

Midterm Review

October 2023

**Building Bridges between Local Authorities with Youth and
Communities (Jusoor II)**

Research Team: Analyze Research

Search for Common Ground, Jordan

Executive Summary

CONTEXT

Jordan has one of the world's largest young populations; 63 percent of Jordanian citizens are younger than 30, of which 44 percent are under 19.¹ This demographic, however, confronts significant challenges, particularly in the realm of **personal agency** and **institutional legitimacy**, when it comes to their inclusion in local governance and decision-making processes.

Youth are often marginalized and are rarely afforded opportunities to act on issues they deeply care about. This feeling is fuelled by the perception that their voices don't matter in the grander scheme of things, which in turn hampers their motivation and engagement. The backdrop of this sentiment can be attributed to a lack of actual **change** and inclusion in the forefront of things where youth needs are effectively sought and addressed.

Jordan's strategic direction further highlights a pivotal shift towards the importance of recognizing and leveraging the potential of its young population. The nation's long-term planning, decentralization efforts, and dedicated youth policies collectively signal a commitment to embedding youth voices within the fabric of governance and decision-making.

Project Overview

"Building Bridges between Local Authorities with Youth and Communities" (Jusoor II)

- Is a 20-month initiative implemented by Search for Common Ground.
- The project was designed to foster connections between local authorities, youth, and communities, marking the second phase of the project,
- and building upon the foundation laid by the first phase "**Promoting Constructive Relationships**" (Jusoor I) initiated in June 2020.

The Target Group

Established networks from Jusoor I in **five governorates**:



Goal: Strengthening youth-centered participatory approaches to local governance in Jordan.

Outcome 1: Equip local authorities and youth with the skills and competencies to effectively, constructively, and inclusively engage target communities in local governance.

Outcome 2: Enable local authorities and youth to leverage participatory approaches and strategic communication to address local communities' governance demand

75

Youth leaders, that had participated in the first phase.

75

Members from Local, Municipal, Gov Councils

14

Mid- to senior-level government officials

¹ The Department of Statistics, (December 2022) [Online] www.web.dos.gov.jo
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ABOUT THE STUDY

METHODOLOGY

The evaluation methodology utilized a **mixed-method approach** that entailed collecting and analyzing extensive amounts of data- both qualitative and quantitative.



Quantitative Data Collection

THREE Online Surveys



The surveys were launched online and distributed via WhatsApp.

1 Youth Survey

65% response rate (108/165 – 64 of which were project participants)

2 LA Survey

68% response rate (51/75)

3 NA/PP Survey

National Authorities: 30% response rate (6/20)
Political Parties: 65% response rate (17/26)



Qualitative Data Collection



Upon completing the quantitative data collection and its subsequent analysis, the findings were synthesized into tools for qualitative data collection.

10

In Depth Interviews with Local Authorities

TWO interviews per governorate.

3

Focus Group Discussions with Youth

ONE group per region; Irbid, Amman, Tafleeh.

2

In Depth Interviews with Project Staff

ONE with two of Searches' Project Staff, and ONE with Al Thoria

Outcome Harvesting

The data collection process comprised three distinct phases, with emerging outcomes from each phase serving as a foundation for the subsequent phase.

Literature Review: Allowed the Identification and delineation of the key outcome areas of the project by reviewing documents.

Quantitative Data Collection incorporated outcomes identified during the literature review phase, where youth, LAs, and NAs were asked to validate or refute these outcomes, indirectly.

Qualitative Data Collection based on the results of the quantitative survey. During the qualitative interviews and FGDs, participants were invited to confirm/negate and discuss project outcomes, how the intervention contributed to these outcomes, and suggest additional areas of improvement.

Outcome statements were defined in alignment with the **project's outcomes** as outlined in the **logical framework**, addressing the **evaluation questions** and considering both **intended and unintended** factors

- **Description of Outcome Statement**
- **Significance of Outcome Statement**
- **Contribution of Outcome Statement**
- **Proven Results of Outcome Statement**

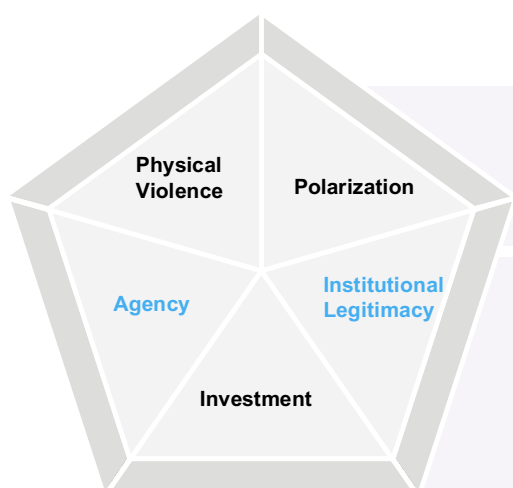
LIMITATION

MITIGATION MEASURE

Participant Turnout	Direct Communication
National Authority Participation	Direct Communication
Low Completion Rates	Follow up Phone calls
Respondent Bias	Data Collection Approach
Online Data Collection	Online Followup
Participant Reservations	Animosity

PROJECT OUTCOMES

PEACE IMPACT FRAMEWORK



Agency: The project aimed to foster personal agency by equipping participants with the skills and empowerment needed to influence and take action on matters they care about.

Institutional Legitimacy: The primary aim of the project is to fortify the relationship between youth and LAs to promote a more inclusive decision-making paradigm on a national scale.

The aspiration is for the youth and the wider community to have increased satisfaction with the services rendered by decision makers.

KEY FINDINGS

Finding #1

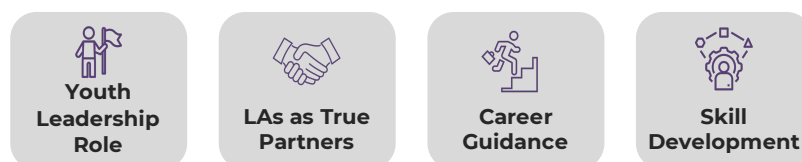
Relevance

Given Jordan's **shift** towards increased youth participation, amidst the recognized **challenges** youth encounter in their local realities, the project's design effectively **encapsulated** the needs of both.

The project is highly **relevant** to the needs of both youth and LAs within the sphere of **local governance and decision-making**, aiming to **equip** and **empower** them to address shared community **needs**.

A Needs-Based Approach

Feedback gathered at the end of the first phase



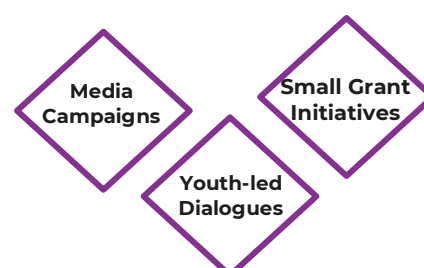
Needs Assessment

The feedback obtained from the rapid needs assessment was **effectively** incorporated into the training curriculum.



Youth Needs

Beyond merely identifying youth needs through its design, the activities directly responded to their **needs beyond the confines of the project**.



Finding #2

Effectiveness and Impact

The Evaluation Team found that the implementation of **youth-centered participatory** methods and **youth-led platforms** has markedly enhanced **engagement** and **collaboration**, **bridging the gap** between LAs and youth laying the foundation for long-term **partnerships**.

While the project laid a strong foundation, establishing skills, knowledge, and confidence, achieving enduring impacts and comprehensive integration requires continued effort and a deeper **mindset** shift for long term impact.

Long-lasting Collaborative **Communication** Channels between LAs and youth on a personal level

Youth are empowered to leverage youth-led platforms for constructive **engagement** in local governance

Strengthened **relationships** between LA and Youth

The project gave youth the **skills and knowledge** to identify and address community **needs**, whilst bolstering their **self-confidence** within themselves.



1. Networking and communicating with decision-makers
2. Understanding the varied needs of youth
3. Maximize their involvement with LAs



1. Interaction and collaboration with the youth
2. Increased knowledge related to their jobs, which they weren't previously aware of.

YOUTH



A low percentage of youth believe that their **needs are being adequately identified** and **addressed** by LAs at this point

YOUTH



Reported that their needs are adequately **understood** by LA.

Finding #3

Effectiveness and Impact

Through the strategic focus on youth participatory approaches, not only were misconceptions discredited, but there was also a tangible shift in **perceptions**, facilitating more effective collaboration. This resulted in a mutual appreciation and a tangible **positive shift** in their working relationship.

Perceptions towards Youth

YOUTH



- Source of inspiration for LAs to view them more favorably.
- LA More receptive to youth engagement

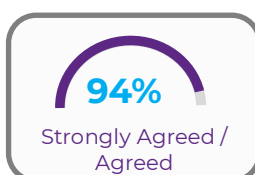
LAS



- View of youth participation in decision-making
- Understanding needs and priorities of the youth

Perceptions towards LAs

YOUTH



Enriched understanding of the roles, responsibilities, and challenges faced by LAs

Enduring Impact



Youth confidence to strive for **positions** as decision-makers.



Transfer of **knowledge** and **skills** gained as a result of the project



LA responsibility towards **promoting** youth inclusion.



Shift in **dynamics** between youth and decision makers

Finding #4

Sustainability

Youth and LA have the Knowledge and Skills to independently pursue beyond the project's scope.

The additionally have a sense of ownership and dedication developed among participants towards pursuing its impact.

Sustainable Pathways

YOUTH

1

The networks and relationships established between youth and LAs

2

The Junior Council Member Apprenticeships

LAS

1

Small Grant Initiatives

2

The networks and relationships established between youth and LAs

Knowledge Sharing

A substantial percentage of both youth and local authorities reported actively **shared their knowledge** and experience with fellow youth and local authorities outside the project consortium.



Knowledge Sharing Platforms Established by the Project

1. Junior council members: knowledge and experience sharing amongst peers.
2. Conference on Best Practices: platform where LAs could share their insights, best practices, lessons learned, and recommendations

Finding #5

Sustainability

The youth's **motivation** and commitment to the project's continuity were evident. So far, both youth and LA have taken initiatives beyond the project's scope, indicating promising sustainability. However, there's potential for momentum to wane as time progresses.

The absence of a structured **exit strategy** in the project raises sustainability concerns. For enduring impact, **formal mechanisms** are essential to ensure that the project's achievements persist and adapt over time.

Active youth councils within governmental institutions.

Constant Follow-up

Understanding of the bureaucratic processes, resources, and **sustained support** for such formal mechanisms.

Finding #6

Adaptability

The project prioritized feedback **collection** and **integration**, with both the youth and LA believing their input was consistently considered, and participants felt comfortable to **openly share** their input.

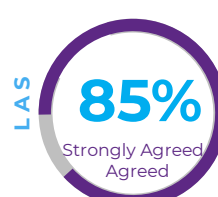
Furthermore, the project showcased successful adaptability amidst **changing local contexts**, from inevitable changes to the local context to financial challenges caused by the euro's depreciation. Through these shifts, the project-maintained **transparency** and **flexibility**,

Response to Beneficiary Feedback



However, both youth and LAs expressed concerns over the project's transparency in work planning, desiring more upfront and clear scheduling.

Response to Contextual Changes



CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSION 1

At its core, the project was designed to enhance the **capacities** of both the youth and LAs, promoting effective. However, despite these resources, there was a consistent call for more **advanced** and longer **training** sessions. The youth also voiced a need for **trainers** who were more adept and well-versed in their roles. Moreover, while the youth-led dialogues did present **leadership** opportunities, the youth expressed a desire for more comprehensive leadership roles and avenues to **leverage** their acquired knowledge to inform the broader youth community.

CONCLUSION 2

A key outcome was the project's ability for not merely bridging the **gap** between youth and LAs but also cultivating robust **relationships**, reshaping their mutual positive **perceptions** towards one another despite previous resistance. This unintendedly resulted in enduring bonds and initiated long-term channels of **communication**. Despite the project's achievements in altering perceptions, deep-rooted mentalities within LAs and youth still pose challenges to fully immersing youth in decision-making processes.

CONCLUSION 3

The project activities laid the groundwork for potential sustainability but lacked essential components to guarantee ongoing **continuity**. While skills were imparted to both youth and LAs, a comprehensive **roadmap** for sustained engagement post-project was missing. Assumptions were made regarding their continued progress, but concrete **mechanisms** to ensure lasting impact and sustainable strategies weren't established.

CONCLUSION 4

The project aimed at promoting **knowledge exchange** among participants by creating platforms for such interactions, with an intention to enhance sustainability. Although a foundation for knowledge-sharing exists, there's potential to further link youth across various governorates and distribute resources more widely. This will work to propagate positive views among other youth and LAs to maximize and share these experiences. Additionally, the influence of **media** has been highlighted as a key component to enhance reach.

CONCLUSION 5

Participants praised the supportive environment of the project. However, participants raised concerns regarding the **centralized** approach of the project's second phase. As this structure appeared to strain the IP's capacity, with remote regions facing logistical issues.

Further compounding these challenges was the perceived lack of **transparency** in work planning. Both the youth and LAs desired a clearer, more upfront understanding of the work plan, citing last-minute changes and seemingly directionless activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 Advanced Training Opportunities

1.2 Strengthen Youth Leadership in Project Activities

2.1 Deepen and Leverage Youth-LA Relationship

2.2 Enhance Youth Access to Decision Makers

2.3 Cultivate a Mindset for Sustainable Change

2.4 Active Involvement of LAs

3.1 Institutionalize Youth Councils

3.2 Educating Youth on Sustainable Pathways

3.3 Formulating and implementing an official Exit Strategy

4.1 Amplifying Impact and Knowledge Sharing

4.2 Establish Inter-governate Connectivity

5.1 Youth Engagement in Project Design and Planning

5.2 Flexible Project Structure