

### Why Use SMS (Text Messaging) to Link Palestinians with Jobs and Aid?

**Most Palestinians use cell phones, not the web:**

- 82% of West Bank residents use cell phones regularly; only 34% have easy access to internet (PCBS, 2006).

**Cell phone use is booming among youth:**

- 66% of all Palestinians are below age 30; mobile phone provider Jawwal reports largest growth in its youth market share.

**Cell phone networks reach more areas of the West Bank/Gaza than land lines, internet:**

- Jawwal mobile phone network covers 95% of West Bank and Gaza territory.

## What are SoukTel's SMS Services?

### Service #1: JobMatch – Linking Youth with Employers

- Pairs young Palestinians with jobs/internships in the West Bank:
- Through SMS (text message) questionnaires, youth use their phones to create simple “mini-CVs”.
- SMS mini-CVs include data on age, location, skills, education level, and career interests.
- At the same time, local employers create simple SMS “job ads” through a similar text-message Q & A process.
- Both sets of data are sent directly from users' phones to a central database.
- Database matches youth “mini-CVs” with relevant “job ads”—pairing identical info from youth and employers.
- Users then receive SMS “match” messages—with details about job opportunities or potential staff, along with phone numbers for follow-up. Users can also browse for jobs or staff from their phones.

#### Example:

After hearing about SoukTel from a friend, a young man from the Nablus region uses SMS JobMatch to create this ‘mini-CV’: “Male; age 19; living in Huwara; electrician’s certificate; interested in construction work”. Once he sends this data via SMS to the central database, the database matches the young man with jobs that meet his criteria: A health clinic renovation contract; for young men; in Nablus. The young man will receive a text message with this information—and the phone number of the local construction foreman.

### Service #2: AidLink – Connecting Aid Agencies with People Who Need Help

- Aid agencies create short “news alerts” or surveys, and send them via SMS to thousands of registered members. Members can range from rural families who need emergency help, to aid workers giving out food and medicine.
- To answer SMS surveys, members “text” their responses to questions, one at a time.
- Answers appear directly in SoukTel's online database, for quick analysis and response.
- Agencies can also send alerts and surveys to specific demographic groups: To all registered women in the North, or only to 18 year-old students living in Jenin.

#### Example – Alerts:

- Logistical Update – Sent from aid agency to families arriving for food aid: “Time of today’s food basket distribution changed from 12 pm to 4 pm, due to checkpoint closure. Call Hala at 555-0000 for more info”.
- Medical Alert - Sent from agency to registered new mothers in Nablus: “Today only: Free newborn checkups in Nablus Balata clinic. Contact Nizar at 059-555-555 for details”.

#### Example - Surveys:

A cold snap suddenly leaves southern families in need of winter blankets. An aid agency wants to respond quickly with blanket delivery. To get fast feedback from 2000+ registered families in the Hebron area, SoukTel helps agency staff create a simple series of SMS questions: (eg. “How many family members need blankets/clothing? Text the number: 1 = none; 2 = 1- 4; 3 = 5 or more”). This brief survey is then sent out via SMS to all families; answers are received instantly through the SoukTel online database. The aid agency analyzes results, and deliveries begin later the same day. Each family gets exactly the number of blankets it needs—saving the agency time and resources.

## Our Impact – Winter 2008: How is Souktel Helping Palestinians Right Now?

### JobMatch – SMS CVs and Job Ads

- Youth using the service: 700+
- Job/Internship Matches per month: 20+
- Family Members supported through these jobs: 100+

### AidLink – SMS Emergency Aid Alerts and Surveys

- Aid agencies using the service: 8
- Farmers getting animals/supplies via SMS: 300
- Needy families getting food and clothing through SMS delivery system: 1691

### Selected West Bank/Gaza Clients:

- **East Jerusalem YMCA:** Linking West Bank youth with local jobs, via SMS.
- **Education Development Center:** Using SMS JobMatch to connect youth with IT, accounting, and media internships.
- **Ta'awon:** Coordinating deliveries of emergency food, clothing, and eyeglasses via SMS.
- **Life and Hope Association:** Delivering rabbits and hens to Gaza farmers, through SMS AidLink.

*"In my final year of studies, the university gave us no help in finding a job. There was virtually no career counseling, no job center support, and nothing online....I had no idea where to start looking for work. My family tried to help—asking friends, relatives, anyone they knew. But that turned up nothing.*

*When I heard about JobMatch, I registered, and then I posted an SMS mini-CV. About a week later, I got a text message telling me about a job that matched my skills: A marketing position in Ramallah, with the employer's phone number. I've been working there for three months now. I don't know what I would have done without JobMatch!*

*- Ala'a, age 22; matched with a marketing job in November 2007*

## What Makes Souktel's Services Unique?

### Faster, Better Access to Information

- **Custom** matching of youth with jobs—reduces time spent unemployed, looking for work
- AidLink Alerts: Reach thousands of individuals instantly.
- AidLink Surveys: Answers go directly into custom online databases—for instant use by aid agencies.

### Wider Reach: Connects Scattered Communities

- Fast outreach to communities in areas with no internet access
- Improved communication between individuals and groups across hard-to-reach regions of the West Bank/Gaza

### Gender Sensitive

- Custom-made user communities for young women
- Virtual (non face-to-face) communication creates new, safe ways for women in traditional families to connect with female and male peers

### Custom-Made for Conflict/Post-Conflict Zones

- Reduces isolation, increases linkages among users in areas with poor infrastructure, military travel restrictions

