



USAID
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UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL OF WOMEN AND YOUTH JORDAN

Women and youth are an untapped resource for Jordan. Despite high education levels, the country has some of the lowest indicators in the world for labor force and civic participation, productivity, and gender equality. Less than one-fifth of women are engaged in the workforce. Social norms discourage women from working and there are limited support services, such as transportation and child care, to enable their economic participation. Few women assume leadership roles in the private sector and government. Despite the increased number of women running for election, women continue to have minimal representation in parliament.

Two-thirds of Jordan's population are under the age of 30 and around one-third of youth (15-30 years old) are unemployed. Insufficient employment opportunities and an education system that does not prepare youth for the workforce exacerbate the problem. Young women and men have limited opportunities for political and civic engagement and lack access to resources and support services. This affects their ability and motivation to effect positive change in their communities, which leads to apathy and frustration. USAID programming encourages and facilitates equitable participation by women and youth in the economy and public life, which is essential for the country's political and economic stability.

AREAS OF FOCUS

INCLUSIVE SOCIAL NORMS

Supportive households, communities, and organizations are essential for ensuring women and youth have access to the opportunities they need to realize their full potential. In cooperation with the Government of Jordan, USAID is raising awareness about social attitudes and values that hinder economic, political, and civic engagement by women and youth through social media discussions, youth initiatives, advocacy, and training.

KEY PARTNERS

Ministries of:

- * Education
- * Health
- * Labor
- * Political and Parliamentary Affairs
- * Social Development
- * Tourism and Antiquities
- * Water and Irrigation
- * Youth

Jordanian National Commission for Women

Legislative and Opinion Bureau

Social Security Cooperation

IREX

Global Communities

LOCATIONS

All twelve governorates

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REMOVING BARRIERS TO LEADERSHIP

Enabling women and youth to play leadership roles in society and the economy is essential for Jordan to secure a stable and prosperous future. USAID's programming strengthens the regulatory and institutional frameworks that underpin women and youth assuming leadership roles within their families, communities, and workplaces, and strengthens their leadership skills to allow for more effective engagement as decisionmakers and leaders.

PARTICIPATION IN ECONOMIC AND PUBLIC LIFE

USAID's market-driven initiatives, such as on-the-job training, provide women and youth with the skills needed to participate in the economy and better prepare them to manage their own lives. Civic and political engagement programs involve women and youth in decision-making and create pathways for participation in public life.

NOTEWORTHY ACHIEVEMENTS

- Advances that protect the rights of women and encourage their participation in the public sphere include: the repeal of an article in the penal code that allowed perpetrators of sexual assault to escape punishment if they married their victims, adoption and implementation of the Flexible Working Hours Bylaw to encourage women's economic participation, and the launch of a Guide on Combating Violence Against Women in Public Life to help women address the challenges they face when seeking leadership roles in Jordan.

- Youth in Jordan lack opportunities for civic engagement. Using skills learned through USAID programs, more than 3,000 youth identified challenges they faced in their communities, developed recommendations, and presented them to government officials through a national dialogue. Youth recommendations were incorporated into the Ministry of Youth's strategy for 2019-2025.

- To help youth develop the skills to be engaged and productive citizens, facilitators trained more than 7,000 youth across Jordan in critical thinking, decision-making, and civic engagement and advocacy skills. Youth identified priority areas for action and created learning clubs to generate initiatives around themes such as science, technology, engineering, entrepreneurship, workforce readiness, community development, and social inclusion.

- Policy changes made the registration process easier for 17,000 home-based businesses, many of which are owned by women and youth, opening the pathway to legal protections and investment opportunities.

- Since 2018, USAID has trained and successfully placed around 1,300 youth into full time positions throughout the country in sectors such as the garment, retail, and automotive industries. A separate program, focused on the hospitality industry, recruited 1,200 youth into positions in restaurants throughout Jordan and provided on-the-job-training to help them succeed.