

# YOUTH:WORK

*Jordan*

## BUILDING ON HOPE: Findings from a Rapid Community Appraisal in Jordan

**EXECUTIVE VERSION**

FEBRUARY, 2010





This publication was made possible in part by the generous support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under Associate Cooperative Agreement No. 278-A-00-09-00306-00.

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This publication was made possible in part by the generous support of the World Bank's Development Grant Facility through the Global Partnership to Promote Youth Employment and Employability.



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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The full Rapid Community Appraisal (RCA) Report, as well as this Executive Version, represents the tireless dedication and remarkable teamwork of many individuals and organizations. We thank everyone who has contributed, and we want to express our deepest gratitude to the following:

First and foremost, the RCA study owes a deep debt of gratitude to the young people, their parents, and community members who participated in the survey and focus groups conducted by the RCA. The critical information they provided formed the basis of the report and served to shape the Youth:Work Jordan Community Action Plans that we hope will make a lasting impact on the lives of Jordan's young people and their families. We are grateful as well to the many business leaders who agreed to be interviewed for this study.

We were also very pleased to have strong support and guidance from our critical partners in this effort, the Ministry of Social Development, under the guidance of Her Excellency Minister Hala Bsaisu Lattouf, and our main counterpart at the United States Agency for International Development, Haya Shubailat. Their assistance in the development of the report and the overall vision for the program has been invaluable. We also greatly appreciate the financial support provided by the World Bank for the conduct of the study, under the framework of its Global Partnership to Promote Youth Employment and Employability.

We would like to acknowledge as well those who have helped write, edit, and design the report. A special thanks is due to Jack Boyson for his design and leadership of the overall RCA effort, together with his colleagues at IYF/Baltimore, Susan Pezzullo and Jean-Pierre Isbendjian. Their work was conducted in strong partnership with a talented team from IYF/Amman, led by IYF's Jordan Country Director Rana al Turk, together with Deputy Director Hala Abu Nuwar, who served as the field implementation manager for the RCA, and Technical Program Specialist Linda Tubaishat. These teams worked closely together with their counterparts from the Ministry of Social Development, Jamal al Asal, Rasha Qudaisat, Ayman Hamand, and Eman Al Rossan, who also provided valuable assistance during the study.

A special thanks is due to Mahara, Professional Consultancies in Development, for their coordination and implementation of all field research and initial presentation of analysis and findings. We would like to acknowledge in particular the effort led by Widad Jameel Adas (Managing Director) and her team, including Noora Al Wer, Jumana Halasa, Yasmine Pharaon, and Rania Rimawi.

Finally, our deepest appreciation goes to Jenny Hills of IYF for her overall assistance with the coordination of this substantial effort. We also thank Christy Macy and Gillian McCallion, who, with their excellent eyes for content and graphical presentation, have made the RCA report user-friendly and of great practical use as we move into the implementation of programs based on RCA findings.

The Executive Version of the RCA Report, presented here, was written by Kris Rusch. We are grateful for her talents in developing this shorter and more accessible version of the full RCA Report, to be used for wider circulation.

At the International Youth Foundation, we always stress the singular power of partnership. The RCA Report and the work that will be carried out as a result of this effort exemplify collaboration at its best. We are grateful to all who contributed here, and to all who will play a role in the success of Youth:Work Jordan in the years to come.

Awais Sufi  
*Vice President, International Youth Foundation*

## DEFINITIONS

### LEVELS OF EDUCATION

**Basic “Compulsory” Education:** Up to Grade 10

Number of years: 10

Type of school: Al-Asase

Type of diploma or credential: Basic school certificate

**Secondary Education:** Grades 10–12 (not compulsory)

Number of years: 2

Type of school: Academic and Comprehensive Vocational

Type of diploma or credential: Tawjihi (general secondary education certificate)

**Vocational (Secondary)**

Number of years: 2

Type of school: training centers and apprenticeships

Type of diploma or credential: completion certificate

### EDUCATIONAL STATUS

**Enrolled:** Young people currently enrolled in an educational institution.

**Not enrolled:** Young people not currently enrolled in an educational institution.

**School Leavers:** Young people who left the education system before completing grade 12.

### EMPLOYMENT TERMS

**Employed:** Working with remuneration. We also use the term to mean working, which encompasses working youth who may not have an employer but work for themselves.

**Unemployed:** Individuals who are not working and are actively looking for work.

**Economically inactive:** Individuals who are not working and are not looking for work.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Youth:Work Jordan (YWJ) is a five-year initiative to increase youth employment and civic engagement among the country's most disadvantaged youth ages 15 to 24. The International Youth Foundation, in partnership with the United States Agency for International Development, the Jordanian Ministry of Social Development, and respected national and local organizations across Jordan, will bring economic and social infrastructure development programming to Jordan's youth. The two-year pilot phase of YWJ will occur in 12 selected communities with significant socio-economic challenges related to high unemployment and poverty rates as well as social issues. These selected communities are in the areas of Amman, Zarqa, Irbid, Jordan Valley, and Ma'an.

YWJ is committed to designing and implementing programs based on the documented educational, social, and employment needs of young people and their communities. To ensure that programs effectively address the particular challenges and opportunities in each target neighborhood, YWJ conducted in-depth assessments (Rapid Community Appraisals) of the areas, collecting quantitative and qualitative data from a range of sources, including focus groups with young people and community members.

This report presents select findings from YWJ's Rapid Community Appraisal (RCA) of these 12 communities. Key findings follow.

### Key Findings: Life, Employability, and Entrepreneurship Skills

- Nearly one in five young people are unemployed in YWJ target communities, and most economically inactive youth are female.
- Many unemployed young men have low levels of education, which drastically diminishes their chances of getting decent work.
- Young people recognize the social value of formal education, but they do not see its practical value; they say formal education only somewhat teaches them the practical and life skills they need for work.
- Vocational training is a reasonable and promising alternative to other types of education, but negative stereotypes and gender roles keep young people from pursuing vocational careers.
- Employment opportunities exist, but employers report that youth do not have the technical and "soft" skills they seek in new hires.
- Youth themselves are unaware of which industries are growing in their areas. Most jobs are available in the private sector, for example, but youth remain attracted to public sector work because it offers better working conditions. Holistic career counseling is needed.
- Training in technical skills, life skills, and entrepreneurship, and opportunities to advance their knowledge on the job will help fill gaps.

### Youth-Friendly Services

- Healthcare, cultural, and other services exist, but they may not be designed with young people in mind; many are not as "youth friendly" as they could be, so they cannot serve youth effectively.
- In many communities, there are not enough institutions and programs for young people. Where such services exist, ineffective marketing and outreach often leave young people unaware of them.
- Young people value cultural and athletic activities, but few organizations offer them.
- Not surprisingly, youth have an extremely low rate of participation in arts, sports, and cultural activities.
- There are ample opportunities to create programs that enable young people to use their free time productively.
- Some young people—especially women—at times restrict their social, educational, and economic involvement because they feel unsafe in their neighborhoods.

- Cultural and sports activities sponsored by respected organizations are widely desired across communities because young people—and their parents—feel youth will be safe in them.

### **Youth Volunteerism and Civic Engagement**

- The level of young people's participation in civic activities in all YWJ communities is extremely low (less than 4%), further limiting opportunities for them to make positive change in their communities and in themselves.
- Very few institutions offer volunteer opportunities for young people.
- When youth participate in community service projects, they do so primarily through their schools.
- Most young people do not understand how being civically engaged benefits them directly, or how such activities help secure a better future for their communities as a whole.
- Although a “culture of volunteerism” has not taken hold in these communities, youth expressed enthusiasm for and a willingness to volunteer if opportunities are provided. Increased opportunities will encourage the growth of a culture of volunteerism.

### **In Sum**

A primary goal of the RCA is to provide stakeholders with the information they need to develop concrete, realistic recommendations for action, and to suggest priorities. The Community Action Plans that result from the RCA will be implemented by a group of respected Jordanian Coordination NGOs in close partnership with local organizations and individuals—including youth—in each community.

Like young people everywhere, Jordanian youth seek lives in which they have a quality education, a good job, safe streets, and opportunities to be productive members of their communities. While the RCA documents the many significant challenges facing YWJ communities, it also mapped community assets. The conditions are difficult, but they are not overwhelming. The RCA shows that, with commitment from a range of stakeholders, youth in poor communities can build on their individual and community strengths and lead contented, fulfilled lives.



# 1. HARDSHIP AND HOPE

## An Overview

### YOUTH:WORK JORDAN

Youth:Work Jordan (YWJ) is a five-year initiative of the International Youth Foundation (IYF) to increase work and civic engagement opportunities for Jordan's most disadvantaged youth: young men and women ages 15–24 who are not in school, unemployed, and living in households at or below the poverty level. IYF is joined in this ambitious plan by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Jordanian Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), and respected national and local organizations across Jordan. With core funding of \$30 million provided by USAID, IYF and its partners aim to enhance prospects for youth in three key areas:

1. **Youth employability**—giving young people the information, job skills, life skills, and entrepreneurship training they need to secure decent work.
2. **Youth services**—developing the capacity of youth-friendly organizations—particularly those that offer arts, culture, and sports programs—to give youth productive ways to use their free time.
3. **Civic engagement**—providing young people with volunteer and community service opportunities to gain the experience and satisfaction of improving their neighborhoods and investing in their futures.

To increase these important resources for at-risk young people, Youth:Work Jordan will implement IYF's community-driven approach to sustainable development. Clear, concrete Community Action Plans will guide interventions from Coordination NGOs (CNGOs) across Jordan. The CNGOs will work with community-based organizations (CBOs) to design and deliver locally relevant and effective programming for at-risk youth. Sub-grants dispensed by CNGOs will ensure the activities are properly funded.

Four highly respected Jordanian organizations, **Al Farouk Charity Association for Orphans, Jordan Career Education Foundation, Jordan Hashemite Fund for Human Development, and Jordan River Foundation**, will serve as the CNGOs.

### Geographical Focus

Youth:Work Jordan is a national initiative implemented at the community level. In the pilot phase, IYF will implement YWJ in 12 of Jordan's most impoverished communities. The pilot communities are located in the governorates of Amman, Zarqa, Irbid, Jordan Valley, and Ma'an. MoSD and USAID worked closely with IYF to select the communities for the pilot program. The selection was based on poverty levels, concentrations of out-of-school and out-of-work youth, population density, and social concerns voiced by the community (figure 1).

### Rapid Community Appraisal

Effective programming and CNGO funding priorities will be informed by the specific challenges and assets found in each target community. For example, although all target communities have high numbers of unemployed youth, areas differ radically in terms of the types of jobs available to youth and the capacity of local organizations to train youth for these jobs. A realistic neighborhood assessment is the foundation for promising Community Action Plans. To obtain this crucial information, IYF partnered with Mahara, a Jordanian consultancy firm, which conducted a rapid community appraisal (RCA) of the pilot communities. The RCA gathered an enormous amount of quantitative and qualitative data on

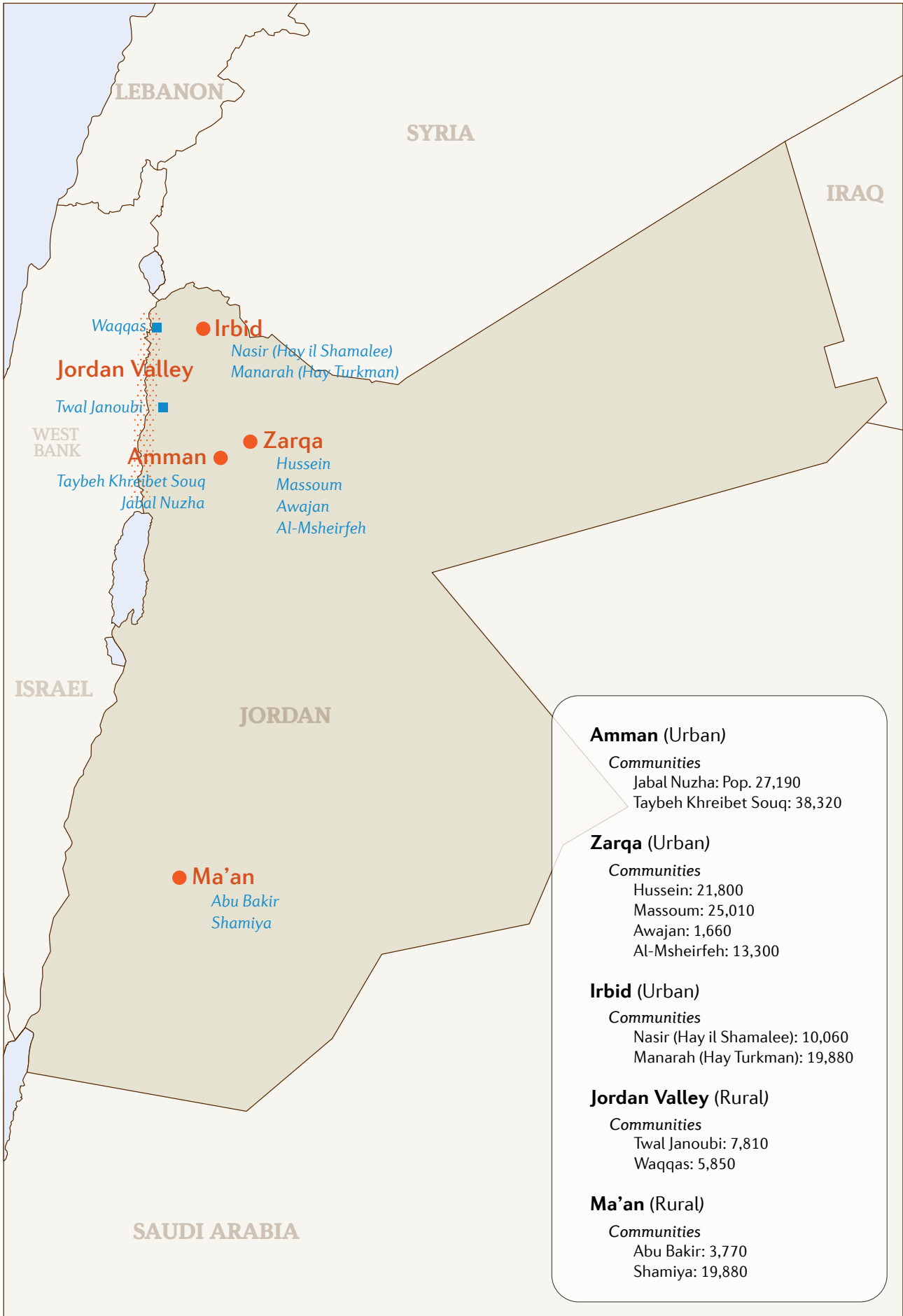
- local labor markets, particularly employer needs and market trends;
- the status of youth, including demographics, and their perceptions of their neighborhoods and opportunities available to them; and
- the number and types of services designed for or accessible by young people (institutional mapping).

A key component of the RCA was verifying hard data with face-to-face interviews with stakeholders such as employers, community leaders, parents, and young men and women themselves.<sup>1</sup>

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1 A full discussion of the RCA rationale, methodology, and findings can be found in *Building on Hope, Findings from a Rapid Community Appraisal in Jordan (Full Version)* ©2010 International Youth Foundation, available at [www.iyfnet.org](http://www.iyfnet.org)

Figure 1. YWJ Target Communities



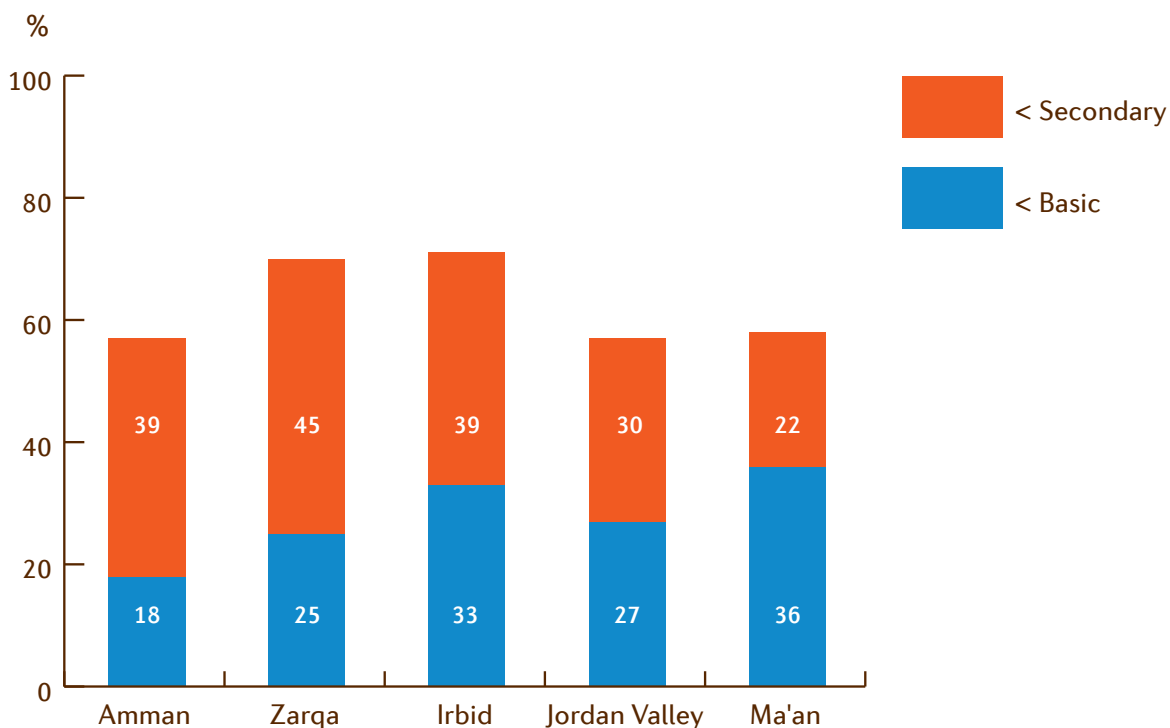
## SOCIOECONOMIC FEATURES OF HOUSEHOLDS IN YWJ TARGETED COMMUNITIES

The overwhelming majority (95%) of the families living in YWJ communities are primarily large nuclear families, not extended families. The average family size in YWJ target areas is 6.6, compared with the national average of 5.4. The majority of youth living in these areas are single and living with their parents.

To a certain extent, these households differ from the Jordanian average regarding the educational attainment of parents. The findings from the RCA indicate that the majority of fathers (62.9%) and mothers (64.2%) have achieved less than a secondary education, their educational levels fall under the Jordanian norm.

One distinguishing feature of YWJ communities is the low academic achievement of their youth. The national school enrollment rate for youth ages 15–19 is 84 percent; in YWJ communities, the rate is 7 points lower (77%). The RCA found that, across all five areas, well over half (64%) of young people leave school before completing grade 12. The percentage of youth leaving school before completing grade 10 is also high, ranging from 18 percent in Amman to 36 percent in Ma'an (figure 2). On average, barely half (49%) of young people are enrolled in school at the secondary or tertiary levels. In four out of the five YWJ areas, enrollment rates are higher for young men than for young women.

Figure 2. Youth Who Do Not Complete Grade 12 (%)<sup>2</sup>

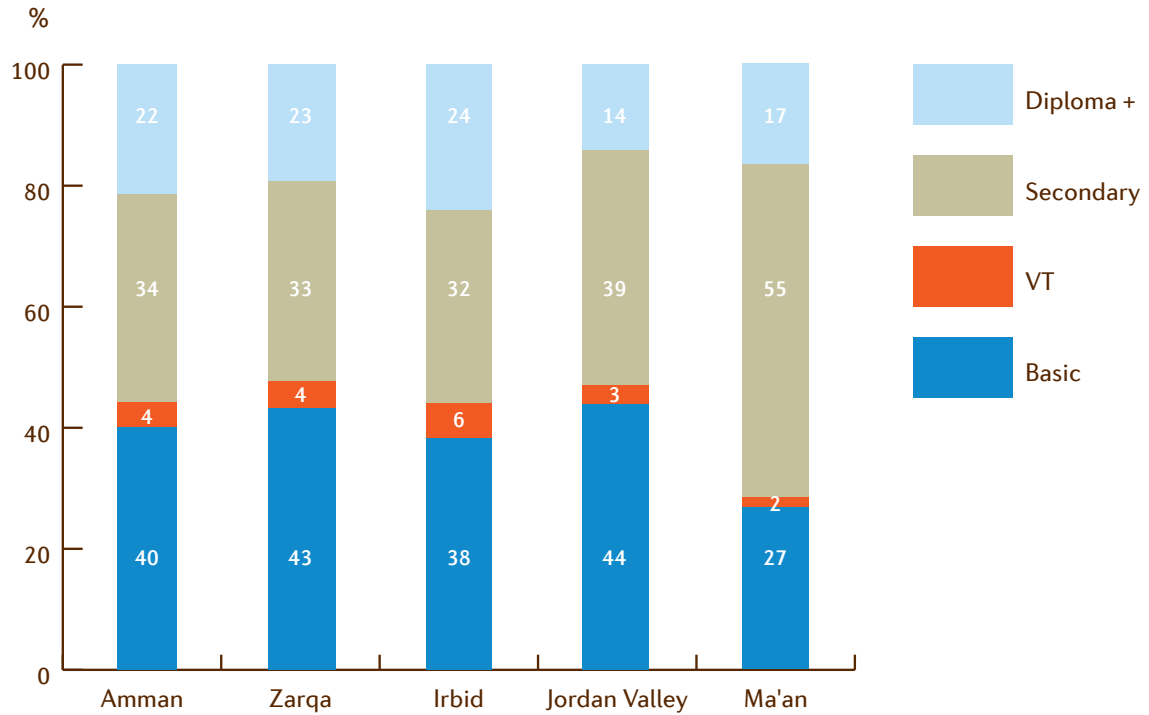


Although youth acknowledged that more education would improve their social status, many youth report that going to school is not a worthwhile way to spend their time. Instead, young women intend to marry, and young men intend to find work. Marriage rates in IYF communities are far below the national average, however, and leaving school makes it more difficult to get work, particularly when unemployment is high. Barriers such as distance to school, expense, and inability to comprehend lessons are not commonly cited reasons for leaving school. For those who planned to finish their education, one in five do not know what they will do after finishing school, or did not reply to the question.

So it is notable that vocational training (VT)—the point of which is to train youth for specific jobs—has consistently low enrollment rates across all target areas, age groups, and genders. VT enrollment is highest in Irbid at only 6 percent, and it drops to less than 2 percent in Maan area. Young people participating in the RCA say that negative stereotypes about people who attend VT affect their choice of vocational work as a career option (this issue discussed further in section 2). There is general agreement among young men and women that VT offers young women in particular few socially acceptable career choices. Figure 3 shows the educational profile of youth enrolled in formal education.

2 Figures in all the charts have been rounded.

Figure 3 . Educational Profile of Enrolled Youth



The RCA also reveals a significant misalignment between young people’s employment aspirations and Jordan’s current employment reality. Young men and women who complete their education continue to look to the government (including the military) for jobs, despite the fact that more jobs are available in the private sector, and this trend is expected to continue.

Some youth further their education informally through on-the-job training, or through public or nonprofit institutions. Overall, fewer than 1 in 10 youth are registered in a nonformal training program through the private or nonprofit sectors or on the job. The majority of young people received their training through public sector institutions (54%) followed by NGO-led programs (34%). Youth say they seek informal training primarily to get a job.

Interestingly, 40 percent of young women and 21 percent of young men report that they seek informal training to have something useful to do. Young people and their parents view these training programs as a safe and productive way for young people to spend their free time.

Young people rated the extent to which formal and nonformal training equipped them with technical skills and life skills, and they indicate a slightly higher level of satisfaction with informal training programs compared with formal educational programs. Youth in target communities acknowledge the social value of formal education and the practical value of informal education. However, they rate nonformal training higher in terms of equipping them with both technical skills and employability and life skills (figures 4 and 5).

Figure 4. Youth Assessment of Formal Training Programs

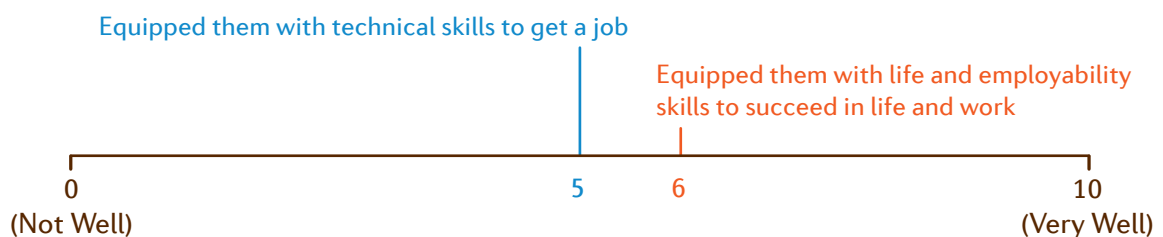
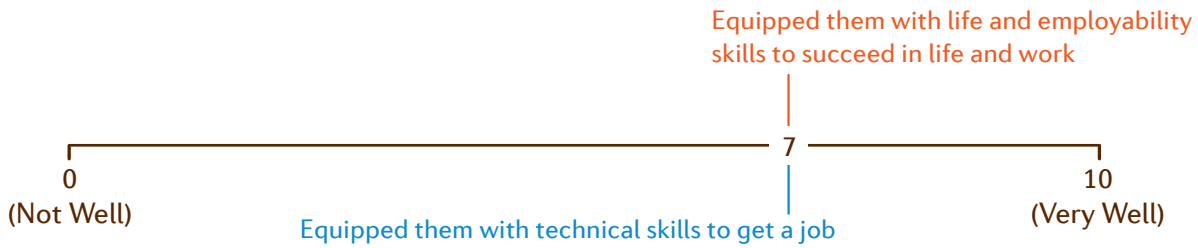


Figure 5. Youth Assessment of Nonformal Training Programs



Disadvantaged youth certainly need better technical training and life skills training. As discussed in section 2, they also need better information about what jobs are available or will likely be growth industries in their areas so they can make sound decisions about the skills they need to acquire.

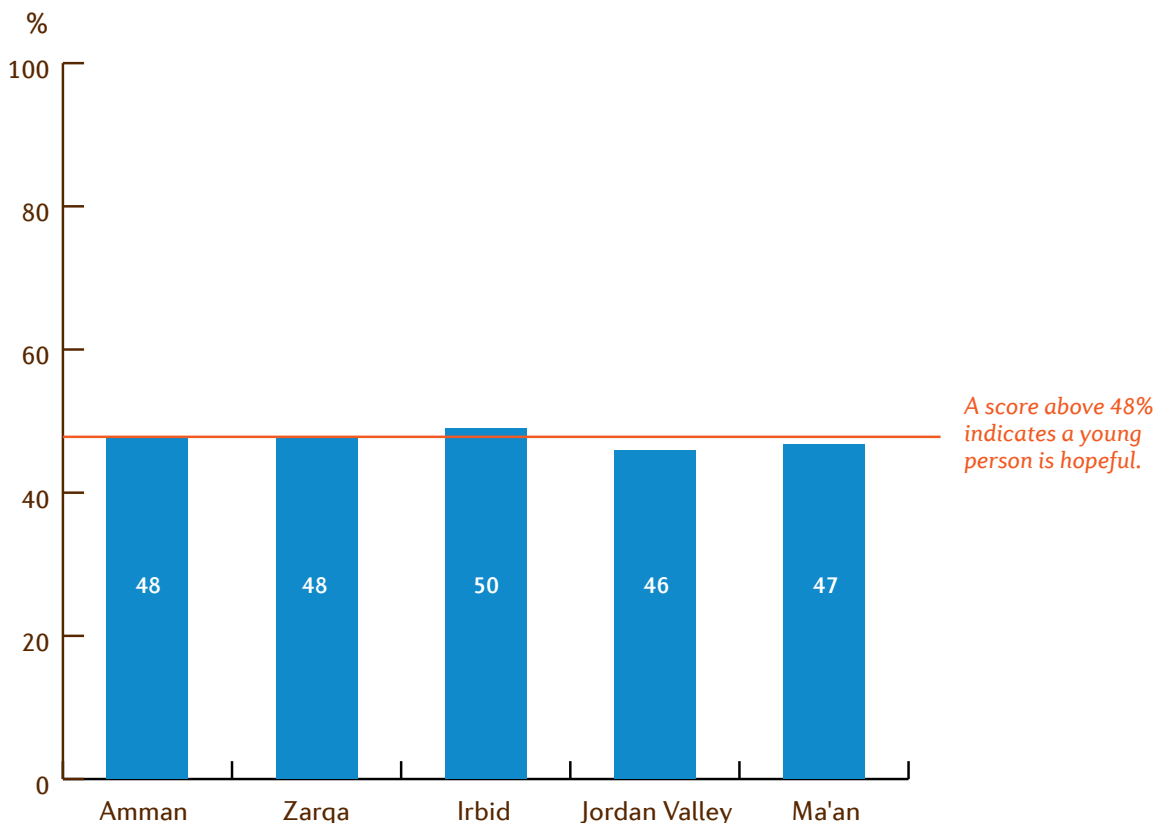
### YOUTH HOPE SCORE

The RCA sought to understand the environments in which Jordan’s most impoverished youth must try to construct their futures. Not surprisingly, it revealed a constellation of hardships that prevent young people from fully enjoying their youth and threaten to seriously compromise their future quality of life.

The RCA is an invaluable first step in developing Community Action Plans to address the significant needs of disadvantaged youth. But no data, no understanding of community gaps and assets, and no multinational, multi-level partnership will be enough to make a significant difference if youth themselves are too discouraged to imagine a better future for themselves. Therefore, the RCA also sought to gauge how much of their hearts young people are willing to invest in building their futures.

The RCA Youth Hope Score is an overall measure of how much control young people feel they have over their lives. It is a matrix of decisiveness, readiness for stress, leadership, and independence (figure 6). A score of 48 and above indicates that a young person tends to be hopeful. The RCA found an average score of approximately 47 for all target areas. The area averages do not illustrate local variation, which reached a low of 44 in the Balqa community in the Jordan Valley.

Figure 6. Youth Hope Score



Nevertheless, that Jordan's most vulnerable youth are cautiously hopeful should fill us with optimism. Although this report will show that some of their needs are hard met, these young men and women have resilient dreams. They want for themselves what their parents want for them: decent work, meaningful leisure time, and a chance to be valued members of their communities. With the facts provided by the RCA and the incentive provided by the hopes of Jordan's youth, we must seize this opportunity to help them build productive, healthy, and contented lives.

## 2. WHAT THEY NEED TO SUCCEED

### *Life, Employability, and Entrepreneurship Skills*

#### SNAPSHOT OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Low levels of education and vocational training, lack of information about genuine job opportunities, and lack of basic life skills do not tell the whole story behind high rates of unemployment in poor areas. But they help to explain why fewer than one in five youth from the neighborhoods surveyed are working (figure 7). Nearly the same number are unemployed and looking for work, and more still are simply not looking for work. Youth employment rates are fairly consistent across all target areas. The exception is the Aghwar Shamaliya neighborhood in the Jordan Valley, where only one in ten young men have jobs.

Unemployment is much more prevalent among young women than among their male peers, with an average of one women in ten employed in the YWJ areas (figure 8).

Figure 7. Youth Employment and Education Status

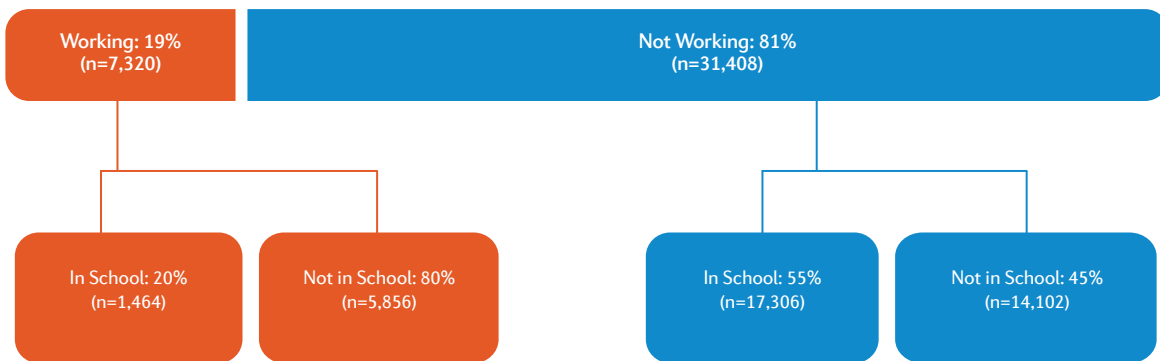
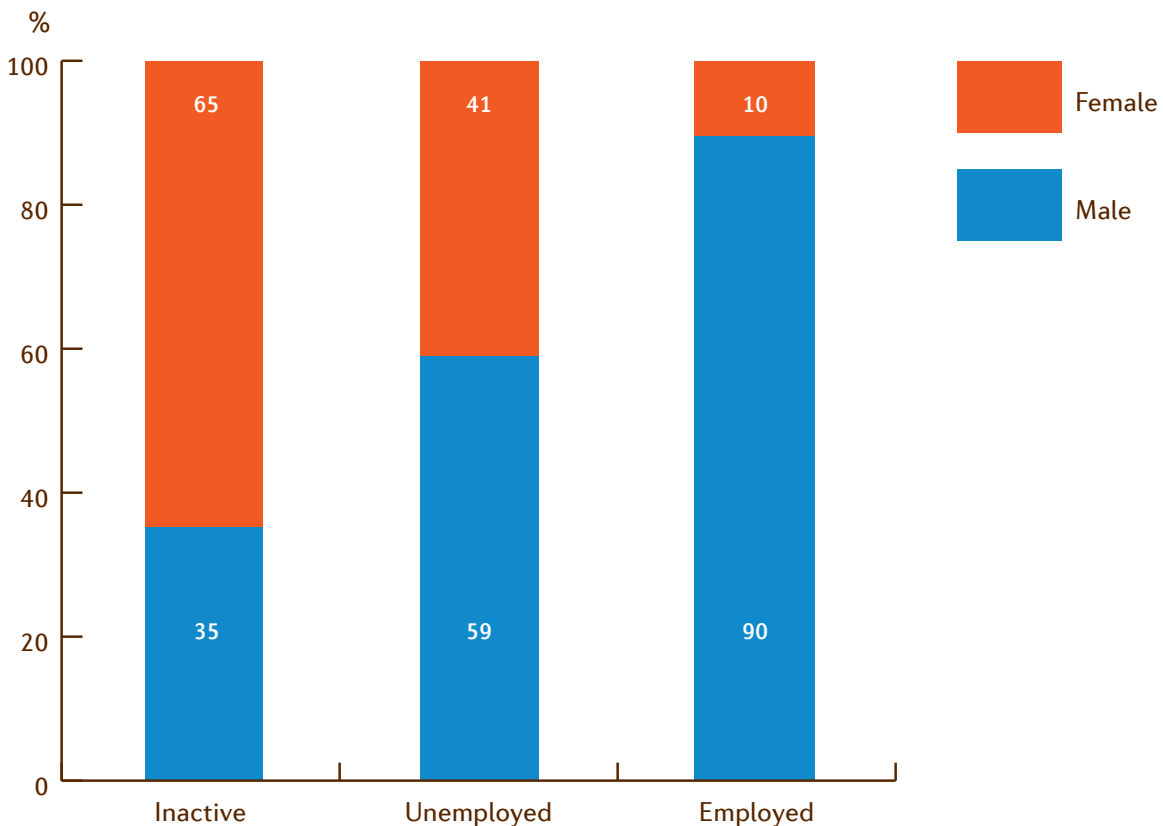


Figure 8. Youth Employment Status by Gender



As would be expected with the legal working age set at 18, only 3 percent of youth under age 18 reported working, whereas 16 percent of youth 18 years and older are working. The younger cohort is in school, and relatively fewer are looking for work.

## PROFILE OF WORKING YOUTH

Data from the RCA generated the following profile of working youth in the 12 targeted neighborhoods:

- 90% are male
- 69% are 18 years old or older (with the exception of the Jordan Valley, where all working youth are over 17 years of age)
- 72% did not finish secondary education

Given the working youths' low level of formal education, their ability to compete for positions with technical requirements is limited. For the majority who have less than a secondary education, prospects for advancement are few.

Although young people have a preference for public sector employment, the vast majority of working youth (81.5%) are employed in the private sector. Most of them (75%) say they obtained their current jobs through personal connections (*wasta*).

As discussed more below (see Youth Perspectives on Work), wages and job security are the two main reason youth prefer work in the public sector. The RCA found that youth in target communities work long hours for low pay. Overall, 16 percent work a 48-hour week, and nearly half of them work more than 48 hours a week. Overall, young women work fewer hours than young men. In certain communities, however, a high percentage of young women work 49 hours or more a week. (The RCA did not gather data on whether the youth were being compensated for overtime.)

In Amman, Irbid, Zarqa, and Ma'an, roughly one-third of young people earn less than the minimum wage (JD 150 per month). In the Jordan Valley, however, most working youth (87%) earn the minimum wage or more because wage regulations tend to be enforced in the public sector (including in the military). Among young people earning less than the minimum wage, the RCA found that more than half (53%) work 49 or more hours per week.

On a scale of 1 to 10, youth, on average, rate their satisfaction with work at 5.5. Youth are least satisfied with their wages. On the same scale, youth rate their current jobs at 5 in terms of the extent to which it meets their professional expectations.

Although most young people are relatively satisfied with their work, they say they lack clear career goals. Some feel their jobs do not help them develop professional skills. Nevertheless, about half of all youth indicate they are not interested in changing jobs, which may indicate low ambitions, or job scarcity in a recession. It could also indicate that young people need more information on job opportunities and career paths, which could be provided through holistic career counseling.

## PROFILE OF UNEMPLOYED YOUTH

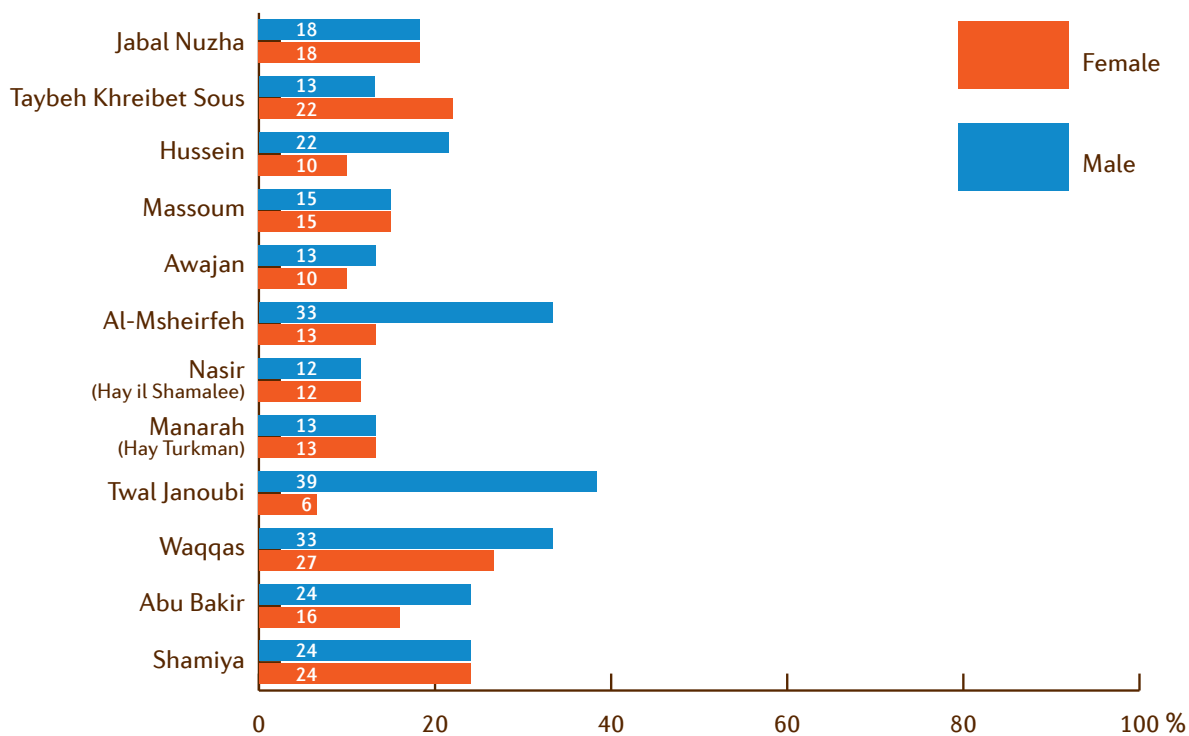
Youth unemployment rates are high, and they vary widely across YWJ communities (see figure 9). The average rate of unemployment among youth is 18 percent, ranging from 12 percent for the Nasir neighborhood in the Irbid target area and the Awajan neighborhood in the Zarqa target area to 30 percent for the Waqqas neighborhood in the Jordan Valley. The RCA generated the following profile of unemployed youth:

- 59% are male
- 45% are not in school
- 28% have less than a secondary education

As seen in the profile of employed youth (figure 8), young men have higher employment than young women. They also have higher unemployment. Most young women are not looking for work, so they are not counted among the "unemployed" (see profile of economically inactive youth, below). However, young women who are looking for work have a slightly better chance of finding a job than their male peers.



Figure 9. Unemployment Rates by Gender and Neighborhood (%)



Typically, six months of job hunting suggests that the job seeker is becoming discouraged and unable to overcome obstacles to finding a job. The RCA found that the length of time it took youth to find work varied by area (table 1).

When asked why they could not get a job, youth gave the following answers:

- They do not have information about employment opportunities (24%).
- They are waiting for a job in the public sector or military (19.8%).
- They do not have the skills employers were looking for (18.4%).
- They have no wasta to link them to an employer who has work (8.3%).

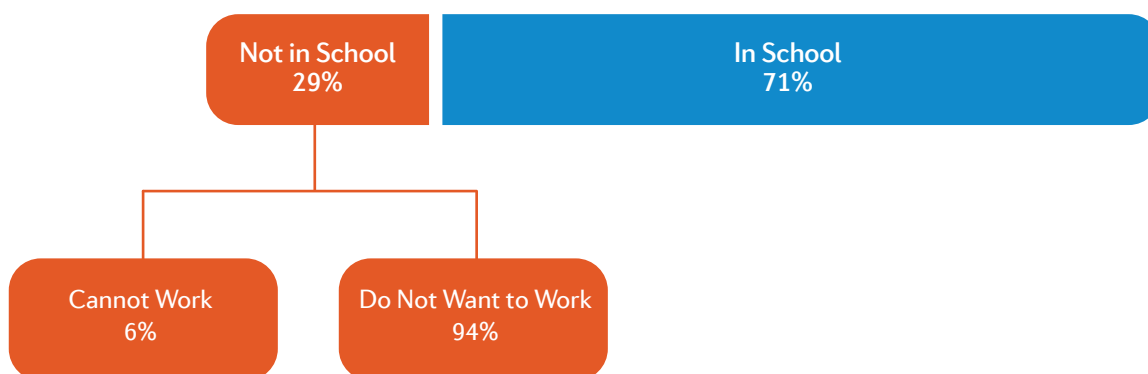
Table 1. Time Unemployed

Area	Average time spent looking for work (months)
Amman	4
Zarqa	4
Irbid	3.7
Jordan Valley	5.4
Ma'an	4.9

## PROFILE OF ECONOMICALLY INACTIVE YOUTH

The largest group of youth across all communities are economically inactive: they are not working, and they are not looking for work. Most inactive youth are in school. The remaining cannot work or do not want to work. Among inactive youth who are not in school, most all do not want to work (see figure 10).

Figure 10. Profile of Economically Inactive Youth



The RCA profile of economically inactive youth who are not in school is as follows:

- 97% are female
- 80% have less than a secondary education
- 92% are at least 18 years old

When asked why they do not want to be employed, the majority (62%) of young women say they “have to take care of the house and family.” The next most common answer is that work is “socially inappropriate” for women (18%). These responses clearly reflect gender norms that govern family responsibilities and female social behavior.

However, a few variations by neighborhood are noteworthy. First, in the Awajan neighborhood of Zarqa, 26 percent of youth cite not needing the income as the reason they do not want to work. These young people are most likely dependent on their parents or husbands for financial support.

Of the small portion of economically inactive youth who report that they cannot work, the clear majority (73%) cite family-related reasons, such as having to care for others, or not being allowed to work by parents. These reflect gender expectations similar to those voiced by women who do not want to work.

## YOUTH PERSPECTIVES ON WORK

Regardless of community, age, gender, and employment status, young people define “decent work” as a job that guarantees them a decent standard of living and garners community respect. According to young people, elements of decent work include the following:

- **Benefits.** Young men in particular indicate that health insurance can sometimes be more important than salary level.
- **Good wages.** Youth state that JD 170–300 is considered a “good” or above average salary.
- **Peace of mind.** This phrase is continuously mentioned as a critical factor of decent work in East Amman, Zarqa, Irbid, and the Jordan Valley. Youth define peace of mind as “good treatment by the boss,” “good physical conditions in the workplace,” and “employer’s adherence to labor laws, especially in terms of working hours.”

Compared with men, women tend to place more value on the effects their jobs have on their personal life. Young women say that key factors of decent work include having

- shorter working hours;

- ethical and respectful bosses;
- jobs close to home and accessible by public transportation;
- opportunities for professional advancement; and
- safe and comfortable work environments.

Young people expect to find good benefits, job security, fair working hours, and adherence to employment laws in the public sector rather than in the private sector.

Overall, young men emphasize the importance of having a good job to achieve social status. This no doubt is one reason young people under-enroll in vocational training. The RCA team asked youth about their willingness enroll in vocational technical training for six months, after which they would be linked with jobs. The following points summarize their thoughts on this possibility, which are consistent across the geographic areas:

- Parents will not let their daughters enroll in vocational training.
- Parents would allow young men to enroll in VT if there are actual jobs available after training.
- VT would have to be close to their neighborhoods and reachable by public transportation. This comment was most prevalent in the Jordan Valley, where transportation is less available than in other areas.
- Young men say they are most interested in jobs in the construction and hospitality sectors.
- Young women say that the hospitality sector is still viewed by many as a highly inappropriate choice for young women. They say their parents will not allow them to work in that sector.

Whether the youth surveyed have decent work available to them is difficult to determine, and more research needs to be conducted on this topic.

## **JORDAN LABOR MARKET**

The RCA conducted extensive research into the labor market, particularly local markets, to gauge the skills and qualifications that private sector employers seek in their new hires. In doing so, the RCA research team identified subsectors with the most potential for growth, particularly job growth. Company executives cite lack of skilled workers and high turnover rates among youth workers as constraints on hiring more young people.

## **APPRAISAL OF LABOR DEMAND**

The growth industries (and sample jobs) identified by the RCA are

- packaging (semi-skilled technicians working with plastic, paper, metal, wood, glass);
- healthcare (nursing assistants, hygiene and cleaning technicians, receptionists, data keeping and medical records technicians);
- tourism (maintenance and cleaning staff, culinary technicians, hospitality workers, receptionists, accountants);
- construction (semi-skilled technicians, heating and air-conditioning technician, electricians, carpenters, welders and builders, metallurgists);
- business services outsourcing\* (credit card processors , IT technicians, call-center operators); and
- agriculture (planters, fumigators, harvesters)

Each growth industry's geographic scope is shown below (table 2).

It is worth noting that agriculture is the dominant industry in the Jordan Valley, but it offers few jobs for Jordanian youth. Currently, most jobs in agriculture are filled by unskilled, non-Jordanian laborers. In part, negative

\* The Youth:Work Jordan program does not fund training programs for business outsourcing services.

stereotypes about manual labor keep Jordanians from working in this sector. In addition, agriculture employers typically do not provide benefits, health insurance, or social security.

The sectors with predicted job growth are shown in table 3, along with elements that indicate their availability to youth in target areas, particularly to young men.

*Table 2. Growth Industries in YWJ Target Areas*

Area/Sector	Packaging	Health Care	Tourism	Business Services Outsourcing	Construction	Agriculture
Amman	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Zarqa	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Irbid		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Jordan Valley						✓
Ma'an					✓	

*Table 3. Profiles of Growth Industries*

Industry	Level of Education Needed	Potential Monthly Salary (JD)	Gender Preference
Packaging	Basic with experience or secondary	160–350	Male or female
Healthcare	Basic through community college	160–250	Male
Tourism	Basic	150–220	Male
Construction	Basic through vocational	200–900	Male
Business Services Outsourcing	College degree	200–400	Male or female

### 3. WHO IS THERE FOR THEM?

#### *Findings on Services for Youth*

The RCA sought to determine the number and types of social and cultural institutions available to youth in target communities. Services that were designed for youth or that could potentially serve youth were not necessarily located within a community's geographical boundaries. Therefore, to understand the types and numbers of services available to youth, the RCA mapped institutions located beyond the relatively narrow borders of YWJ target neighborhoods.<sup>3</sup>

A core goal of YWJ is to help services that are currently available to youth become “youth friendly” or more youth friendly.

#### **What Makes a Service Youth Friendly?**

In their approach to young people, youth-friendly services:

- Promote holistic, positive development by helping young people prevent problems and grow in healthy ways
- Offer age-, gender-, and developmentally appropriate activities
- Involve youth in meaningful ways

In their connection to local family, culture, and community, such services:

- Involve parents, extended family, significant adults
- Ensure cultural relevance
- Involve the community in planning and implementation
- Work in close coordination and partnership with other youth service providers, whether sponsored by the government or CBOs

In their organizational commitments to programming excellence and sustainability, such services:

- Identify cost-effective ways to achieve program activities, outputs, and outcomes
- Undergo monitoring, evaluation, and feedback
- Provide for staff training and development
- Plan for self-sustainability
- Develop financial, technical, and managerial capacity

Because services will go unused if youth do not know about them, the RCA also assessed whether youth could identify services that were available to them.

The RCA mapped the following types of services:

- Social safety net, such as parenting and family counseling and NGO-related services
- Health care
- Cultural and leisure services, such as public parks and playgrounds, youth centers, and cultural programs
- Sports
- Out-of-school tutoring

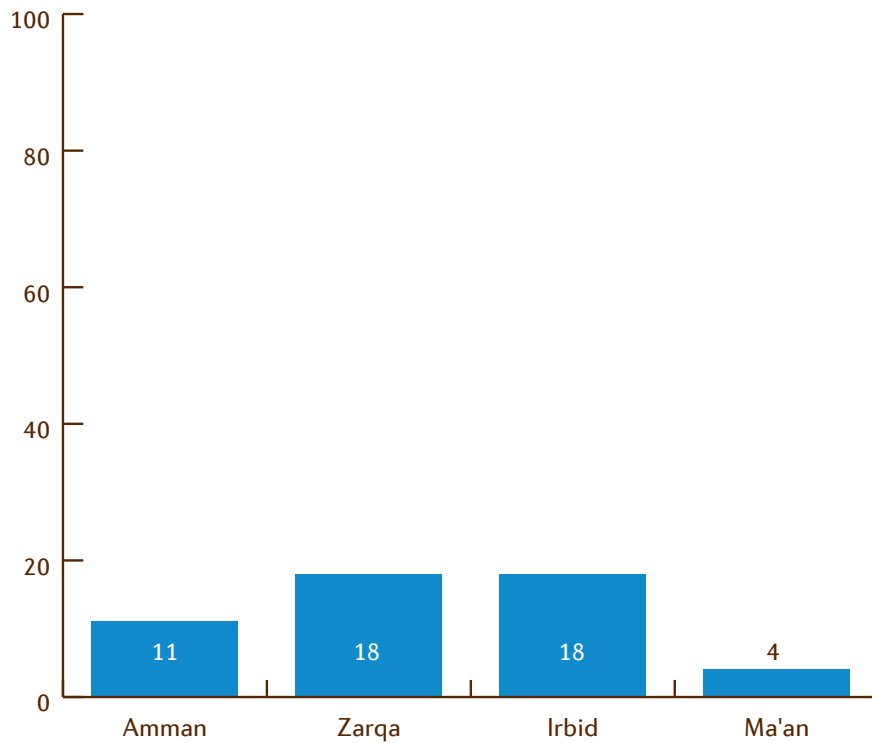
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3 The Jordan Valley was not included in the mapping exercise because one of the neighborhoods was added after the RCA work plan and budget was finalized.

Religious activities were also tracked for availability, but no further research was done around the issue of youth recognition of these services, their participation in them, or their quality.

Figures 11–15 below illustrate the types and number of services that are or could potentially be youth friendly in four of the YWJ areas. Because young people are dissatisfied with having few opportunities for productive use of their leisure time, YWJ is particularly interested in local opportunities for youth participation in arts, sports, and cultural activities.

*Figure 11. Number of Social Safety Net Services*



*Figure 12. Number of Health Services by Area*

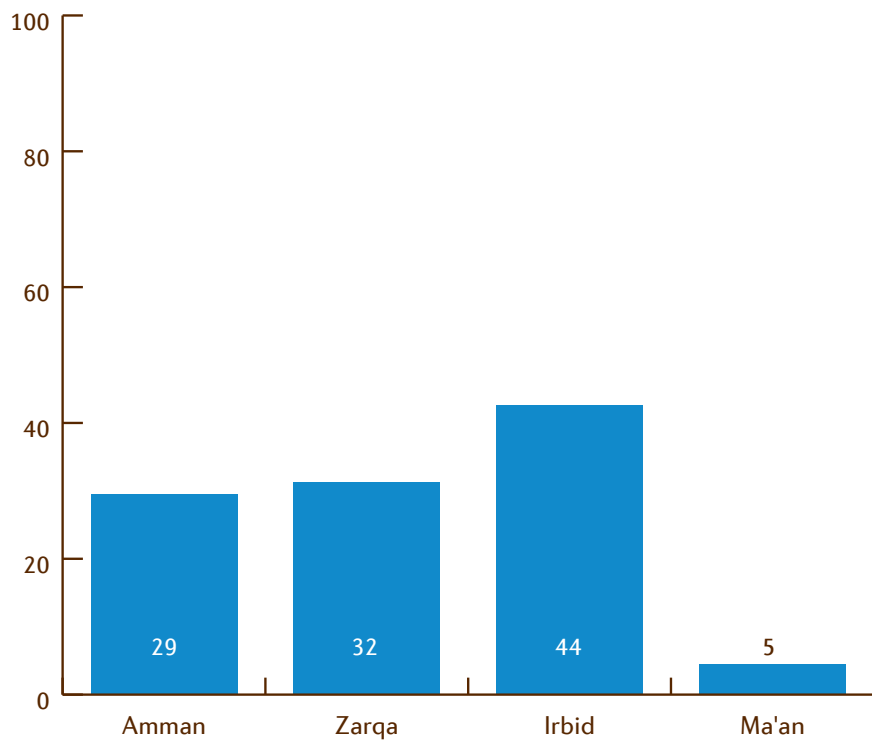


Figure 13. Number of Culture and Leisure Services by Area

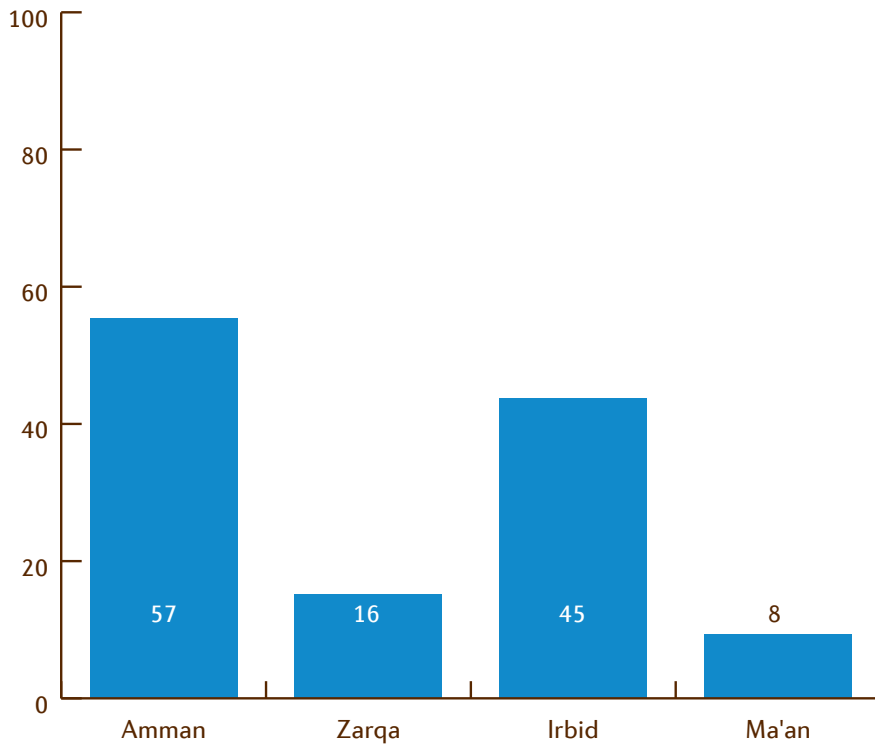
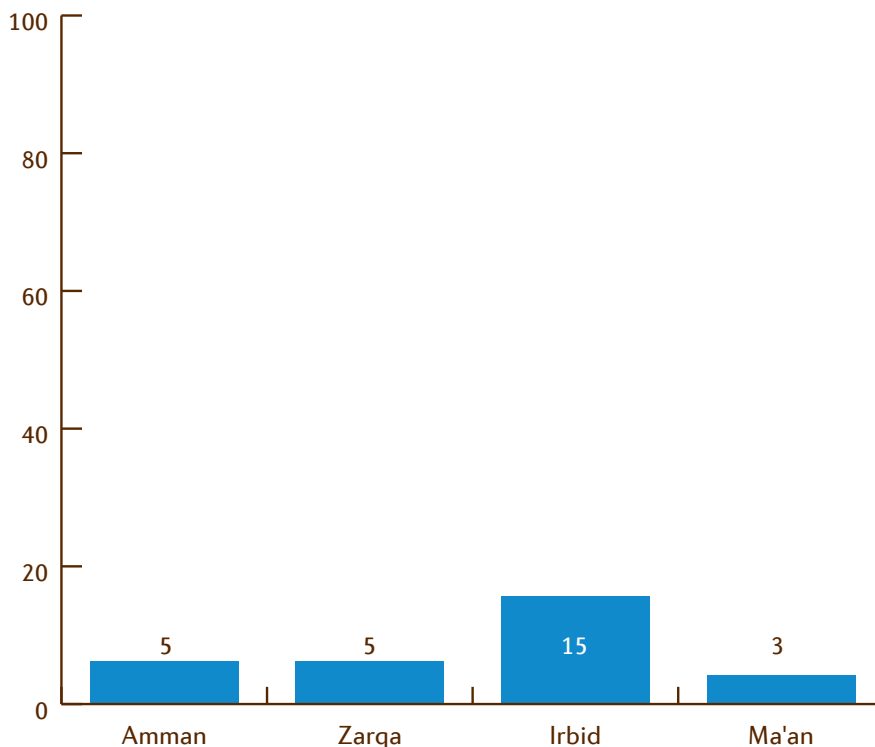


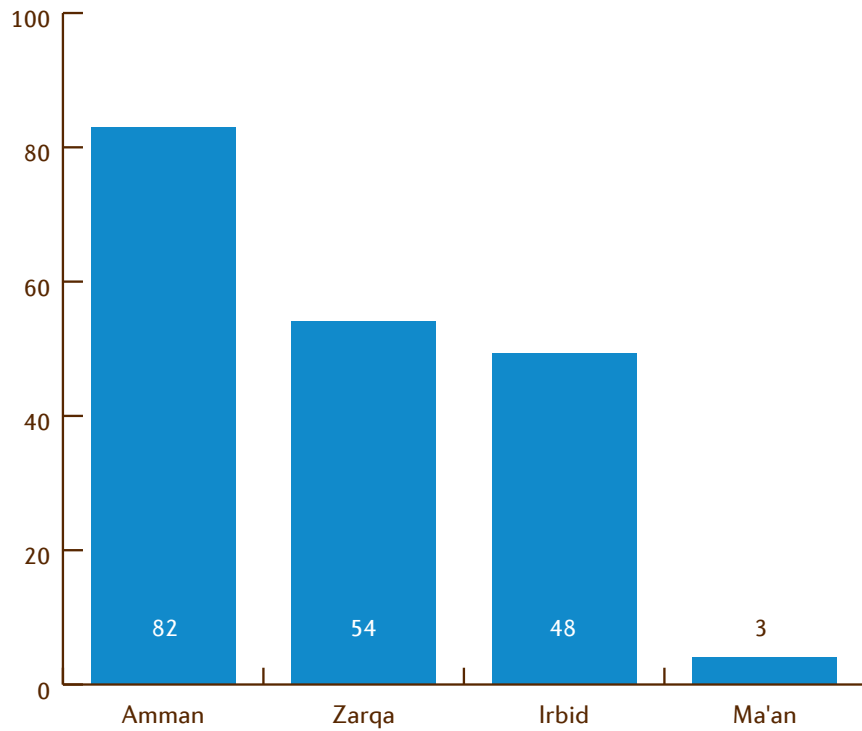
Figure 14. Number of Sports Services by Area



The availability of these services ranges widely, depending upon the area. For example, the number of cultural and leisure activities (youth centers, playgrounds and parks, and cultural activities) are high in Amman (57 such services) but far lower in other areas (e.g., 16 in Zarqa and 8 in Ma'an).

A very high percentage of youth recognize the presence and availability of healthcare services in their communities across all areas. These services could play a key role in helping youth navigate main threats to their quality of life, which they report to be smoking, substance abuse (particularly alcohol), and violence.

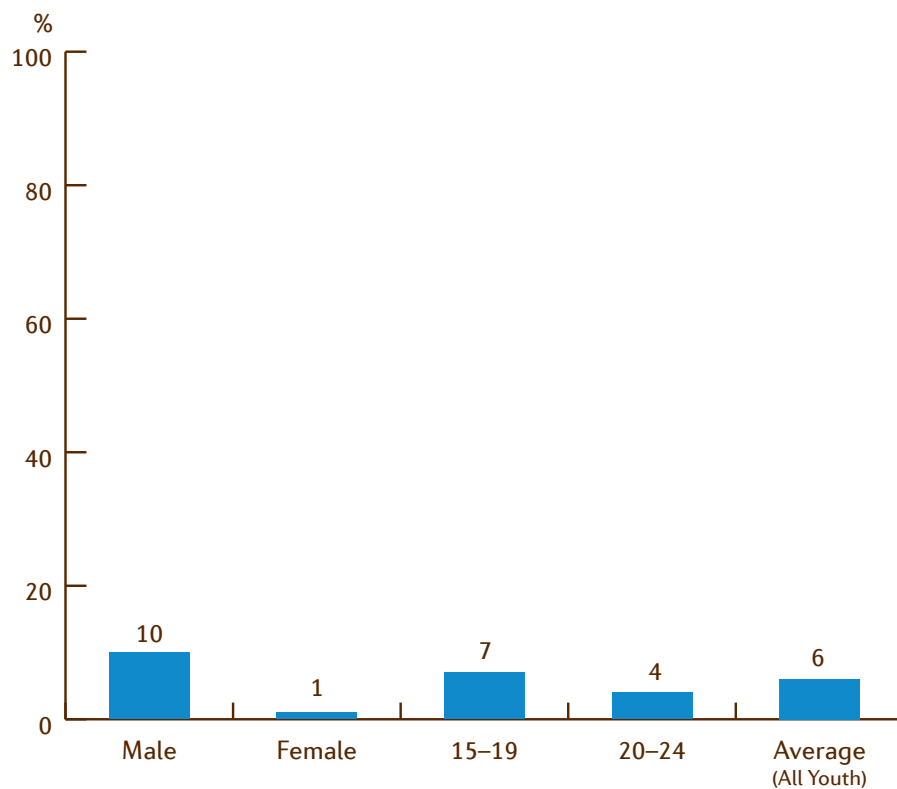
Figure 15. Number of Religious-Based Services by Area



Few young people recognize the presence of sports programs in their communities. Focus groups with community leaders and parents confirmed the finding that there is a general lack of infrastructure and programming for youth, especially in culture and leisure.

Not surprisingly, then, throughout all areas, the rate of youth participation in art, sports, or cultural activities is extremely low, particularly among young women (figure 16).

Figure 16. Youth Participation in Art, Sports, Cultural Activities by Gender and Age





## Safe Places Promote Community Development

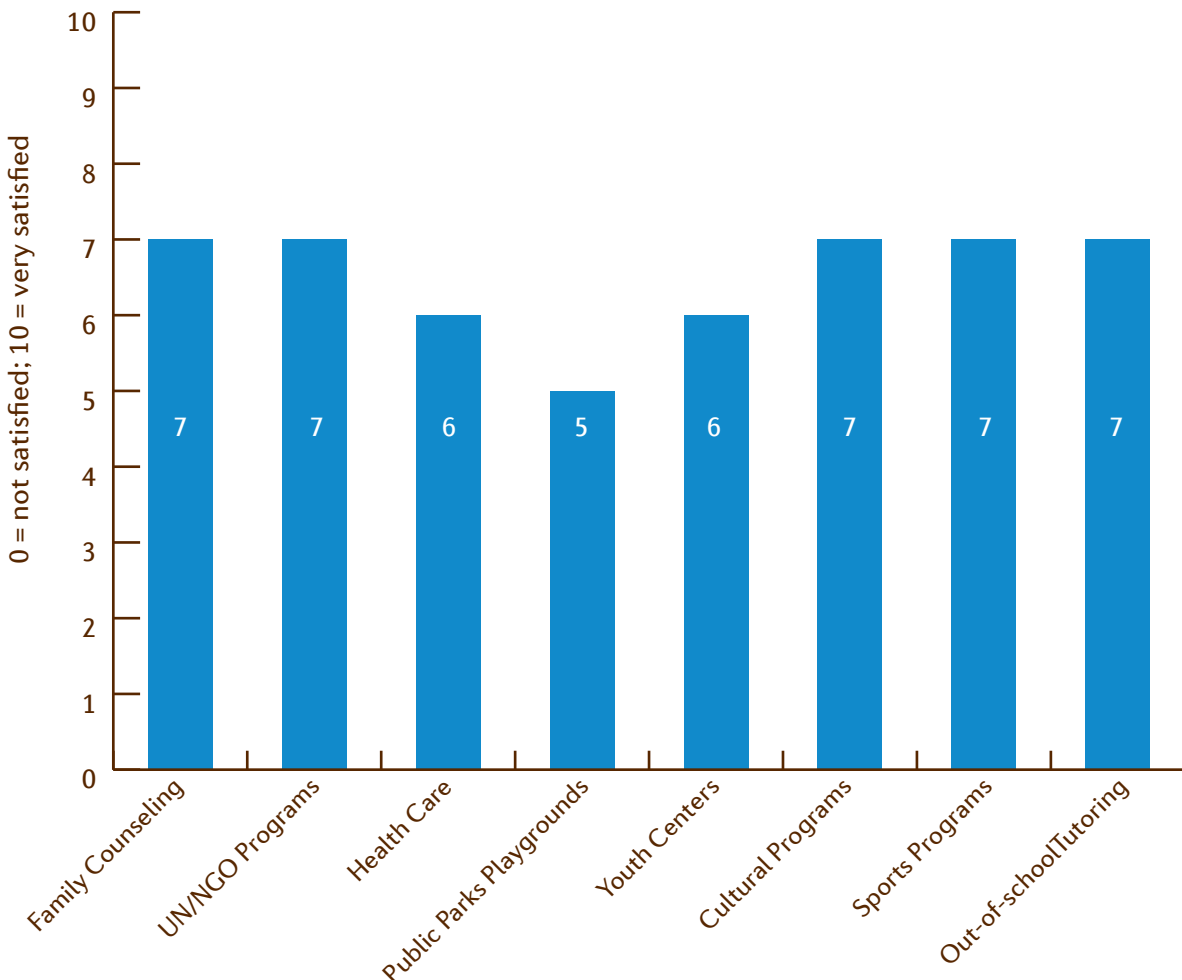
Among the many ramifications of poverty are community-level crime and violence and an increased sense of sense of public insecurity or outright fear. Feeling that one's community is dangerous—whether it is the case or simply perceived—exacerbates social isolation and smothers community activity, which contributes to less community development. If parents are afraid to let their children play in parks, then parks, over time, become less valuable to neighborhoods and they eventually disappear. If young women feel unsafe on the street, they will not leave their homes unnecessarily, becoming tangential to society at large.

Not surprisingly, the RCA found that young people in YWJ neighborhoods often feel unsafe in their communities. Across all areas, young people perceived crime, community violence, domestic violence, and alcohol and drug abuse as notably present in their communities. The visible presence of men in the streets (particularly after dark) affected the sense of security of young men and especially of young women.

## YOUTH SATISFACTION WITH SERVICES

Youth in the target areas who did recognize the presence of youth-friendly services in their communities were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with these services on a scale of 1 to 10. The ratings were remarkably similar across age and gender groups (figure 17).

Figure 17. Youth Satisfaction with Services



Youth report mid-range satisfaction for the services available to them. NGO programs and cultural programs receive the highest ratings. While the presence of these services is not as widely recognized by youth as other services, youth generally enjoy what they have available to them. Across the target communities, young people agree that establishing community centers, public parks, and libraries, and providing local activities for youth would enhance their sense of safety and improve the quality of their lives. This is especially true for young women.

## 4. SIGNING UP

### *Findings on Youth Civic Engagement*

Individual and community well-being is enhanced when there are opportunities for people to work together for their mutual benefit. A culture of volunteerism blurs the distinction between serving others and serving oneself, because helping others brings many measurable and immeasurable benefits for the volunteer. Volunteerism and community service can be particularly important to disadvantaged young people, who may lack other means of acquiring the experience and competencies needed to be productive adults engaged in their communities.

Involving youth in activities that benefit both young people and their broader community has numerous advantages. Youth civic engagement can

- decrease the likelihood that young people will engage in risky behaviors;
- have some economic impacts (ticket sales to music performances, for example). Youth participation in larger projects (such as infrastructure development) would create even greater direct economic benefits for the community as a whole;
- lead to environmental improvements through activities that rehabilitate local parks, clean up local streams and waterways, or provide informal education on how to save energy, recycle waste, or conserve water;
- lead to systemic change in their communities as youth become engaged in the decision-making process.

Their meaningful participation in effective volunteer and community service programs can provide youth opportunities to exercise initiative and leadership while developing knowledge and skills that will enable them to play a positive role in society as they mature. In the present, however, their efforts directly counteract a sense of social isolation and feelings of unproductiveness. Volunteerism helps youth to be relevant and active creators of their own communities. It also reminds them that they have something to offer to others in their community.

What does meaningful youth participation in civic engagement entail? In YWJ programs, it means that young people have ample opportunities to be involved in decision making in the organizations, activities, events, and issues that affect their lives.

#### **SNAPSHOT OF YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

Unfortunately, young people in target communities currently participate in civic engagement activities and programs at an extremely low level. Less than 2 percent are registered members of any kind of civil institutions, and only 4 percent regularly participate in civic activities overall (figure 18).

Part of the explanation for low youth civic engagement is a dearth of opportunity (figure 19). Across communities, few institutions give youth a chance to become involved. The RCA mapped Irbid as having the highest number of such institutions (14) and Ma'an as having the lowest (1).

Almost no private institutions offer volunteer opportunities in the Amman subdistricts of Marka and Qwaismeh, the Zarqa subdistricts Qasabet Al-Zarqa and Rssaifeh, and the Irbid subdistricts of Qasabet Irbid and Aghwar Shamaliya.

#### **YOUTH AND COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES ON YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

When asked about youth's low participation in civic activities, focus groups of parents and community leaders across Jordan remark that young people tend to view volunteer opportunities as mediocre ways to spend their time. Focus groups note that young people tend to volunteer in their communities during certain seasons (such as Ramadan, national occasions, the winter), when opportunities present themselves through charity associations and schools.

The few young people who participate in community service activities confirm that they volunteer primarily through their schools. They tend to sign up for simple, short-term activities, such as painting the school, cleaning the school or neighborhood, or planting trees within the school. But contrary to what adults report, young people in focus groups express enthusiasm for community service activities and for the feelings of achievement they gained through these activities.

Figure 18. Youth Participation in Civil Society Activities, by Gender and Age

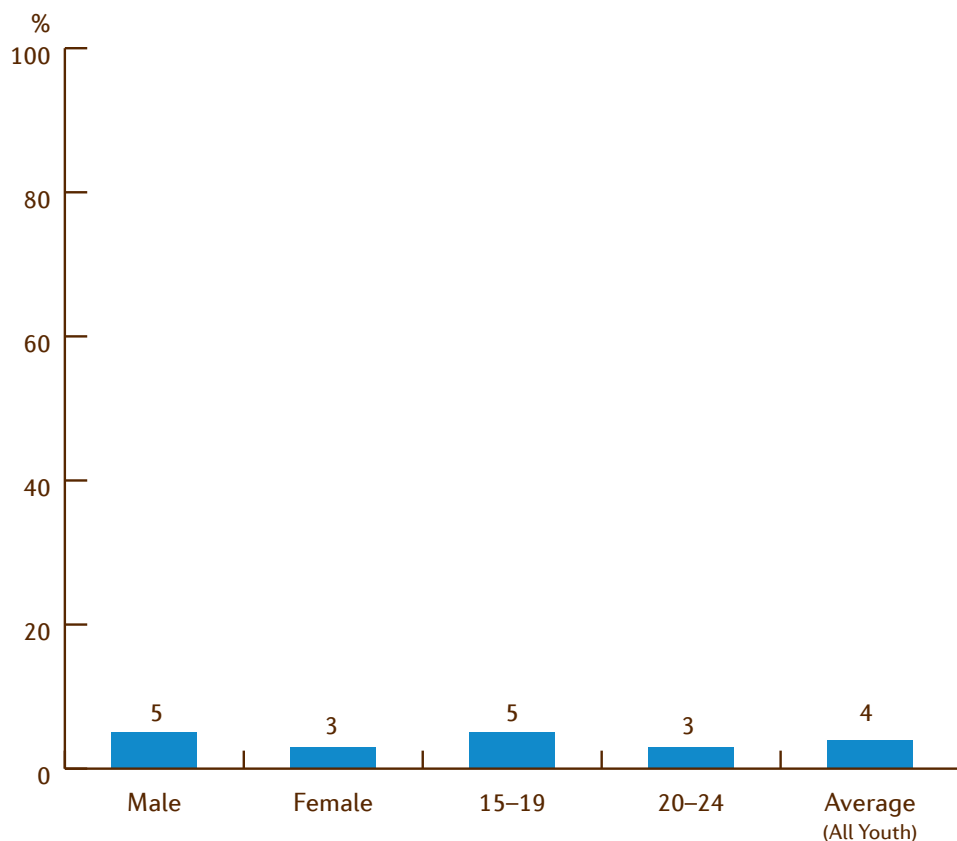
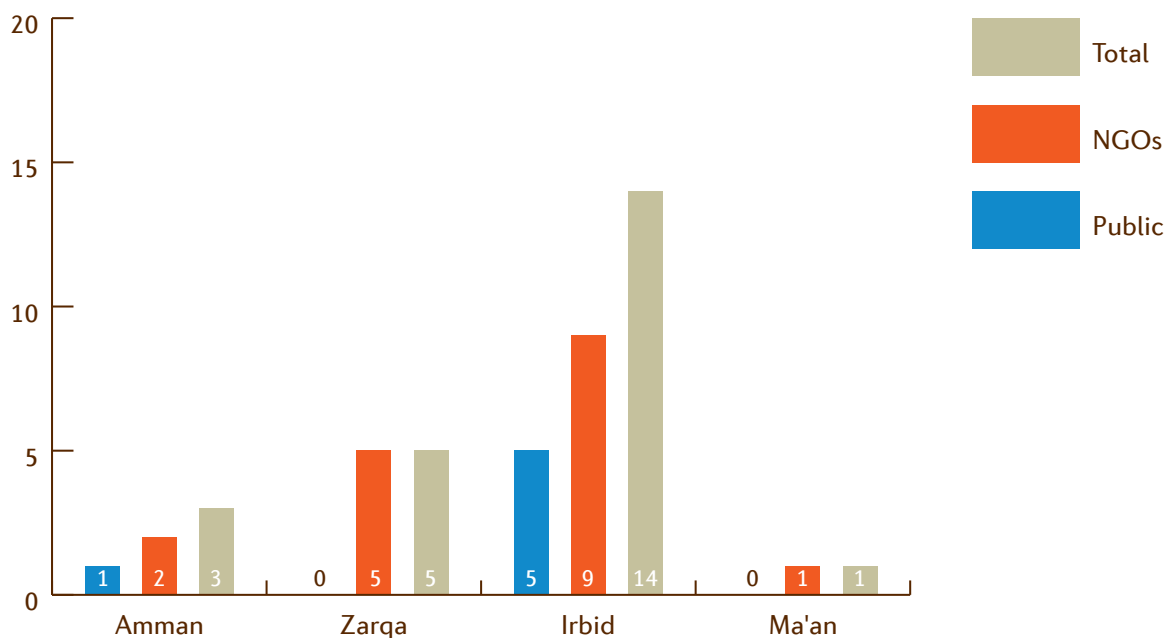
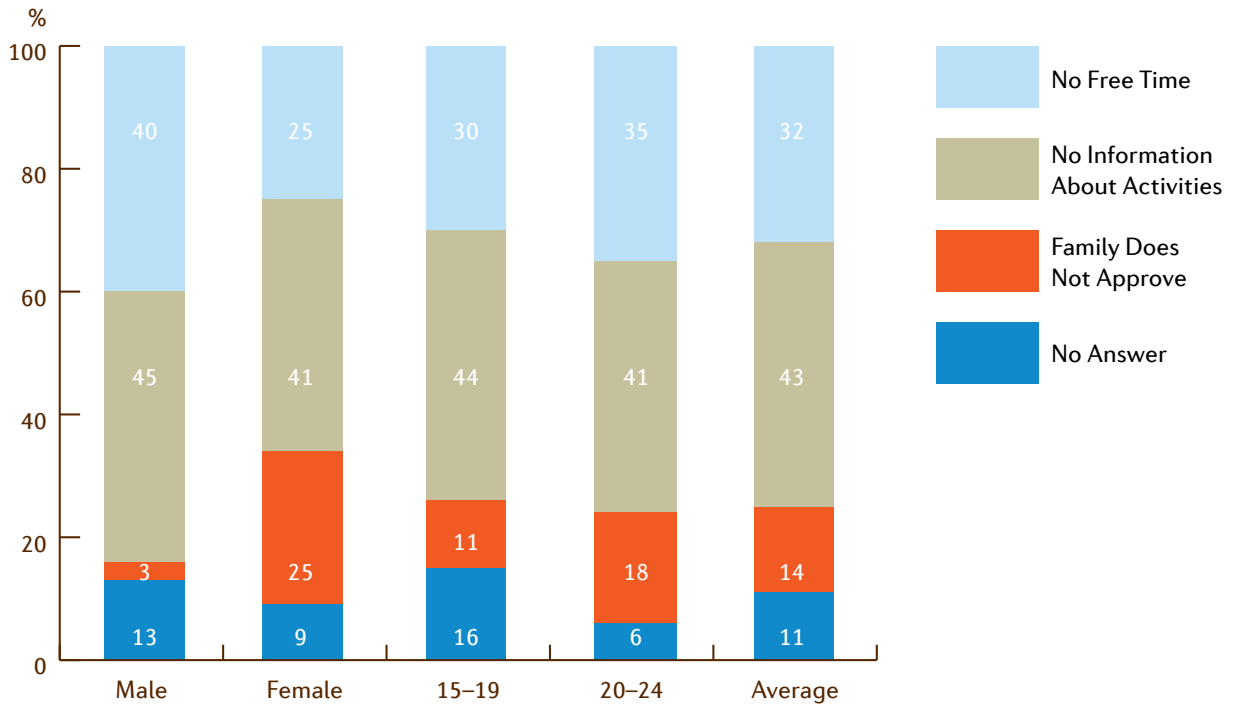


Figure 19. Number of Institutions that Offer Volunteer Opportunities for Youth



When asked about their extremely low participation in civic and community service activities, young people say that they do not have enough free time or information on volunteer opportunities (figure 20). However, other data gathered about young people in the target communities indicate that youth have plenty of free time. Young women insist that their families do not approve of such activities for them.

Figure 20. Reasons Youth Do Not Participate in Civic Activities



Parents and community leaders, on the other hand, attribute young people's poor showing in civic engagement activities to

- a scarcity of programs;
- a lack of a supportive infrastructure; and
- the absence of a culture of volunteerism.

Parents and community leaders believe that if youth had volunteer opportunities and information about how they could help others, youth would not hesitate to engage in volunteer work. Likewise, young people say that their interest in community service would increase if there were more opportunities, if the opportunities were better known, and if volunteer organizations provided transportation for them.

YWJ will nurture youth commitment to civic engagement, as the degree to which young people are involved in developing their communities is the degree to which they are convinced a better future is possible.

## 5. RCA RECOMMENDATIONS

The RCA revealed several pressing needs, three of which will be addressed by YWJ activities:

1. Access to high-quality life skills, employability skills, and entrepreneurship training
2. Increased access to youth-friendly services and infrastructure, especially in arts, sports, and culture
3. Increased opportunities for civic engagement, involving youth in the development of their own communities

The following sections detail the broadest RCA recommendations to address each of these key needs. To implement these recommendations, CNGOs and local partners will develop concrete, viable action plans tailored to each YWJ community.

### Life, Employability, and Entrepreneurship Skills Training

- **Prioritize helping young people who want to work but cannot find jobs;** these youth are eager to work and receptive to training.
- **Provide job skills needed in the local market, including entrepreneurship training;** job training should qualify youth for jobs in the real world, bridging the gap between what employers seek and what youth have to offer.
- **Develop activities to engage economically inactive young women** using innovative approaches to gender issues.
- **Integrate life skills and professional skills development into training programs** so that young people are fully prepared for the world of work.
- **Support equivalency degrees.** Disadvantaged youth need ways to advance their education and complete their secondary education to improve their employability prospects.
- **Advocate fair wages and decent jobs** and educate young people about their labor rights.
- **Develop strong career information and counseling activities** to give youth accurate information about the job market.
- **Upgrade vocational training centers and nonformal training centers;** some growth industries require vocational training.

### IMPROVE YOUTH-FRIENDLY SERVICES

- **Identify best practices to inform youth-friendly service design;** know why some services work and others do not.
- **Train service providers and support improvement efforts.** It's not enough to want to serve youth; well-meaning service providers need training in order to serve young people effectively.
- **Emphasize cultural activities** to round out youth development and help them appreciate their heritage.
- **Keep safety in mind.** Young people—and their parents—want to be assured activities are safe.
- **Activities in this area should complement training programs offered through other YWJ components.** Consider crosscutting programming opportunities.

### CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- **Make civic engagement options more visible and accessible,** and ensure that they appeal to youth.
- **Engage parents and communities in the effort;** community development is for and by everyone.
- **Use civic engagement and volunteerism to build skills.** An array of hard and soft skills can be honed through community development activities.

The RCA was comprehensive, and it revealed several needs that are beyond the scope of YWJ activities. Although YWJ activities will bring measurable improvements to the lives of youth in the three key areas identified above, YWJ resources are not available to address every need revealed by the RCA. For example, the RCA revealed a critical need for improvements to formal education. It is essential that relevant stakeholders focus on ways to improve the quality of education, encourage parental involvement in schooling, devise incentives to reduce the number of drop-outs, seek basic improvements to ensure the relevance of formal education, and integrate career counseling and entrepreneurial training into the classroom.

IYF and YWJ are keenly aware that Jordan's young men and women require a holistic programming that creates and reinforces gains from many angles. Improving life for Jordan's youth now—and sustaining these improvements—requires systemic change. Deep change is possible only when a broad partnership of actors from the public, private, nonprofit, and funding sectors join in partnership with the YWJ program to achieve it.

## FINAL WORD

Youth:Work Jordan will launch its pilot program in 12 of Jordan's most impoverished, underserved communities. The Rapid Community Appraisal documents the challenges and assets IYF and its partners will begin with. A key asset is the enthusiasm that community leaders, parents, and youth themselves bring to these development activities. Enthusiasm is both a cause and an effect of successful community partnerships.

As prospects for youth brighten, as their economic and social lives become more secure, the context in which YWJ implements its programs will likewise change, requiring less struggle in some areas, new struggle in others. Therefore, learning—we hope—will be an ongoing experience for every individual involved with YWJ.

YWJ intends to track our successes and failures very carefully—building on lessons learned—and we will regularly convey our findings to others. The 12 communities in the first phase of our program will impart experience crucial for the successful expansion of the program to other young people in Jordan. With sufficient commitment from a variety of stakeholders, these YWJ pilot activities will have a ripple effect, generating additional excitement and attracting a wider base of stakeholders. The enthusiasm generated by any success large or small can be a wellspring of fresh ideas for partnerships, activities, and policies that benefit other Jordanian communities in ways currently unimaginable.







