



## MID-TERM PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF THE CIVIC INITIATIVES SUPPORT PROGRAM

### **CIS Project Award Number:**

AID-278-LA-13-00001

### **CIS Award Dates:**

2013 – 2018

### **CIS Project Funding:**

\$50,000,000

### **CIS Geographical Coverage:**

Nation-wide

### **Evaluation Timeframe:**

May – November 2015

### **Procurement Mechanism:**

Cooperative Agreement

### **Implementing Partner:**

FHI 360

### **Activity Background**

Through targeted technical assistance and grants, USAID has long supported civil society in Jordan, seeking to enhance its role, capacities, influence, and ability to contribute to key national objectives. The primary USAID civil society program currently operating in the kingdom is the Civic Initiatives Support (CIS) Program.

Implemented by FHI 360, CIS is a five-year, \$50 million activity that aims to cultivate a strong and vibrant civil society in Jordan by supporting a broad range of civic initiatives. Working at both national and local levels, CIS provides assistance for civic initiatives and advocacy efforts; endeavors to strengthen the organizational capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs), including community-based organizations (CBOs) around the country; and, promotes collaboration between the Government of Jordan (GoJ) and civil society to address the reform and development challenges facing the kingdom.

Support for Jordanian civil society actors working in the fields of democracy and governance, economic development, education, energy, environment, health, water and/or gender is provided through:

- a. Sub-awards and technical assistance in support of Jordanian civic initiatives;
- b. Institutional strengthening and capacity building assistance to CSOs at all levels, including Jordanian intermediary support organizations (ISOs);
- c. Targeted technical assistance to USAID implementing partner sub-award recipients from across the Mission's portfolio of programs;
- d. Efforts to enhance the capacities of GoJ staff at the Registry of Societies within the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) and those of other relevant ministries that engage with civil society;
- e. Funding for research on the civil society sector; and,
- f. Support for opportunities to foster GoJ-civil society dialogue.

 <http://www.cisjordan.org>

 <https://www.facebook.com/CISJordan>



## CIS Theory of Change:

IF we invest in initiatives and advocacy related to common interests, increase the capacity of CSOs to implement those initiatives and promote constructive efforts for civil society and the GoJ to jointly address Jordanian challenges and reform, THEN civil society will be better skilled and more empowered to promote the common interests of Jordanians.

## Evaluation Summary

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess effectiveness of grants-making approach, capacity building efforts and extent of GoJ-CSO interaction in order to inform USAID and CIS's work plan development and implementation for the remainder of the program. The evaluation looked at activity implementation as well as CIS program design and objectives in light of the Civil Society Assessment completed in August 2015. The evaluation, conducted by a team of independent consultants, employed a qualitative approach to answering the evaluation questions. The Civil Society Assessment is foundational to this evaluation; it can be found at <https://usaidjordankmportal.com/collections/jordan-civil-society-sector-studies>.

To maximize the utility of the evaluation, it was decided that the evaluation would focus on four of CIS's original program interventions based on three criteria: size of funding (relative to overall program budget); number of CSOs that received assistance; and, demonstrable results (or their absence).

CIS's grant-making mechanisms, processes, and management systems directly support national and sub-national civic initiatives, strengthen organizational development, and contribute to an awareness of advocacy among nascent CBOs. Training and capacity building also effectively reached a large number of CSOs. The lengthy grant review process may be causing some grantees to lose momentum. In addition, grant solicitations need to convey clearer guidance to attract innovative initiatives and to align award criteria with more ambitious objectives to address sector gaps.

CIS has designed a number of interventions to enhance the readiness and capacity of the GoJ and civil society to engage with each other. Although CIS is increasing the frequency and quality of GoJ-civil society interaction through its seven DRG grants, more can be done to promote such interaction through the civic initiatives grantees and internal strengthening capacity participants, and stepping up efforts through training government staff and proactively seeking grantees focused on advocacy efforts towards the government. That said, the political landscape affects the ability of CIS to create opportunities for CS-GoJ dialogue and engagement. Such interaction necessitates GoJ understanding of the role of civil society, and receptiveness to working with it.

The common denominator of recommendations is the need to sharpen the focus to have a deeper, more meaningful outcome with a smaller number of CSOs. Less may be more: targeting fewer organizations over a longer period of time will enable CIS to engage more meaningfully with each of them and will likely result in greater sector-wide gains.

The full report is available through the USAID Jordan Knowledge Management Portal at the following address: <https://usaidjordankmportal.com/collections/jordan-civil-society-sector-studies>.

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