

YOUTH:WORK | news Jordan

The Newsletter of the Youth:Work Jordan Program

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■ Mr. Khaled Al Shammari, Head of Ma'an Municipality.

BUILDING SUPPORT FOR YWJ AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

An interview with the Head of Ma'an Municipality

The Youth:Work Jordan program nurtures the growth of community-based alliances — alliances that bring governmental entities, social organizations, young people, and the private sector together to improve job preparedness and civic participation among Jordanian youth. Coordination and collaboration with these multiple partners deepen local support and help sustain program activities and impact. Mr. Khaled Al Shammari, head of the Ma'an Municipality, has been a champion of the Youth:Work Jordan program in his community, having played a crucial role in supporting YWJ's three small-scale youth-driven environmental rehabilitation initiatives in Abu Baker and Al Shamiyeh neighborhoods this past spring. Recently, as YWJ has been in the process of selecting community-based organizations (CBOs) to undertake projects that would improve the employability and entrepreneurship prospects of youth, he donated 20 shops and several public parks for use in the program's implementation. These spaces will be used by the CBOs in Ma'an to help young entrepreneurs start their own businesses and to create youth-friendly public spaces. We sat down with Mr. Shammari to learn more about the role of local governments in supporting YWJ's youth.

How did you hear about YWJ and why are such programs so important?

Staff members from the Jordan Hashemite Fund for Human Development (JOHUD) came to visit me and told me about the program, knowing my concern for youth. In our community, youth are pulled in two ways — drugs and extremism. These are their only two options, so we're trying to give them a third way. I had already started youth committees within the municipality and given them spaces to meet that were not on the street. When I heard about YWJ, I liked the idea from the very beginning, because I know how important a role it will play in our society.

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YOUTH:WORK Jordan

Youth:Work Jordan (YWJ) is a community-based five-year initiative that seeks to improve the life and job prospects of highly vulnerable youth. Through a unique alliance, the **International Youth Foundation** is partnering with **USAID**, the **Jordanian Ministry of Social Development**, and well respected national and local organizations across Jordan to improve and expand community-based social services, with an overarching focus on promoting the employability and civic engagement of Jordan's youth.

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How did the municipality support the small scale initiatives that the youth carried out in their neighborhoods?

The municipality provided material resources for the youth to use in their community projects, including equipment, trees, and soil. I also instructed the municipality staff to support the youth if they ever came to them with any requests for help. I told them, 'Consider their requests as if it were me who was asking.'

Do you think these youth-led small scale initiatives had a positive impact on their relationship with the community, and if so, how?

Of course these activities had a positive impact. Youth started to care about their community and to consider it as their own. You treat things differently when you feel it belongs to you. In my own house, I'll take the initiative to change the light bulb as opposed to someone else's. That's how the youth now feel about the park. It's their own, and they want to make sure it's maintained.

Even some of the troubles that have happened since the completion of the initiatives I view positively. For example, someone from the neighborhood began pulling out one of the trees that had been planted, and one of the young people who had worked on the project got very angry about it. This young person's anger is a sign that he wants to see this project continue and is eager to keep contributing to his community. He wants to see the tree grow so that he can tell his grandchildren, 'I planted this tree.'

What kinds of partnerships are possible between YWJ and the municipality of Ma'an?

The municipality is working with the YWJ program in a number of different ways. We will offer the youth who receive entrepreneurship training 20 shop spaces or kiosks to start their own business. These spaces are rented out at market prices to private businesses, but we will offer them to the youth at discounted rental prices to help them launch their income-generating projects. In addition, we can help facilitate the process of obtaining business licenses and provide initial investment, as well as buses for transportation and other support for the training programs.

In addition, the Ma'an municipality will offer public spaces for CBOs who are receiving grants from YWJ to implement youth-friendly services in the Ma'an area such as public parks and playgrounds.

Every day youth come into my office, and the hardest thing to see are the youth who are looking for jobs and have the responsibility of feeding their families at home. It pains me to see this, so we want to support them in any way we can.

What role can the municipality play in providing a safe environment for the youth who are becoming active in the community, and what are your goals for making the municipality services and programs more youth-friendly?

The municipality is for them. It is always open for their use. Any activity they want, we are happy to offer both financial and in-kind support. We can also offer incentives for youth to take the initiative in their training and futures, including contests to get them interested.

Our youth need role models to fight the culture of shame and laziness when it comes to work. They have great ideas, but they need a start, both financially and organizationally. As a municipality, we strive to guide them in the process for how to plan for the future. For example, recently the Japanese ambassador made a site visit Ma'an. The youth helped arrange the visit, but were supported by the municipality in thinking through what needed to get done. We can also encourage them to continue to develop their ideas and help them get resources. For example, some of the youth here have started their own sewing workshop. We gave them the space and the machines, but then told them they needed to find more resources and support from the local community. As a result, they were able to raise 500 JD.

Do you think YWJ's model of working with local organizations through grant giving is a good strategy?

Building a program from its locals is fantastic, because they are the only ones who can truly work and implement activities in the community. The decision to work with CBOs is the best thing YWJ has done. But we want you to keep your focus at the municipality level as well, because we also have strong connections with the local community and can work effectively with those organizations after the program is completed.

What other partnerships do you think can be achieved in the future between the municipality and YWJ?

The priority for the time being is to focus on the program in its current form to ensure its success. However, in the future we could partner with YWJ to help change the way youth think about their futures. For example, we could start women's groups for the youth and invite female role models like Dr. Mona Abu Tayeh to speak to them and mentor them in their projects and activities. This way, we can also address the broader culture. We know that young people want to work, but they also need to take responsibility for their own futures. We're talking about changing the culture and the way young people think about themselves for the betterment of the community.



■ Twenty shops donated by the Ma'an Municipality for use by YWJ entrepreneurs.



■ USAID visit to Khreibt Al Souq, East Amman: USAID Deputy Assistant Administrator, Anne Arnes, receives a gift (top left), USAID Jordan Mission Director, Jay Knott, chats with some of the young people (above) and Youth:Work Jordan Director, Rana Al Turk, Anne Arnes and JCEF CEO, Mayyada Abu-Jaber watch a presentation by the youth (left).

Community Updates: YWJ Reviews Proposals for Local Activities

YWJ is designed to provide opportunities for local organizations to focus their efforts on addressing the needs of youth at risk in their own communities. It is in this spirit that YWJ's Project Management Unit (PMU) together with its Coordinating NGO (CNGO) partners and the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) are working closely to support grant-making to local community-based organizations (CBOs) to undertake program activities in the 12 targeted neighborhoods.

Through the work of these partners, YWJ has issued "calls for interest" to solicit proposals from local organizations in the targeted neighborhoods. Of the eighty responses received, 63 were eligible to participate in a training session that included practical applications on topics such as youth employment, youth civic engagement, and youth-friendly services, in addition to proposal writing skills to help

them develop their project proposals.

In total, 24 CBOs in the targeted communities have passed the desk review and field assessments based on the eligibility criteria set earlier by the evaluation committee — which is made up of representatives from the YWJ program, MoSD field directorates and the CNGOs. The program is now in the process of finalizing these CBO proposals to implement program activities in the targeted neighborhoods.

As YWJ believes in the importance of local ownership, the CBOs will receive further capacity building training and shadowing programs to promote more effective, long term and sustainable youth programming.

YWJ Community Activities

Zarqa: Five CBOs have been initially selected to carry out activities for the youth. Proposals include plans to imple-

ment vocational training to meet market demands in areas such as shipping and customs clearance, hair styling, maintenance of mobile phones, sales, and physiotherapy.

Jordan Valley: Five CBOs have been identified to carry out activities for youth in areas of cultivation of ornamental plants and seedlings as well as grading and packing vegetables and fruits.

Russeifeh: Five CBOs proposed a range of training and job placement activities as well as income-generating small enterprises in the areas of school bags production, mobile phones repair services, electricity and power extensions, and the production of sweets and pastries.

Ma'an: Four CBOs proposed conducting training for the youth to meet local business needs in solar systems, renew-

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able energy, and hospitality. In addition, entrepreneurial projects in hair styling, car mechanics, handicrafts, and jewelry design are also envisioned.

East Amman: Four CBOs have proposed a number of training and employment activities to address local market demands. Youth will be trained and placed in jobs in various sectors such as hospitality and tourism, heating, ventilation and air conditioning, and marketing. Youth identified as having entrepreneurship skills will also be trained to start their own income-generating enterprises.

Irbid: CBOs will implement activities to meet the employment needs of emerging and promising sectors such as tourism and hospitality, sales, and the maintenance of mobile phones. Youth will also be trained

to start their own businesses to meet high demand in the production of furniture, carpentry and cleaning detergents. Program activities will be implemented with the support of the Irbid Chamber of Commerce, the Irbid Development Area, and the private sector.

In all communities, participating CBOs have also proposed several opportunities to involve youth in civic engagement and volunteerism activities. These include the rehabilitation of public parks and the beautification of public spaces in cooperation with local municipalities as well as the formation of sports teams and competitions. Others have suggested partnerships with local youth centers, governmental, and non-governmental entities to initiate Scouts activities and cultural events.

News & Events

April: A two-day training workshop was conducted for MoSD field directors and focal points as well as CNGO staff working on the YWJ program. Topics included: capturing success stories and lessons learned; youth engagement and mobilization; and communications principles and media relations. The workshops also promoted team building activities as well as a session on the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders around knowledge sharing.



May: Ms. Anne Arnes, currently the USAID Deputy Assistant Administrator and the former USAID/Jordan Mission Director visited Khreibt Al Souq neighborhood in East Amman along with USAID Jordan Mission Director Mr. Jay Knott to learn about youth achievements in the area. The visit included a round table discussion with the youth, CBOs and the private sector on future plans relating to youth training and employment as well as civic engagement. (See photos on page 3)

May: USAID Education Regional Conference participants visited Zarqa and Khreibt Al Souq to learn more about YWJ objectives and achievements to date (above).

May: YWJ Program staff members in Amman visited the IYF home office in Baltimore-U.S.A. The visit included presentations to the USAID offices in Washington D.C and the US Peace Corps regarding YWJ's achievements to date, plans for the future, and areas of cooperation. . The visit also included a staff retreat for YWJ Amman and Baltimore teams to review overall YWJ programmatic goals, identify challenges to date, and design ways to address them.

Upcoming Activities

- **Launching YWJ Youth Forum:** In line with YWJ's vision to enhance the capabilities and talents of participating youth, the program will launch a new initiative aimed at enhancing youth abilities and skills in such areas as leadership, communications, entrepreneurship, culture and sports. The Forum will be launched officially in a press conference and through mini campaigns at the community level .
- **Signing grants agreements with the CBOs:** After CBO proposals are finalized, CNGOs will sign grant agreements with the selected CBOs in their communities to begin the implementation of program activities targeting youth.
- **Implementing Life Skills and IT training:** Service providers in IT and life skills have been selected on a competitive basis and will commence with their youth training programs in close coordination with the CNGOs and CBOs.
- **Opening YWJ field units:** YWJ field units will be established and launched in each neighborhood to serve as a reference point for the youth and members of the local community to provide information about the program, receive their feedback, and answer inquiries. The field units will be supported by field coordinators from each neighborhood and will reflect YWJ image and identity.