



2019 CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION SUSTAINABILITY INDEX

Middle East and North Africa Region: Jordan Country Report
August 2020

Cover Photo: As part of the USAID-supported Iraq Governance and Performance Accountability (IGPA) project, known locally as Takamul or Integration, the Iraqi Development Association organized a solid waste management awareness campaign in the Ali bin Yakteen area and souq al-Basrah al-Qadeema (Basrah Old Market), the largest market in Basrah, which is visited by thousands each day. The media, local government, and volunteers helped the campaign give away calendars with educational messages on July 1, 2019.

Photo Credit: USAID IGPA/Takamul project

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For Jordan

August 2020

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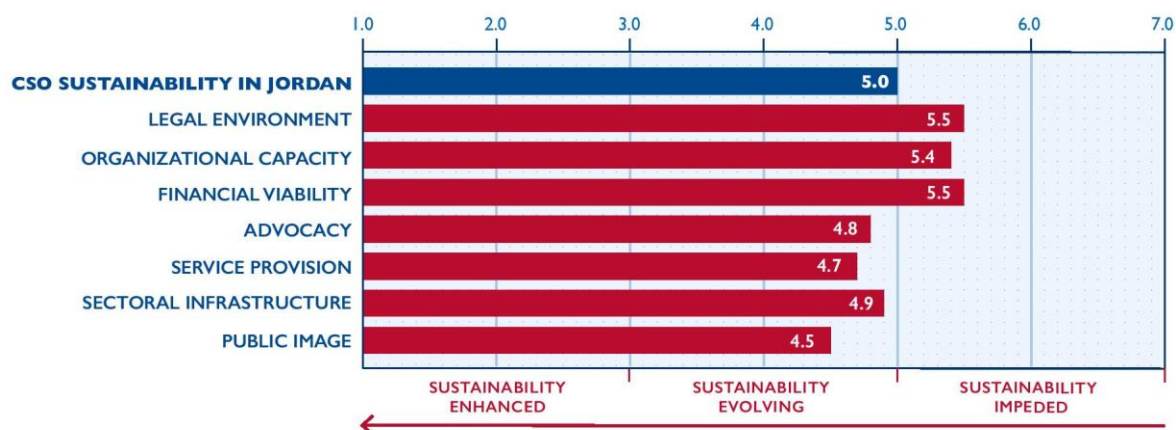
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OVERALL CSO SUSTAINABILITY: 5.0



Jordan continued to face significant economic pressures and political challenges in 2019. Economic growth remained slow, with the World Bank reporting a growth rate of around 2 percent, while unemployment hit a record high of 19.2 percent. Regional instability continued to hurt trade and investment as well as internal stability and security. The “Deal of the Century,” a plan to address the conflict between Israel and Palestine that was introduced by US President Donald Trump in 2019,¹ strained Jordan’s relationship with Israel and several other regional and international powers. Concern over the possible annexation of the Jordan Valley by Israel also heightened tensions between the two countries.

In February, the governments of Jordan and the United Kingdom (UK) co-hosted an international economic conference in London to support investment, growth, and jobs in Jordan. The London Conference convened senior government officials, development and financial organizations, and high-level investors and businesspeople from over sixty countries. One outcome of the conference, the Five-Year Reform Matrix, comprises a set of prioritized and sequenced deep structural reforms that would create an environment for the private sector to lead the growth and job creation process. Other key focus areas of the conference included securing international support to aid Jordan’s repayment of its foreign debt and attracting private investment.

Jordan continues to host a large population of refugees. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the number of registered refugees in Jordan in 2019 reached 744,795, with Syria being the predominant country of origin. It is estimated that thousands more refugees reside in Jordan but are not registered. Eighty-three percent of registered refugees in Jordan live in urban areas. The refugee population continues to place significant pressure on government services including education, health, and municipal-governed services, as well as infrastructure and natural resources. A sub-sector of CSOs continues to focus on serving refugee populations because of the availability of funding for this work. Meanwhile, many Jordanians feel deprived of opportunities to achieve sustainable development.

Beginning in February 2019, hundreds of young people marched in Amman and other cities across the country to protest the government’s economic policies and demand greater job opportunities. In June, Jordan’s government, led by Prime Minister Omar al-Razzaz, secured a \$1.2 billion loan from the World Bank for debt repayment, despite the fact that the economic and political reforms required by the Bank sparked widespread public protests in 2018. The government simultaneously enacted a series of decisions to help residents and ease the impact of the

¹ Economic aspects of the Deal of the Century were announced at a conference held in Bahrain in June. The plan is based on an “economy first” approach to revive the moribund Israeli-Palestinian peace process and includes 179 infrastructure and business projects in target countries, as well as a global investment fund to lift the Palestinian and neighboring Arab state economies. Protests against the plan were organized in Jordan even before this conference took place.

austerity measures required alongside the loan, such as pledging not to cut water and electricity to households that fell behind on utility payments.

Overall CSO sustainability improved slightly in 2019, driven by positive developments in advocacy and sectoral infrastructure. Advocacy advanced as CSOs had greater access to government officials and achieved numerous advocacy successes. The infrastructure supporting CSOs improved in 2019 with the creation of a new CSO coalition, capacity-building programs, and public-private partnerships. Financial viability, on the other hand, deteriorated with increasing competition for decreasing funds.

At the end of 2019, there were 6,800 societies registered with the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD). Some organizations register as civil, non-profit companies with the Company Control Department of the Ministry of Industry Trade and Supplies (MOITS) to avoid the obstacles presented by Law 51. According to data from 2015, there were around 600 civil, non-profit companies registered at MOITS. There are also approximately 10 Royal Non-Governmental Organizations (RNGOs) that are established by special laws based on royal decrees and parliamentary endorsement, rather than registering with a particular ministry. RNGOs enjoy special access to government funding not available to other CSOs, and as a result tend to have strong organizational capacities.

LEGAL ENVIRONMENT: 5.5



The legal environment for CSOs remained challenging in 2019. The Law on Societies (Law 51 of 2008) is the primary law governing the registration and operation of local and foreign organizations in Jordan. Under Law 51, all societies must register with the Registry Council within MoSD in order to operate lawfully. Other CSOs register under Labor Law 8 of 1996, which along with union-specific laws regulates the work of trade unions and employers' associations, or as civil companies under the Companies Law 22 of 1997 and the Regulation for Non-Profit Companies 73 of 2010. Informal, unregistered organizations are prohibited.

The registration process for societies under Law 51 continued to be lengthy in 2019. Coalitions and alliances have particular difficulty registering due to vague

provisions in this law. For instance, Article 24 of Law 51 explicitly states that “No society may be a member of another society,” while also stating that “Two or more societies may form a coalition to implement a shared program which aims to realize such societies’ goals and purposes.” Himmam, one of the largest coalitions of CSOs in the country, was initially denied registration in 2019. Himmam was able to correct the problems with its application, which was then sent to the Council of Ministers for final approval in accordance with the law; the application continued to await final approval at the time of writing.

Law 51 imposes many requirements on CSOs that restrict their ability to operate. CSOs are required, for example, to inform MoSD of all general assembly meetings and provide copies of all decisions issued by the general assembly to the relevant ministry.

MoSD has the right to legally intervene in CSO activities. In 2019, MoSD formed fifty-two “verification committees” to confirm the legal existence of all registered societies and monitor their work. The committees sent warnings to 601 societies to resume their activities, resolve financial violations, or initiate administrative elections. The verification committees also appointed temporary supervision committees to oversee the work of seventy-one societies and ensure that they resolve their issues. Ultimately, the verification committees dissolved 210 societies either upon their request or due to administrative and financial violations according to legal provisions.

CSOs and activists continued to face some state harassment in 2019. More individuals were detained for exercising their right to free expression in 2019 than in 2018. For example, dozens of activists and journalists who were covering the sit-in of detainees’ families in front of the National Center of Human Rights (NCHR) were arrested.

In addition, an activist from Dhiban who started a hunger strike in May was convicted and sentenced to two years in prison for insulting the king. The court later reduced the sentence to one year. A legal aid organization reported that lawyers were harassed for their work on cases of abuse by security forces or illegal arrests and threatened with disbarment by the Jordanian Bar Association.

The Public Gatherings Law does not require organizers to obtain government permission to hold public meetings or demonstrations. According to Human Rights Watch, however, in 2019, “organizations and venues continued to seek permission from the Interior Ministry or General Intelligence Department to host public meetings and events. In some cases in 2019, security authorities cancelled public events without explanation.” Journalists for Human Rights (JHR) documented eighteen instances in 2019 in which the Ministry of Interior (Mol) and governors rejected proposed activities.

There were also instances in which the freedom of expression was restricted in 2019. In March, authorities blocked access to a news website created by Jordanian expatriates that covers political affairs and documents arrests of activists. Authorities also continued to block the website of an online lifestyle magazine focused on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) audiences on the grounds that it was an unlicensed publication. In addition, the Jordan Open Source Association reported evidence of Facebook’s live-streaming function being blocked during large protests.

According to the Regulations regarding the Collection of Charitable Donations, No. 1, 1957 as amended, societies may only carry out public collections of donations twice a year, and only after obtaining approval from MoSD. CSOs registered under either Law 51 or the Companies Law also must obtain approval from the Council of Ministers to receive funding from outside of Jordan or from a non-Jordanian. While the law requires the Council to provide a response within thirty days, officials rarely abide by the deadline and organizations often face long delays before receiving decisions on their funding requests.

In June, the government announced a decision to require branches of foreign organizations to obtain approval from the government prior to receiving funds from their headquarters. The decision was reversed in July.

In December, the government approved new procedures for the foreign funding approval process for local CSOs that are more detailed and allow requests to be tracked. According to the new procedures, CSO funding requests will be reviewed by a joint committee consisting of representatives from MoSD and MOITS, and other ministries, such as the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC) and Mol. The process uses a new electronic platform that the government pledged would be fully operational within two months. Twenty-five applications had been referred to the joint committee by the end of 2019. The joint committee agreed to meet weekly prior to cabinet sessions, so that the committee’s recommendations on foreign funding requests can be submitted to the cabinet without delay. The committee also pledged to alert project organizers about similar projects to avoid duplication of efforts. If the committee thinks an application should be rejected, it should still refer the application with its recommendation to the cabinet for its final decision. Decisions must be made within thirty working days of filing a request. The procedures newly provide that CSOs can appeal the decision within two working days.

The law allows CSOs to earn income through the provision of goods and services and to compete for government contracts.

CSO taxation did not change in 2019. Tax exemptions are limited and only granted to orphanages, associations for people with disabilities, and associations that have obtained status as “public interest” organizations. However, CSOs sometimes have problems obtaining these exemptions. In 2019, for example, some CSOs faced difficulties getting tariff exemptions on medical equipment for people with disabilities in 2019. Other CSOs are not categorically exempt from paying taxes and are subject to sales tax and tax on certain forms of income-generating activities.

Given the legal challenges that CSOs face, it was increasingly important for CSOs to have access to legal expertise and aid in 2019. Few lawyers, however, are trained in CSO legal issues.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY: 5.4

CSOs' organizational capacity remained unchanged in 2019. In general, large CSOs and RNGOs have significant organizational capacities and internal structures, including bylaws and management boards. Most large organizations are based in Amman and some have branches in other governorates. Medium and small organizations, on the other hand, have much more limited capacities.

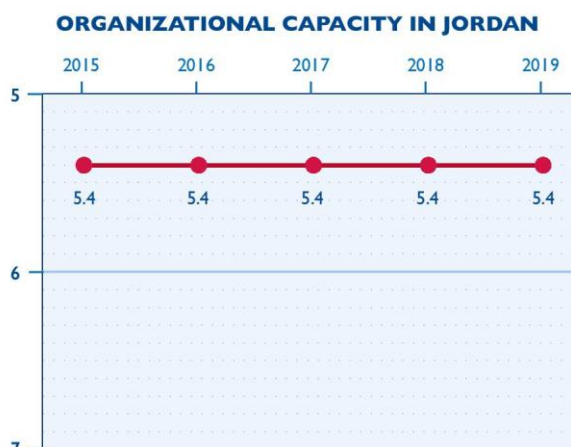
Many organizations have clearly identified constituencies. Certain types of organizations, including labor unions and community-based organizations (CBOs), are better able to develop grassroots constituencies. The Islamic Charity Center Society, for instance, has a horizontal structure that has allowed it to identify and meet grassroots needs and to develop close relationships with its constituencies. This has also enabled it to garner local financial support. Other organizations, however, lack the tools to communicate effectively with local communities or ensure that their activities are responsive to community needs. However, CSOs' interaction with their constituencies has been enhanced by their 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.

Organizations have varying levels of capacity to develop and adhere to strategic plans and missions. Large organizations are more likely than small ones to have long-term strategies and clear missions. Small organizations with strategic plans often lack the resources to implement them.

CSOs form internal governance structures, including governing bodies and general assemblies, according to their organizational statutes as well as requirements set out in Law 51 and the Regulation for Non-Profit Companies. In practice, however, the roles and responsibilities of organizations' managerial bodies are not always clear. Family associations, in particular, struggle with conflicts of interest as they often fail to delineate roles and responsibilities clearly.

Employment in CSOs is not always sustainable, as jobs often depend on short-term project funding. Frequent turnover affects the productivity of employees and organizations. Some organizations do not provide employees with basic rights, such as social security or health insurance, despite the fact that these are required by law, and some do not offer them job titles or job descriptions. CSOs registered under Law 51 must appoint a legal advisor, which constitutes an undue financial burden on many organizations. The ability of organizations to recruit volunteers remains weak. According to the Charities Aid Foundation's 2019 World Giving Index, the average percentage of Jordanian respondents who reported volunteering in CSOs in the last ten years is just 7 percent, placing Jordan at 116th out of 125 countries.

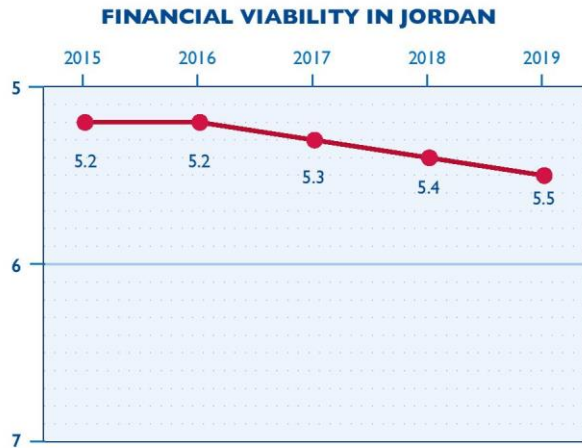
Due to the high cost of internet access and maintenance of equipment, funding challenges made it more difficult for organizations to leverage the use of technology in 2019. Most organizations promote their activities on social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, and a few have their own websites.



FINANCIAL VIABILITY: 5.5

CSOs' financial viability deteriorated in 2019, as limited foreign funding and the economic challenges facing the private sector led to greater competition among CSOs for funding.

The lack of financial diversification continues to be a key issue facing CSOs. 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 RNGOs—are able to diversify their sources of income.



Foreign funding for CSOs was limited in 2019. The entry of foreign and international organizations in Jordan, particularly in response to the Syrian crisis, has increased competition as they also compete for funding that previously went exclusively to local organizations. In 2019, a significant level of foreign funding continued to target activities related to the Syrian crisis, although the overall amount of this funding decreased. While organizations receiving foreign funding have traditionally been concentrated in the capital Amman and areas hosting camps for Syrian refugees, many donors are now investing in other areas of the country. CSOs continued to struggle to get approval for foreign funding in 2019. As of September 24, the government had only approved 75 of the 149 applications for foreign funding it had received. CSO and government experts anticipate that

the government's new procedure for approving foreign funding, adopted in December, will facilitate CSO's access to funding sources and decrease delays in project activities.

Private sector funding for CSOs decreased in 2019 due to companies' establishment of platforms, such as the Zain Platform for Creativity (ZINC) and similar efforts by UMNIAH and Orange, which aim to foster startups and other entrepreneurial endeavors in Jordan. These initiatives partially replaced the companies' social responsibility grants to CSOs. However, some companies do still award funds to CSOs. For example, Arab Potash Co. has established a specialized association to manage its corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs, which awards grants to CSOs for projects in the fields of health, water, and the environment, with a geographic focus on the company's working zone in the south. Companies do not coordinate their CSR efforts, however, and many focus on the same activities, such as the distribution of charity food packages during the month of Ramadan.

Smaller organizations collect donations to diversify their funding sources. During Ramadan and other religious holidays, some provide services for the poor and other relief activities in order to raise funds. Larger organizations, including RNGOs such as Takiyat Um Ali and the King Hussein Cancer Foundation, also engage in local fundraising efforts to support their charity and humanitarian assistance activities. By law, CSOs may apply for up to two licenses a year to organize fundraising events, such as bazaars, though these do not attract substantial funding.

Some CSOs collect membership fees, while others CSOs charge fees for health and social services, training, and legal consultancy to help offset their operational costs.

Only large and medium organizations have sound financial management systems. Small organizations, which make up a majority of Jordanian CSOs, lack such systems because they are expensive and require them to train their employees to use them effectively.

ADVOCACY: 4.8

CSOs' advocacy improved in 2019, as organizations had greater access to government officials and achieved numerous advocacy successes.

Cooperation between CSOs and the government on human rights issues improved during the year. The office of the Prime Minister reinstated the position of Government Coordinator for Human Rights, which had remained empty under the previous government. The Coordinator regularly holds meetings with CSOs and conveys relevant observations to the Council of Ministers. In addition, the Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the reports of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) before the United Nations. In 2019, the government endorsed 149 UPR recommendations after they were reviewed by the permanent human rights committee at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates. These recommendations pertained to the status of women, child rights, the status of people with disabilities, torture, judicial prosecution, administrative detention, and freedom of speech, the press, and opinion. Further, a circular issued by the prime minister in April requested relevant ministries and institutions to implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Report on Human Rights. In 2019, the prime minister

also reappointed members of the National Center for Human Rights (NCHR), many of whom are CSO representatives.

Several advocacy campaigns were successful in 2019. For instance, public school teachers protested to demand higher wages. Security services tried to interrupt the protests by stopping buses carrying the teachers to and from the protest locations and used tear gas to disperse protesters. Following these security interventions, the Teachers' Union called for a strike in September, which lasted for one month, making it the country's longest public sector strike. The Union ultimately negotiated an agreement with the government to increase public teachers' salaries by 35 to 60 percent starting in 2020.

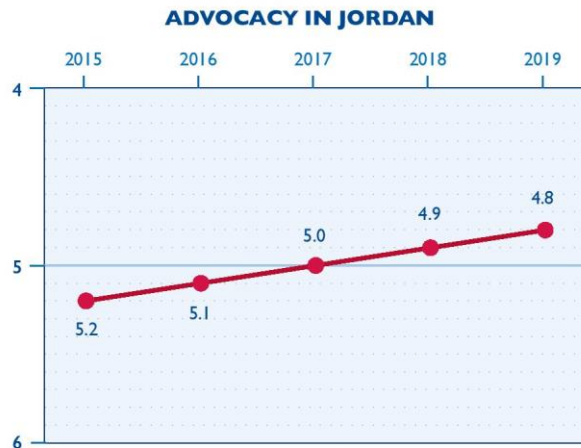
Mass protests were organized in February 2019 with unemployed young people marching to Amman from cities around the country to demand employment in the public sector or in large factories. The protests ended following a meeting between the protesters and the Royal Hashemite Court Chief, who pledged to address the protesters' demands and work to provide them with employment opportunities. In response, the Ministry of Labor announced that 3,300 jobs in tourism, industry, construction, health, and agriculture will be made available.

In August, CSOs, rights advocates, party officials, and families of detainees protested in front of the House of Representatives against the growing numbers of individuals detained for exercising their right to free expression. Activists, trade unionists, lawmakers and others also protested the implementation of an agreement between Jordan's national power company and an Israeli-American gas consortium aimed at importing gas from Israel. These groups launched the National Campaign Against Gas Agreement with the Zionist Entity. The campaign held various activities in the governorates and collected hundreds of signatures demanding that Prime Minister Al-Razzaz cancel the agreement. Despite the protests, imports began in January 2020. Soon thereafter, Jordan's parliament unanimously adopted a draft law to ban imports of Israeli gas.

CSOs also engaged in advocacy related to people with disabilities. In March, CSOs organized public discussions on inclusive workspaces, and developed a manual for public and private sector employers to encourage employment of persons with disabilities. The Accessible Jordan campaign successfully advocated for the provision of accessible buses for people with disabilities.

Other campaigns had mixed results. Widespread protests in 2018 successfully led the government to withdraw amendments to Jordan's cybercrime law that would have unduly restricted freedom of expression online. In 2019, however, the government introduced and enacted new amendments. While the government claims that the amendments are aimed at combating hate speech, they introduce new restrictions on online freedom of expression. For example, the proposed amendments define the offense of hate speech in an overly broad manner and impose harsh penalties ranging from fines to prison terms for those who publish or republish what is considered hate speech online. The government did not engage with CSOs or other stakeholders who opposed the amendments.

Other CSO campaigns were less successful. Some struggled with a lack of coordination and networking among CSOs, a lack of cooperation by the government, and the lack of community mobilization. Others failed to undertake sufficient research prior to designing and launching campaigns, exhibited poor planning, or failed to sustain follow-up efforts. For instance, in November women's groups organized a protest called Taliaat (Enough) near the Prime Ministry to call for better legal and social protections for women victims of domestic violence. The protest was organized in response to an incident in Jerash in which a husband reportedly gouged the eyes of his wife following a domestic dispute. However, no follow-up activities were organized after the protest. While the Accessible Jordan campaign successfully advocated for the provision of accessible buses for people with disabilities, this had little impact due to the lack of sidewalks necessary for people with disabilities to reach these buses. These examples highlight the fact that some CSOs can organize and advocate, but they still need to learn skills in long-term planning, research, and prioritization to achieve their desired outcomes.

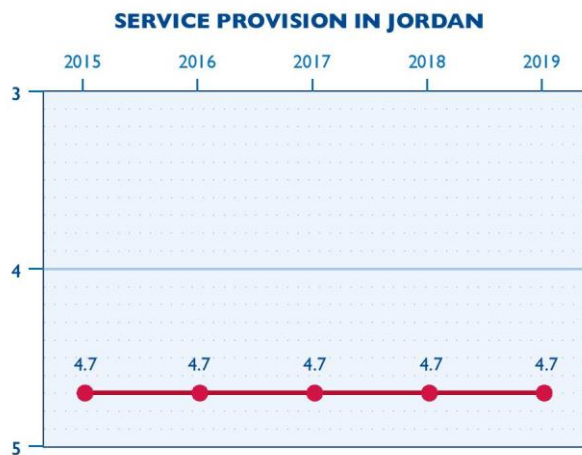


Women’s CSOs have long lobbied members of parliament to adopt amendments to the Personal Status Law to end child marriage, specify the minimum age for marriage without exceptions, and ensure full equality between women and men in marriage, divorce, and inheritance. However, in 2019, parliament maintained the marriage age in exceptional cases at sixteen and rejected provisions that would give children whose mothers died the right to inherit from their maternal grandparents, while giving children whose fathers died the right to inherit from their paternal grandparents. Other CSOs intensified their lobbying in 2019 to introduce laws protecting widows and to establish official programs to alleviate illiteracy and poverty among widows, which are widespread problems. In addition, CSOs previously lobbied in favor of the use of DNA testing to prove paternity. As a result, in 2019, the family lineage of nearly 100 children without family ties was verified and they were given to their families.

In May 2019, parliament adopted amendments to the Labor Law that impact wages, overtime, paternity leave, annual leave, childcare, retirement, and the resolution of wage disputes. Fifty CSOs and unions launched a campaign to further amend the Labor Law, arguing that some of these changes are unconstitutional and do not provide workers with adequate rights to organize and engage in collective negotiations.

During the year, the government increasingly communicated with CSOs to resolve obstacles that they face in their work, which resulted in the introduction of important new measures, including the new regulations for foreign funding, and the appointment of a new director of the Companies Control department, a secretary general for associations’ registry, members of the NCHR, and the Government Coordinator for Human Rights.

SERVICE PROVISION: 4.7



CSOs’ provision of goods and services improved in 2019.

During the year, CSOs provided a range of services, including both short-term relief services as well as long-term services such as economic empowerment, health, and education. CSOs continued to provide services to address the needs of Syrian refugees, such as job training, education, health-care, and legal advisory services. CSOs increasingly provided non-traditional services, as well. For example, CSOs installed solar panels with subsidies from the government-supported Installation of Solar Panels and Solar Heaters program.

Several CSOs provide legal services to help resolve issues related to crime, domestic violence, and exploitation in the workplace; they also raise awareness of these issues and promote legal empowerment. In

2019, the Jordanian Bar Association referred forty-one lawyers to the disciplinary board for contracting with legal assistance centers. This move sparked massive controversy, and these centers advocated for the development of a legal aid system that guarantees everyone’s right to an effective remedy.

CSOs’ services remain largely dependent on donors’ agendas and requirements, and do not always reflect the needs of local communities. For instance, while various organizations provide job training, the trainings do not always align with actual employment opportunities in the labor market. As a result, they do little to address Jordan’s high unemployment rate.

CSOs provide their services to local communities without discrimination. However, most CSOs are not effective at marketing their services to other groups such as other CSOs and academia.

CSOs still rarely conduct their own needs assessments when designing services. Most CSO services are designed in response to donors’ agendas and priorities. In addition, CSOs still rarely conduct impact assessments of their projects.

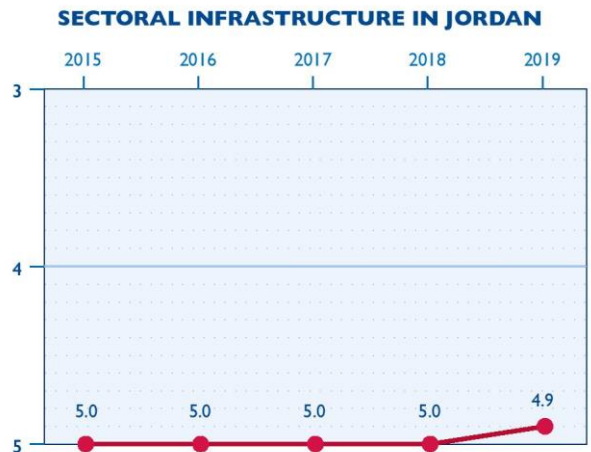
As in past years, the government occasionally contracted with CSOs for goods and services in 2019. For instance, MoSD continued to contract with the Sakeena Charity for Social Support to help orphans enroll in academic and vocational educational institutions. MoSD also provides funds to the Princess Taghrid Institute for Development

and Training to aid orphans transitioning to independent living. The government continued to contract with Al Aman Fund for the Future of Orphans to provide young male and female orphans with the opportunity to complete their higher education in universities and colleges or receive vocational education.

SECTORAL INFRASTRUCTURE: 4.9

The infrastructure supporting CSOs improved in 2019 with the creation of a new CSO coalition, capacity-building programs, and public-private partnerships.

Intermediary support organizations (ISOs) provide a range of technical, financial, training, evaluation, and consultancy services to CSOs throughout the country. Many of these ISOs, including Noor Al Hussein Foundation, King Hussein Foundation, King Abdullah Fund for Development, and Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development (JOHUD), are RNGOs. Other organizations such as Abdul Hamid Shoman Foundation also serve as ISOs. These organizations provide small grants, financed by local and foreign funds or government grants from MoPIC to other CSOs. In 2019, the Union of Charitable Societies began offering specialized training courses for CSOs on topics like financial management, strategic planning, and human resources.

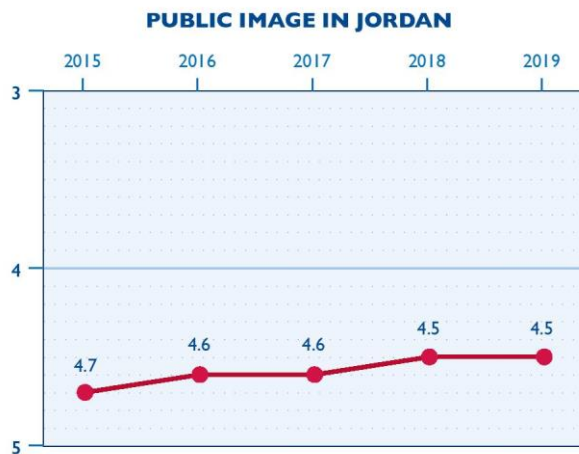


Several new programs were initiated in 2019 that focus on building the capacity of CSOs. In 2019, ACTED launched a program to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Mafraq CBO Union (MCU) and, indirectly, CBOs in Mafraq. With funding from the European Union (EU), Expertise France launched a program to improve access to and the quality of social services for vulnerable groups by building CSOs' capacity to deliver services and influence political affairs. In September, the Center for Strategic Studies of the University of Jordan hosted a conference to present the findings of a CSO needs assessment conducted earlier in the year as part of the Qararuna project, co-funded by the EU and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation. The program aims to strengthen the participation of civil society in the political process. A follow up training program to build the capacities of over 200 Jordanian CSOs is planned.

With encouragement from donors, CSOs increasingly form coalitions and engage in participatory action for specific projects. A new alliance of CSOs, called the Tazeez Alliance, was formed in 2019. The Alliance includes twenty-five human rights CSOs from across the country, including the Awareness Center for Human Rights, Manara for Social Justice and Human Rights, Tatheer Association for Human Rights, and the Arab Bridge Center for Human Rights and Development. Tazeez aims to strengthen the human rights system in Jordan through collective action. Himam, which unites thirteen CSO members, is another example of an effective coalition. In the past three years, it has gained the government's trust and has therefore been able to convey the most important issues facing CSOs to the government. In addition, Himam has become a reliable source of information for private media outlets on issues such as labor rights and women's rights. However, as mentioned earlier, it faced registration challenges in 2019.

New public-private partnerships were formed in 2019. Spurred by the high unemployment rate, the Luminus Technical College in collaboration with the Ministry of Labor, Khedmet Watan, and UNICEF launched the Training for Employment Program. The program aims to increase private sector employment and provided training for roughly 1,000 young men and women in programs such as Advanced Coding, Digital Fabrication, Complete Media Production, Welding and Metalworking, Computerized Interior Design, and Hotel and Restaurant Management. Also in 2019, MoSD, the Companies Control Department, and MOITS announced the program "Enhancing partnership and dialogue between the public sector and Civil Society," which is designed to encourage and promote government-CSO collaboration. Twenty-seven Jordanian CSOs participated in the program.

PUBLIC IMAGE: 4.5



CSOs' public image was unchanged in 2019.

Media coverage of CSOs' activities improved somewhat as compared to previous years, as both private and public media outlets provided wide coverage of CSO events. For instance, the teachers' strike received daily coverage for an entire month. However, coverage of the strikes in the public media was largely negative, concentrating on aspects like the strike's impact on the continuity of the education process. Mass media and social media platforms also covered unions' and CSO representatives' expressions of solidarity with the Teachers' Union. In 2019, some private media outlets, such as Al-Mamlaka Channel, Roya TV, Al Ghad Newspaper, and 7iber magazine, provided more coverage of issues raised by CSOs, including human rights. A growing number of

journalists appeared to publicly embrace human rights. However, there is still a need for journalists to develop their expertise on certain rights issues, such as those related to gender and people with disabilities.

The public has a mixed perception of the role of CSOs in Jordan. Many people have a positive perception of certain large, charitable organizations, such as Tkiyet Um Ali and King Hussein Cancer Center. Some other CSOs, however, are perceived negatively based on the view that they work to advance foreign agendas, misuse grant funds for personal purposes, or are otherwise corrupt. Charitable societies, especially those based in villages, face this kind of negative perception less often.

The government's perception of CSOs improved slightly in 2019, with more openness to CSO opinions. Some CSO representatives were also appointed to the NCHR. The private sector considers CSOs as an important agent to access local communities.

CSOs continue to rely on social media platforms to promote their activities and events, and to improve their image, particularly given the platforms' low cost and ability to reach broad populations. However, some human rights activists faced obstacles with social media use, for instance experiencing internet interruptions while livestreaming from demonstrations.

CSOs submit annual management and financial reports to supervising ministries. Larger organizations periodically submit management and financial reports to their boards of directors, as well.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed herein are those of the panelists and other project researchers and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or FHI 360.

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