PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT  
JORDAN

With an education system that ensures equal access to young men and women, Jordan boasts a highly educated female population with the potential to advance Jordan’s economic, social, and political development. However, a sizeable gap exists for women between constitutional rights and acceptable social norms, with traditional expectations and cultural restraints continuing to limit women’s advancement.

With less than one-fifth of women engaged in the workforce, Jordan has one of the lowest rates of women’s economic participation in the world. Despite the inclusion of quotas for women in national and municipal bodies, political participation remains limited, with only around one sixth of seats in Jordan’s Parliament held by women. Violence against women persists and is underreported due to societal and familial pressures. Support for improvement exists within the Government of Jordan, but resources to affect change are lacking.

USAID believes that when women and girls have equal rights and access to resources and services, societies thrive. USAID aims in all of its programming in Jordan to reduce gender disparities and empower women and girls to realize their rights, determine their own life goals, and help strengthen their communities.

AREAS OF FOCUS

SUPPORTIVE NORMS AND PRACTICES

Supportive households and communities are essential to ensuring that women and girls have full access to the opportunities they need to realize their full potential. In cooperation with the Government of Jordan, USAID stimulates dialogue and raises awareness around gender issues, including through activities like social media discussions and public art, student initiatives and advocacy, and trainings to organizations on gender and gender-related advocacy. This dialogue creates space for change so that local organizations and activities can more effectively push for gender equality.
EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY AND POLICY REFORM

Governing institutions and legal frameworks can provide a national model for gender equality in Jordan. USAID supports the Government of Jordan’s efforts to institutionalize gender equality through training and supporting public sector workers to identify and address gender-related issues in the workplace, and through supporting regulatory reform to increase women’s participation and leadership in the public sphere. In addition, USAID trains local organizations in order to strengthen gender-related grassroots advocacy efforts.

GENERIC-SENSITIVE SUPPORT SERVICES

When women have access to the support and services they need to reach their full potential, they not only realize their rights as humans, but are also empowered to further contribute the development of Jordan and have the resources to build brighter, more prosperous futures. USAID partners with the Government of Jordan and the private sector to ensure that women have access to the support they need to succeed, such as access to credit to establish and expand small businesses, professional development opportunities, and gender-specific health services.

NOTEWORTHY ACHIEVEMENTS

- Article 308 of the Jordan Penal Code allowed perpetrators of sexual assault to escape punishment if they married their victims. The Sisterhood is Global Institute Jordan applied strategic advocacy training from USAID to its efforts to lead a coalition of 120 local organizations in local and national advocacy against the article, resulting in its abolishment in 2017.

- As of January 2018, USAID facilitated three years of online debates and conversations on gender priorities, virtually reaching over 900,000 people on Facebook, making over 250,000 impressions on Twitter, and receiving over 8,900 views on YouTube. In total, this outreach resulted in over 1,173,000 instances of online social dialogue, fostering dynamic, open dialogue that creates space for change in gender norms and expectations.

- In 2017, in order to increase women’s economic participation, USAID supported the adoption and implementation of the Flexible Working Hours bylaw and the formalization of home-based businesses; trained 4,084 women on vocational skills, product development, and financial management; helped place over 2,400 women in jobs; facilitated access to finance for 622 women-owned businesses; and helped 115 women-owned home-based businesses increase sales by connecting to new markets. With expanded work opportunities, women can better support themselves and their families and contribute to local economic growth.

- By expanding access to maternal and neonatal health services, USAID has supported the Ministry of Health to reduce pregnancy-related deaths by 54 percent since 1997. Building on this success, USAID helped the Ministry of Health to rollout Jordan’s Maternal Mortality Response and Surveillance System, which gives health practitioners reliable data to help prevent and identify causes of maternal deaths.