



Venture

THE BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE MONTHLY

**SPECIAL
COVERAGE**

FRANCE IN JORDAN

MEET THE MAJOR FRENCH
PLAYERS IN JORDAN'S VARIOUS
ECONOMIC SECTORS

THE FRENCH IDEAL

The French School in Amman (LFA) will be celebrating 45 years of teaching in Jordan next year; its first iteration was founded in 1972 in Jabal Amman, and moved to the first of their two current campuses (elementary school in Deir Ghbar, high school off Airport Road) in 1990 when they were officially recognised by the Jordanian Ministry of Education. *Venture* spoke with current school principal, Mrs. Sylvette Bouché, to discuss the school's origins, its growth in the past four decades, and what it offers its students before and after graduation.


What can you tell us about the decision to set up a school in Jordan?

France decided to set up this school as a manifestation of the educational cooperation between the two states, Jordan and France. We have 500 schools all over the world that teach the French curriculum. This cooperation entails that countries in which there are French schools can open a school of their own in France.

Is the curriculum taught here, the French Baccalaureate, identical to the one taught in France and everywhere else?

Yes, of course. This is what we call certified education. We are recognised by the French Ministry of Education, I am sent by the Minister and work for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as soon as I am abroad. We operate exactly the same





curriculum from kindergarten to 12th grade, and students here take exactly the same exams as they would in France.

What challenges has the school faced since being established in Jordan? Have there been any difficulties for example in terms of regulation or accreditation?

The challenge has been to be recognised for the plurilingual education that we offer, because the curriculum is in French but we also teach Arabic and English at a higher level; so we have 3 languages, and we have just added a fourth, Spanish, from the 6th grade.

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Are all the subjects taught in French with complementary Arabic and English linguistic education? Or are some of the subjects taught in Arabic/English as well?

In the primary school, some topics are taught in English or Arabic. It's a tiny proportion, however, so, for example, in the primary school if they have 5 hours of Arabic or English per week, they will have 3 hours to learn a language and 2 hours to discuss a topic. The primary school teaches 26 hours a week, so 20 hours are French and 6 are in a different language.

Is it the same for the high school?

In the high school we teach the whole curriculum in French because of the exams. English is taught as a foreign language, but Arabic as a language is mandatory.

What proportion of students are Jordanian, how many are French, and how many have different nationalities?

We have 21 nationalities; 40% of students are French, 30% are Jordanian, and 30% all other nationalities. So we boast plurilingualism and pluriculturalism as well.

How does the school facilitate higher education in France after graduation?

It's very easy because as soon as the students have the French Baccalaureate they can register

to study in France. There is a special software to register in French universities, and at the end of November we organised a special fair to which 13 French universities came and discussed education prospects with students from our school, of course, but also students from Yarmouk and Kerak and so on. It's very easy with Campus France, which is the organisation that helps students go to France whatever the nationality.

Does the school offer scholarships or help in obtaining scholarships to study in France?

Yes, we are part of the AEFÉ, which is the Agency for French Education Abroad. They are a network that helps all French schools abroad, and they provide the best foreign students with scholarships to study in France, regardless of financial background. This is for excellent students who get accepted for a scholarship that covers 5 years of university. There are two levels for this scholarship, one with about 280 euros or more than 500, every month.

Are there any scholarships for attending the school?

Yes, but that is provided by the French state and is only for French students.

How often do you collaborate with the French Institute?

We collaborate a lot because we are part of the cultural influence and diplomatic objectives of the French embassy. For example, we organised the university fair together, we are going to organise a special event for the Francophone Week in March. The French Institute can now give lessons in our primary school in Deir Ghbar for people who find it difficult to go to Weibdeh in the evening, so we organised a special arrangement so that people can go to the campus for their lessons, French or Arabic, during the day. This started in January.

What do you hope to achieve with the school in the next 5 years?

To be the best for languages! It is our purpose to increase our level of quality for languages because it is very important for younger students now, because nobody can do without languages, 3 or 4 or 5, so I would like to be very good in that aspect because I know that people come here after hearing about our level of languages. We would also like to have more Jordanian students, because it is a very good offer for them to be in the French system, with the languages and the French Baccalaureate, whether they want to continue their education here in Jordan, in France, or anywhere else in the world.