choice, as 310 days of the year in Jordan are sunlit days, and it is a relatively warm climate, meaning that the solar panels would be a beneficial and practical option. After that, it was a matter of choosing where these solar panels should be installed, and the answer soon became quite clear. What was the place that we could most relate to? Schools, of course. Some less fortunate areas in Jordan do not have excellent learning environments due to their schools' conditions, especially those in mainly hot areas, like a southern area in Jordan called "Al-Ghor",

where students in their schools experience frequent power outages and must endure those difficult weather conditions. Solar panels seem like an alternative that could be used to improve their situations.

We collaborated with the “Madrasati Organization”; an organization run by the Ministry of Education, who work towards bettering the learning environment in less fortunate schools in Jordan. Partnering with them helped us find a school that we can support by installing solar panels, they acted as a guide for us all throughout our project, considering their extensive experience with these types of projects. Additionally, “Basmitak Hat’alim” were also able to help find a school that we could get into contact with and potentially work with on the project. They are a non-profit Jordanian organization that were able to get into contact with a Gaza refugee camp in Jerash (An area in the north of Jordan), and allowed us to implement our project in the school located in the camp. Furthermore, “Umniah”, a local telecommunications company, acted as a guide to our project, offering advice to us, whether it be a proposal that we needed to write, or understanding the nature of the necessary permits we needed to acquire for our project. We were able to work with one of their engineers, and someone from their public relations department.

Schools are our present and our future, the place where people start journeying and impacting. While interviewing school principals, we noted that they frequently experience power outages, and some are unable to install air conditioners due to constantly increasing electricity bills. We felt as though schools would be the most reasonable place to focus our efforts on installing solar panels, as we hope to improve their learning experiences, health, and wellbeing. Moreover, moving forward with the idea of solar panels in schools can set an example of change and sustainability for students. Social media was used to raise awareness on the topics we were discussing which caught the attention of our classmates and friends. Additionally, we carried out awareness sessions for fifth graders in our school, presenting our idea and explaining the importance of renewable energy, the SDG’s, and how they can help. Then, we started actively pursuing possible partnerships with local businesses; where spreading the message to organizations in our country can inspire their actions and goals. This project has become a part of all of us now; we talk about and convey the importance of what we are doing to our community, and we wholeheartedly believe in the message we are trying to spread.

The concept of installing solar panels is not a simple one, it is a long process in terms of finding sponsors, governmental procedures, and technical details. The process of installation would then take more than three months after finding sponsors. For this reason, the actual installation of the solar panels has not been completed yet. We have worked diligently on getting necessary approvals and permits according to governmental procedures, solar panel design models and finding sponsors. Inspiring change is a journey with a destination that can seem so far away; a long path we take to finally see the impact we have created in the world.

This project taught us a lot; how to balance our school and personal life, how to run and manage a project, and all the requirements that come with that. Most importantly, we have become aware of the environmental and societal issues that surround us every day. Over many

months we gained information on solar panels and their systems; their costs, sizes, and their way of installation. We now understand and address the issue of less fortunate schools in Jordan and the harsh conditions they must endure all throughout the school year, their very expensive electrical bills and so much more. Additionally, we learnt the importance of teamwork and how our project would not be possible without it. Cooperating and working together as a team, is one of the few reasons that we were able to get this far with our project.

The Illuminate initiative is an eternal one, a project with the potential to be sustained and continued far after we have left it. Solar panels will have the impact we wish to achieve for years to come, helping the environment and schools at the same time. Moreover, our beliefs and our ideas will grow within the schools that we have aided. When we educate others, we become educated ourselves, and we set an example that achieves a long-term effect. As long as we keep thinking, inspiring, and creating change, sustainability can prevail.