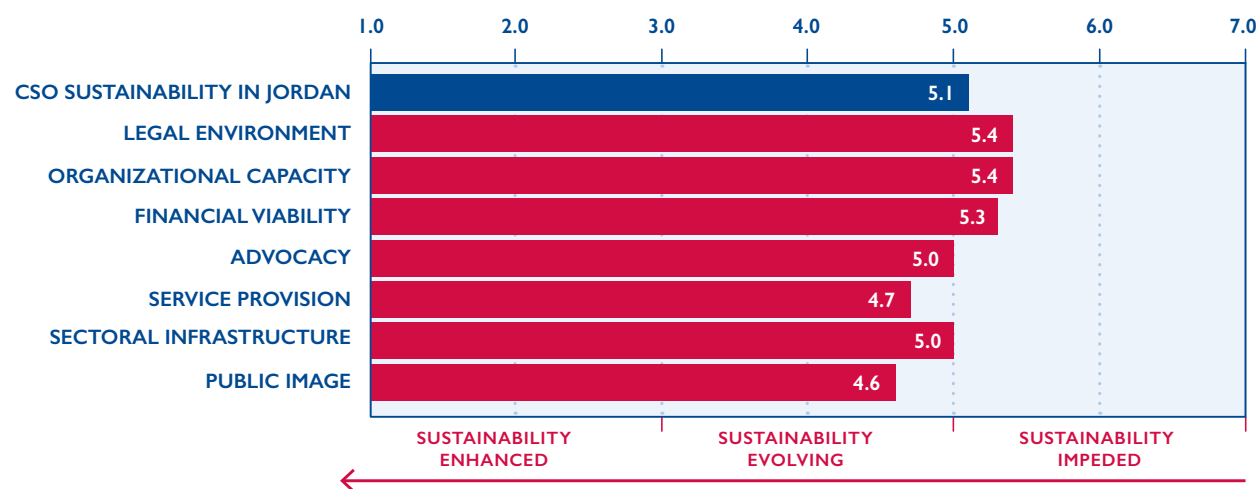


JORDAN

Capital: Amman
Population: 10,248,069
GDP per capita (PPP): \$12,500
Human Development Index: High (0.735)
Freedom in the World: Partly Free (37/100)

OVERALL CSO SUSTAINABILITY: 5.1



Jordan continued to be severely impacted by the conflicts in neighboring Syria in 2017. With an estimated 89 refugees per 1,000 inhabitants, according to the UN High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR), the resource-scarce nation faced growing pressures on the supply of water, health, and educational services, and the economy. The presence of a large refugee population had implications for CSOs as well, many of which serve refugee or displaced populations.

Jordan's economy continued to struggle, with an annual GDP growth rate of just 2 percent. Rising oil prices and high inflation resulted in higher prices for goods and services, while the tourism sector has remained stagnant due to the continuing instability in the region. In order to build individuals' economic agency, including within the refugee population, CSOs increasingly support small-scale initiatives such as micro-loans and vocational skills development.

Jordan, a constitutional monarchy with the king and his cabinet serving as the executive authority, implemented several political reforms in 2017 to advance transparency and democratic participation. The 2017-2025 National Strategy for Integrity and Anti-Corruption aims to strengthen the capacity of the Anti-Corruption Commission as well as enhance education, training, and coordination around efforts to fight corruption. In addition, in August Jordan held elections for mayoralties, municipal and local councils, as well as—for the first time—governorate councils. The governorate councils are representative entities established by the 2014 decentralization law; their election provides CSOs with an additional way to engage local decisionmakers. Nonetheless, barriers to political participation remain, particularly for women. Jordan also implemented significant human rights reforms in 2017. Following a decades-long campaign by women's and human rights groups, parliament approved the abolition of Article 308 of the Penal Code, which had allowed perpetrators of sexual assault to escape punishment if they married their victims. Parliament also amended Article 98 of the Penal Code, which protected perpetrators of honor crimes by acquitting them or reducing their sentences if they claimed "mitigating circumstances" such as "severe rage." Other significant legal reforms backed by CSO advocacy included a new law to protect the rights of persons with disabilities, and a new criminal procedures law to ensure proper representation and timely due process.

Jordan's CSO sector overall maintained the same level of sustainability in 2017. The legal environment for CSOs remained impeded, as organizations continued to face challenges related to registration and access to funding, as well as instances of state harassment. The CSO sector in Jordan is still relatively nascent—particularly compared to regional neighbors such as Lebanon, Palestine, and Egypt—and the majority of organizations lack significant capacity; this remained true in 2017. CSOs' financial outlook worsened along with Jordan's struggling economy, and CSOs seeking government approval for foreign funding faced longer delays and a higher likelihood of rejection. Despite funding and legal constraints, CSOs' advocacy efforts persisted, and as described above several significant campaigns achieved their goals during the year. CSOs continued to provide a diverse range of goods and services, as well. The infrastructure supporting the sector remained relatively weak, with few improvements as far as CSOs' access to training, CSO networks, or intersectoral partnerships. As in 2016, the public image of CSOs was mixed.

The majority of CSOs in Jordan are registered as societies under the Law on Societies (Law 51 of 2008); these organizations are the focus of this report. At the end of 2017 there were 5,718 societies registered with the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), up from 5,294 reported as registered in 2016. These include both national-level organizations based in the capital, Amman, and community-based organizations (CBOs) throughout the country. Most CSOs are charitable organizations, many of which only operate during Ramadan and other religious holidays. The sector has grown considerably in recent years and continues to develop and diversify. In addition to societies, there are approximately 600 civil, not-for-profit companies, which register under Law 73 of 2010 on Companies and are supervised by the Ministry of Trade and Industry and Supply, rather than the MoSD. There are also approximately ten Royal Non-Governmental Organizations (RINGOs). These organizations, some of which receive governmental funding or are considered quasi-governmental, do not register under a particular ministry.

LEGAL ENVIRONMENT: 5.4

The legal environment for CSOs remained impeded in 2017. As in 2016, CSOs faced challenges related to the registration process as well as incidents of administrative harassment.

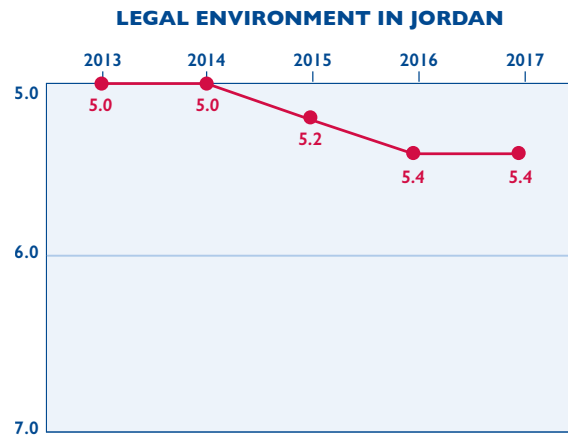
The Societies Law 51 of 2008 continues to be the primary law governing CSOs. Law 51 requires that CSOs register with Jordan's Registry Council within the MoSD in order to operate in Jordan. This process, as implemented, has become increasingly challenging for CSOs. First, registration applications face a significant backlog. Applications for registration used to be reviewed by the Registry Council twice a month, however the Council began meeting less frequently in 2017 and as such applications accumulated for longer periods. According to the law, the government must respond within sixty days from receiving an application, but CSOs have no means of holding officials accountable when they take more time. CSOs indicated that waiting times grew even longer in 2017; one organization said it waited nine months before receiving a response to its application.

Other challenges to the registration process persisted in 2017. CSOs complain about the lack of legal background and professionalism among the government staff who work on societies' registration. The registry application requires that all founders include a certificate of non-criminal record, which also contributes to delays in the process, as minor issues such as a returned check or family dispute in a founder's history may prevent or delay them from obtaining the required certificate. Finally, Law 51 provides that organizations that are refused registration have the right to appeal the decision before a high court, but does not require the government to provide justification when it rejects a registration application. The government rarely provides this information, leaving CSOs without a basis to argue for an appeal if their applications are rejected.

Under Law 51, organizations must apply for and obtain government approval before they may receive foreign funding. A 2015 administrative directive further complicated this process by requiring CSOs to submit an extensive application form to the government providing details on the source and intended use of the foreign funds. The government approves very few of the funding requests it receives. According to the Commission on Human Rights Report for 2017, as of August 30, the Council of Ministers had only approved 124 of the 8,280 applications for foreign funding that it had received. Lengthy administrative delays in processing the application result in substantial

hardship to CSOs. In 2017, Arab Women Organization (AWO) submitted the required application form to the Council of Ministers for approval to receive a grant from a non-Jordanian source. The Council's response was delayed beyond the thirty days allowed by the law, making it difficult for AWO to plan its programming, and the funding was ultimately rejected, preventing AWO from accessing the funds and starting the new project. Organizations seeking to access foreign funds for activities related to Syrian refugees must satisfy an additional requirement: they must submit a separate application form and receive approval from the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC).

According to CSOs and media reports, a number of organizations faced harassment and other challenges related to the government's implementation practices in 2017, particularly with regards to foreign funding. The Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists (CDFJ), an organization advocating for the rights of journalists and media freedom, was one example. Since 1998, CDFJ has been registered as a civil, not-for-profit company, a legal form that does not require it to apply for approval to receive foreign funding. In September 2017, the Jordanian Companies Control Department, a trade regulatory body, publicly accused CDFJ of receiving foreign funds without government approval and failing to maintain proper records. CDFJ denied all the accusations against it, saying that it had complied with all registration and reporting requirements and that the investigation was part of a larger government crackdown on civil society in Jordan. CDFJ had recently issued a series of reports documenting the rise of government censorship in Jordan and criticizing authorities for failing to uphold press freedom.



In other instances of state harassment, the Registry Council pursued some CSOs with questions about funding, while the MoSD interfered in some CSOs' registration processes, for instance by requiring organizations to change their stated goals and objectives before approving their registrations. MoSD officials also required CSOs to obtain prior approval to hold events in private spaces such as hotels, which is not required by law.

There were no changes to the tax law affecting CSOs in 2017. CSOs registered as societies are exempt from paying income tax. However, only those that are specially designated by the Council of Ministers can benefit from tax-deductible donations. Further, CSOs are only exempt from paying sales tax and other duties if they have applied for and obtained "public interest" status. Public interest CSOs are those whose activities serve a clear group of beneficiaries, including groups working with orphans and individuals with disabilities. According to CSOs, however, some organizations struggle to obtain the status due to different interpretations of what constitutes the "public interest."

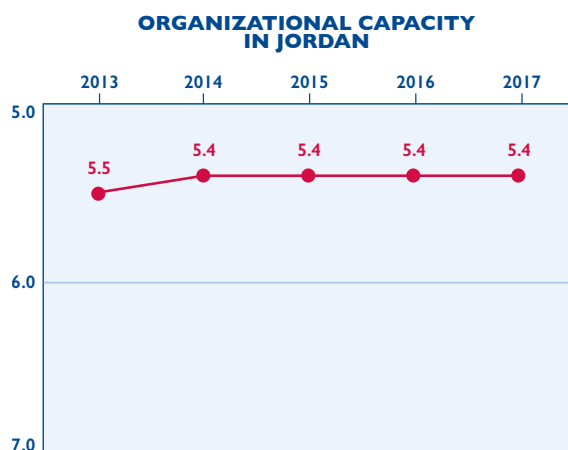
Neither Law 51 nor other laws restrict CSOs from earning income by providing goods and services. CSOs are allowed to compete for government contracts, and certain ministries contract with CSOs to provide specific services, such as providing care for orphans. In addition to requiring prior approval for foreign funding, Law 51 requires CSOs to apply for and obtain licenses before they may collect public donations for charity. CSOs can apply for up to two licenses a year to organize charitable fundraising events such as bazaars.

CSOs in Jordan face a shortage of lawyers who are trained in the CSO legal framework including Law 51. In 2017, organizations trained in CSO law provided some free or low-cost legal assistance to CSOs, but the Bar Association argued that these organizations were limiting employment opportunities for lawyers.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY: 5.4

The CSO sector's organizational capacity remained steady in 2017. Some CSOs exhibited stronger strategic plans and better-defined organizational structures, written policies, and procedures; however, many registered CSOs still have very nascent skills and lack technical and administrative capacities.

The organizational capacity of CSOs in the capital, Amman, continues to be far stronger than that of CSOs outside the capital and in remote areas. This is due to the fact that many donors operate in Amman and support national-level activities. There were efforts to address this imbalance and develop the capacity of organizations in the governorates in 2017. Hayat Center, for instance, worked with fifteen organizations in the governorates on developing their internal regulatory policies and monitoring mechanisms.



In addition, the National Center for Human Rights and the West Asia-North Africa (WANA) Institute introduced programs that focused on developing CSOs' organizational capacities through the implementation of good governance practices.

Most organizations have clearly identified constituencies. CSOs' interaction with their constituencies has been enhanced by organizations' increased use of social media and other communications technologies. Most CSOs have Facebook pages, for instance, which they use to engage with their constituents and publicize their activities.

In 2017, some foreign donors focused on helping organizations develop strategic plans. For instance, following training and institutional assessments as part of a USAID program, forty-two community-based CSOs developed five-

year strategic plans. Some donors also require as a condition of funding that CSOs adopt good governance principles such as delineation of duties and clear structures of authority. Donors may require evidence of this during pre-grant assessments or audits.

Funding constraints contribute to high rates of turnover among CSO staff, as organizations are sometimes forced to dismiss staff members after the completion of a project. Further, some CSOs recruit staff who are less qualified in order to respond to the demands of donors who want projects implemented and results achieved as soon as possible. Many organizations rely on volunteers. On occasion, donors seek to include experts in the implementation of projects, but CSOs' budgets are not always sufficient to support experts' salaries. Large CSOs and RINGOs often have more financial flexibility and are able to retain staff for longer terms; as a result they tend to attract and maintain higher-qualified individuals. Policies and practices among CSOs are weak with regard to the inclusion of women, minorities, and people with disabilities.

Funding constraints also limit CSOs' ability to access equipment. Nonetheless, CSOs' access to modern office equipment and new communication technologies generally expanded in 2017. This has enhanced communication among CSOs, benefiting them through the exchange of ideas and experiences with other organizations

FINANCIAL VIABILITY: 5.3

The financial viability of CSOs deteriorated slightly in 2017. Worsening economic indicators led to greater competition among organizations for funds, while requests for government approval of foreign grants faced longer delays and were more likely to be rejected.

The lack of financial diversification continues to be a key issue facing CSOs in Jordan. Most organizations rely on funding from one or two sources, at least one of which is usually a foreign donor. Only a small share of CSOs, predominantly large CSOs and RINGOs, are able to diversify their sources of income. The government offers very limited financial

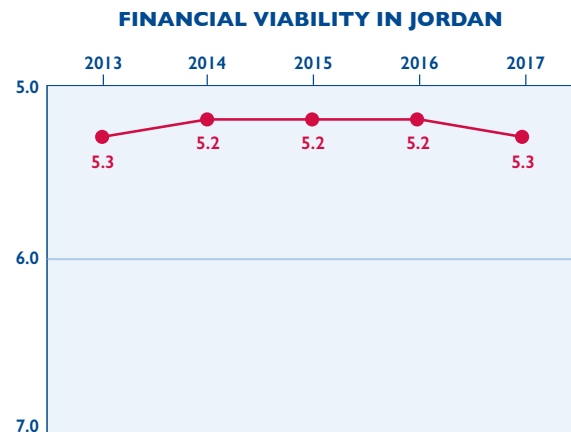
support to certain CSOs to cover their basic costs, though RINGOs generally receive more government funding than other CSOs. There are no official figures on the amount of government funding that went to CSOs in 2017. A group of national institutions, such as The King Abdullah Fund for Democratic Empowerment, provide financial support for CSO activities. Some public and private entities also provide in-kind support for CSOs, for instance by allowing CSOs to use their facilities free of charge. These include the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, the telecommunications company Zain, and the pharmaceutical company Pharmacy One.

Takiyat Um Ali, the King Hussein Cancer Foundation, and other organizations that focus on charity and humanitarian assistance are generally the most successful at local fundraising. Small CSOs have also successfully raised money through local charity and relief activities. During Ramadan and other religious holidays, for instance, several organizations including the Islamic Center increase their outreach in campaigns to encourage charitable giving to the less fortunate. As noted above, CSOs can apply for up to two licenses a year to organize fundraising events such as bazaars, though these do not attract substantial funding. The King Hussein Cancer Center organized a public fundraiser in 2017, though it did not publicly announce the amounts raised. CSOs charge nominal fees for services such as training sessions, or for renting their facilities; some also collect membership fees to increase their revenue.

The limited number of funding sources for local organizations is due in part to the entry of foreign and international organizations into Jordan. As more non-Jordanian organizations started working in the country, particularly in connection with the Syria crisis, they have absorbed funds that previously went to local organizations. These international organizations must apply and receive formal approval to register to work in Jordan, but once registered they can use any funding they have to support their work, in contrast to local organizations, which must receive government approval to accept foreign funding. According to several CSOs, in recent years more and more foreign and international organizations have tended to work individually and compete against national CSOs, including for funding, rather than working in partnership with them.

Foreign donors remain an important source of funding for a large portion of the sector. In 2017, funds from foreign donors continued to target activities related to the Syria crisis, though local CSOs increasingly compete with INGOs for such funds. Foreign funding is concentrated in the capital Amman and areas where there are Syrian refugee camps. CSOs in other regions—especially in the south of Jordan in areas such as Karak, Ma'an, Tafilah and Aqaba—suffer from a lack of funding opportunities. No official figures are available regarding the total amount of foreign donor support to CSOs. However, the government has intensified regulations for charitable donations from non-Jordanians—which was already subject to prior government approval—out of fear that funds might leak to terrorist organizations. In 2017, the government distributed a booklet containing new instructions on applying for approval of foreign funding. The booklet provides detailed instructions to CSOs on how to complete the extensive foreign funding application form, introduced in 2015, but it does not address the main obstacle that CSOs must overcome, as officials who review the form continue to issue arbitrary decisions and deny applications without providing justification. CSOs face new limitations on funding from the UN, as well: In 2017, UN organizations began to require that all CSOs seeking funding from the UN confirm that their work aligns with the themes and objectives laid out in the Jordan Response Platform for the Syria Crisis—the coordination mechanism for efforts by the Government of Jordan, UN agencies, and other donors to respond to the impact of the Syrian crisis on Jordan.

The delay in approvals for foreign funding can impede CSOs' ability to operate and carry out activities. For example, in 2017, AWO was forced to stop four projects because the government did not approve funding. CSOs report that it can take seven months or more to receive approval. The process of opening bank accounts or getting a checkbook has also become more complicated for CSOs. For example, under the new money laundering law, some banks are asking for proof of foreign funding approval before a CSO can open a new account for donor's funds. CSO representatives



from the south and central parts of Jordan reported that certain banks have asked CSOs to close their accounts, under the pretext of international measures to combat terrorism. These measures have impacted funding streams that keep projects going smoothly.

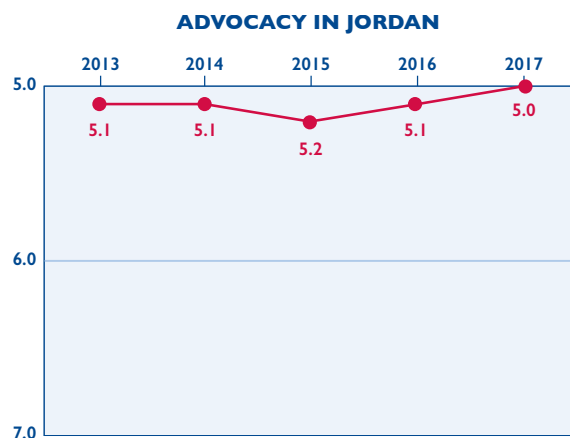
The private sector provides a limited amount of support to CSOs through corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs, but CSOs saw a decline in this support in 2017. Rather than giving to CSOs, several major companies created or expanded their own initiatives and programs, particularly in the area of social entrepreneurship. The telecommunications company Zain, for instance, operated the Zain Platform for Creativity (ZINC), which aims to foster startups and other entrepreneurial endeavors in Jordan and elsewhere in the region. UMNIAH and Orange, two other major telecommunications companies in Jordan, took similar steps. These initiatives partially replaced the companies' CSR grants to CSOs.

Some ministries, like MoSD, contract with CSOs to provide services to orphans and disabled people. In addition to collecting membership fees, some CSOs charge fees for health and social services, training, and legal consultancy, in order to help offset operational costs.

Law 51 requires that CSOs submit annual administrative and financial reports to their supervising ministries, and CSOs generally adhere to this requirement. Societies are increasingly expected to demonstrate financial transparency, and are subject to inspections by the Audit Bureau if their annual budgets exceed 3,000 Jordanian Dinars (approximately \$4,200). This increased demand for financial transparency led to some improvements in financial management systems in 2017, including stronger accounting systems. At the same time, a growing number of accountants are seeking training in nonprofit accounting.

ADVOCACY: 5.0

CSOs engaged in advocacy around a range of issues in 2017, and several notable advocacy campaigns achieved their goals during the year. In addition, CSOs' communication and cooperation with government officials increased. However, legal barriers remain to certain advocacy activities, and there are still a limited number



of CSOs with strong advocacy skills. With the implementation of the decentralization law across Jordan, it has become increasingly crucial for CSOs to build this skillset so that they can voice the needs of individuals to different councils and decision makers.

The law prohibits CSOs from engaging in political activities, though neither Law 51 nor the Law on Political Parties defines the term "political." As a result, there are few organized lobbying efforts or awareness of lobbying mechanisms among CSOs. Despite this, CSOs persisted in their advocacy efforts in 2017 and several CSO advocacy campaigns had notable successes in 2017. Following an extensive campaign by women's and human rights CSOs and advocates, the Jordanian parliament revoked Article 308 of the Penal Code,

which allowed rapists to avoid punishment if they married their victims. Alliance 308, a coalition of sixty-three CSOs primarily focused on women's or human rights, led the campaign to repeal the article rather than amend it. Alliance 308 used social media to raise awareness and support around the campaign, and circulated an e-petition that garnered 5,000 signatures from the public in a single day. A similar coalition of individual women's activists advocated for the repeal of Articles 98 of the Penal Code regarding "honor crimes"; in 2017, parliament amended the article to eliminate mitigating circumstances for men who commit violent crimes against women.

Parliament also adopted a royal committee's recommendations regarding reforms to the criminal procedure law that CSOs including the Arab Women's Legal Network had long advocated for. The reforms included the creation of a legal aid fund to provide lawyers for indigent suspects, and limiting the use of pretrial detention to

“exceptional” circumstances and for a more limited period of time. While CSOs had not consulted with the royal committee that issued the recommendations, the changes aligned with their advocacy agenda.

In addition, parliament endorsed a new law on the rights of people with disabilities (PWD) that was supported by disabled peoples’ organizations such as the I am a Human Society for Rights of People with Disability. The law sets forth clear anti-discrimination provisions and a broadened definition of disability, and is expected to dramatically change the way Jordan contends with issues facing PWD, who account for around 13 percent of the population.

In 2017, UNICEF and the National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA), a RINGO overseen by Queen Rania Al-Abdullah, launched a national campaign to eliminate all forms of violence against children in Jordan, called *Allem La Tallem*. In August, they convened a meeting of leaders and representatives of local media outlets along with civil society to discuss mainstream media’s role in supporting the campaign. *Allem La Tallem* received over 15 million views and 70,000 active participants in its social media campaign.

Communication between CSOs and government agencies at the federal and local levels improved, as well. The Intergovernmental Coordinating Group of the Prime Ministry engaged in unusually extensive communication with civil society in 2017, which CSOs viewed as a remarkable and positive development in CSO-government relations. The Ministry for Political and Parliamentary Affairs (MoPPA) worked in 2017 with local CSOs including the Arab World Center for Democratic Development to educate the public about the new decentralization law and governorate-level elections through workshops and conferences. MoPPA also, in partnership with the EU, launched a project to support civil society dialogue on strengthening democracy, civic engagement, and inclusiveness in Jordan, particularly with regard to the political participation of women and youth. In addition, MoPIC involved a group of representatives of RINGOs including the Jordan River Foundation, Noor Al Hussein Foundation, and the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development (JOHUD) in the development of a national strategy to combat poverty. Jordan’s Government Coordinator for Human Rights, established in 2014, continued to convene meetings and consultations between CSOs that are working on human rights issues and government officials in 2017.

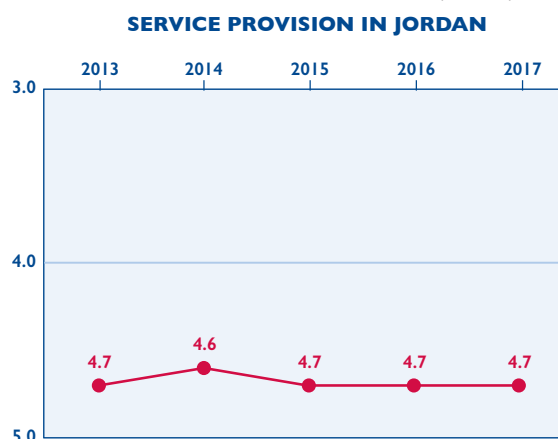
There were no significant efforts in 2017 to advocate for reforms related to the CSO legal framework, including around amendments to Law 51.

SERVICE PROVISION: 4.7

CSO service provision remained relatively stable in 2017. The CSO sector offers a diverse range of services. The majority of CSOs provide some kind of service, whether related to charity, education, health, culture, children, women, orphans, PWD, or Syrian refugees. CSO assistance to refugees in 2017 by groups such as the Institute for Family Health and JOHUD included medical care, shelter, psychological support, reproductive health services, food, clothing, and education. CSOs also provided some less-traditional services in 2017, such as grants to install solar systems for homes in small villages and remote areas; these were funded in part by the Jordan Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency Fund (JREEEF), which was established to meet the Kingdom’s needs for renewable energy.

In 2017, MoPIC introduced new requirements for donor funding that goes to CSO service providers. Per these requirements, in most cases half of all funding that goes towards Syrian refugees must also support Jordanian beneficiaries. This has helped local CSOs better serve their communities and at the same time increased community confidence in CSOs.

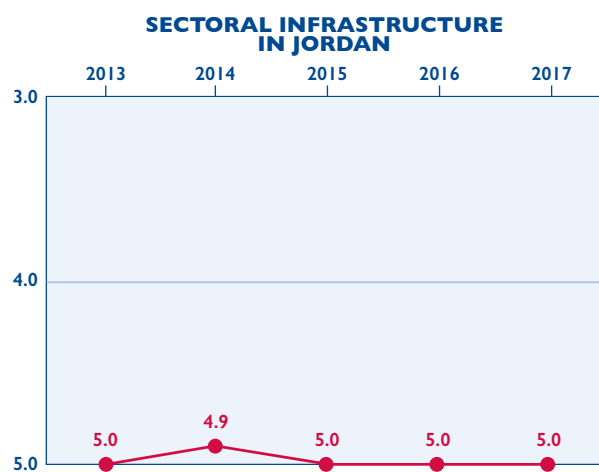
The role of CSOs in the provision of services related to health and justice continues to expand, as the



government has reduced its delivery of such services due to budget constraints. CSOs' legal aid includes services such as free or reduced-cost legal assistance to people who cannot afford to pay for a lawyer; there are also CSO programs that pay for some court fees. In 2017, government agencies continued to purchase some services from CSOs, especially to provide care for orphans and PWD. Other services provided under government tenders continued to include training, legal counseling, and administrative and fundraising consultancy.

SECTORAL INFRASTRUCTURE: 5.0

The infrastructure supporting CSOs continued to be weak in 2017. CSOs receive some support from intermediary support organizations (ISOs), which provide a range of technical, financial, training, evaluation, and consultancy services to CSOs throughout the country. Most ISOs are RINGOs, including the Noor Al Hussein Foundation, King Hussein Foundation, King Abdullah Fund for Development, and JOHUD, but also include non-RINGO CSOs. ISO services are generally available in all governorates.



There are a few local grant-making organizations in Jordan, including Abdul Hamid Shoman. In most cases the funding for local grant-makers originates with the government or international donors. RINGOs frequently provide sub-grants to community-based organizations.

Although most CSOs are aware of the importance of intersectoral partnerships, few currently exist. This did not change in 2017, though a new multisector coalition was formed during the year: the Beyond the Municipal and Decentralization Elections 2017 Coalition, which comprises civil society, parliamentarians, and city council representatives, seeks to increase women's political participation in Jordan. The civil society members of the coalition include AWO and the National Center for Human Rights

(NCHR). Among other activities, the coalition held an event to honor the 120 women who won seats in local councils and Parliament.

There is no overall umbrella organization or network that provides or facilitates information exchange or dialogue for the whole CSO sector. There are some topic-specific networks, such as the Jordanian Women's Union, but these are not sufficiently active to allow for frequent information exchange.

Jordan does not have permanent institutions that offer training on a regular basis to CSOs and their members and staff. International donors such as USAID and Oxfam fund training on various topics such as fundraising, strategic planning, and monitoring and evaluation. These trainings, which are delivered by national trainers, are available to all CSOs. In 2017, the Civil Society Organizations Empowerment Project in the Southern Badia and Ma'an Governorate, funded by the US State Department, offered significant capacity-building training, which focused on budgeting, networking, and monitoring and evaluation, to twelve organizations.

PUBLIC IMAGE: 4.6

The public image of CSOs in Jordan remained unchanged overall. The media's relationship with CSOs is mixed: public media generally provide weak coverage of civil society issues, if any, focusing instead on the opinion of the government, whereas private coverage is more thorough and more positive. In 2017, private media provided significant coverage of CSO workshops and conferences related to the decentralization law and election of governorate councils, for instance. RINGOs usually garner more coverage than other CSOs by both public and private media. There is a need for more specialized media coverage by journalists who understand and interact with civil society.

The public is suspicious of CSOs receiving foreign funding. The public also lacks awareness of the role of CSOs and the services they provide; this is especially true for Amman-based CSOs. Rural communities are more familiar with CSOs and their work.

The government supports the expansion of civil society to some extent, for instance by approving the registration of some new CSOs, but at the same time seeks to keep them aligned with government policies. Some government agencies draw on CSOs to facilitate their relations with local communities and assist in the implementation of projects focused on issues such as poverty alleviation.

Private sector entities largely refrain from explicitly supporting CSOs or publicly addressing issues such as freedom of expression, human rights, or political participation. However, they are more likely to support issues related to the environment, education, youth, and women's rights, as well as activities under royal patronage. For instance, Bank al Etihad sponsored three women artisans to join a 2017 initiative by the Jordan River Foundation to empower women through handicraft production.

Rather than reach the public through radio and television advertisements, which are cost prohibitive, CSOs often promote their work and advertise events through social media, particularly Twitter and Facebook. This is an especially effective mode of reaching constituents, as according to the Pew Research Center an estimated 75 percent of adult Jordanians use social media sites.

Many CSOs publish annual programmatic and financial reports, but so far there have been no efforts to draft a code of ethics for CSOs to self-govern their work.

