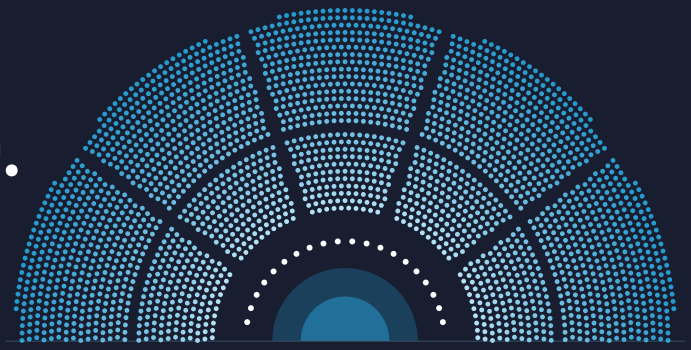
EXPO 2020 DUBAI
WORKFORCE TRAINING & ONBOARDING
LESSONS FOR EXPO 2030 RIYADH

25,000 people. Six months. One immovable deadline.

How a multilingual contractor workforce was prepared for a World Expo during a pandemic. And, what that experience reveals about building readiness before opening day.



1 dot = 10 contractors 1 specialist trainer

25,000
contractors trained

20
specialist trainers

6 months
delivery window

10–100
people per session

The challenge was never just training 25,000 people

Expo 2020 Dubai needed a large contractor workforce prepared for work on site. The deadline could not move. Training had to be practical, face-to-face and consistent across a multilingual workforce. Then COVID-19 changed room capacities, health protocols and the availability of people and space.

Every session depended on a chain of decisions. This included the right trainer, the right room, a translator where needed, contractors released from work and a schedule flexible enough to absorb change. At this scale, a small gap repeated often enough becomes a major operational problem.

What every session depended on



The response: build resilience into the operation

Eoghan Gill led the six-month programme, sourcing, preparing, deploying and managing 20 specialist trainers. Sessions of 10–100 contractors took place in classrooms and auditoriums across the Expo site, supported by translators. Eoghan engaged JAM Event Services as a delivery partner.

The approach drew on experience at London 2012, Glasgow 2014 and PyeongChang 2018. Proven scheduling methods, consistent trainer preparation, multilingual access and alternative people and spaces were designed into delivery from the outset.

> *Resilience was not a separate workstream. It was built into the schedule, the team and the way each session worked.*

What was delivered

25,000 contractors were trained and supported through onboarding within the six-month window. Live, practical delivery continued under changing pandemic conditions, with language access and contingency built into the programme. The collaboration also began a lasting relationship. Eoghan subsequently became Managing Director of JAM KSA.





What Expo 2030 Riyadh can take from it

01 Plan the human operating layer early

A masterplan shows where people will go. Readiness planning asks what they must know, how they will move, who will support them and what happens when conditions change. These questions belong in planning conversations, not only in the weeks before opening.

02 Build consistent standards across every contractor interface

Different suppliers, languages, locations and shifts cannot mean different expectations. Competency, safety-critical communication and induction need a shared operating logic, with enough flexibility for the realities of each team.

03 Design for disruption, not just the ideal schedule

Contingency is not a spare plan in a drawer. It is cover for people, alternatives for space, flexible throughput and decisions that can be made quickly without compromising standards.

04 Leave capability behind

For international partners, pavilion teams and Saudi stakeholders, the opportunity goes beyond getting to opening day. Local knowledge, repeatable training and experienced teams can become part of the programme's legacy.

From Expo experience to established Saudi capability



This demonstrates Eoghan's leadership and JAM's partnership on a specific training programme. To be clear, it's not a claim that JAM delivered every People, Safety and Training discipline at Expo 2020. Today, JAM brings those services together as an integrated consultancy, with operations in KSA since 2018 and a Riyadh headquarters since 2021. JAM is currently undertaking a major Saudi training programme for 10,000 crowd management stewards. This includes programme design through to legacy and hand over for future capacity building, as part of Vision 2030.

JAM's wider work spans Saudi event and visitor environments including Diriyah Oasis, Riyadh Season and Saudi Arabian Grand Prix. The capabilities of JAM include specialist recruitment, event safety, crowd management, training and readiness planning. That broader capability is relevant to the journey from design and construction to live operation.

> **The decisions that determine whether people are ready on opening day are often made years before anyone arrives on site.**

If you are shaping Expo 2030, a pavilion or another major Saudi programme, we would welcome a conversation about where early planning for people, safety, training and readiness could make delivery stronger.

Eoghan Gill | Managing Director, JAM KSA

