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## CIVIC INITIATIVES SUPPORT (CIS) PROGRAM MID-TERM PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

**May 2016**

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# **CIVIC INITIATIVES SUPPORT (CIS) PROGRAM MID-TERM PERFORMANCE EVALUATION REPORT**

**May 2016**

**USAID/Jordan Monitoring and Evaluation Support Project (MESP)**

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## **DISCLAIMER**

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# ACRONYMS

AMEP	Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
APS	Annual Program Statement
CBO(s)	Community Based Organization(s)
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
CDFJ	Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists
CIS	Civic Initiatives Support (Program)
CISF	Civic Initiatives Support Fund
CSO(s)	Civil Society Organization(s)
CSS	Civil Society Sector
CSP	Jordan Civil Society Program
DRG	Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance
DRGG(s)	Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance Grant(s)
EDE	Economic Development and Energy
EDY	Education and Youth
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GEC	Grants Evaluation Committee
GoJ	Government of Jordan
HCAC	Health Care Accreditation Council
HCD	Higher Council for Affairs of Persons with Disabilities
ICAT	Institutional Capacity Assessment Tool
IDA	Institutional Development Assessment
IDP	Institutional Development Plan
IRCKHF	Information Research Center-King Hussein Foundation
ISO(s)	Intermediary Support Organization(s)
ISC	Internal Strengthening for Change
IP	Implementing Partner
IR	Intermediate Result
IT	Information Technology
JOD(s)	Jordanian Dinar(s)
JRF	Jordan River Foundation
KII(s)	Key Informant Interview(s)
LNRA	Learning Needs and Resources Assessment
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MoSD	Ministry of Social Development
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO(s)	Non-governmental organization(s)
NHF	Noor al-Hussein Foundation
OSCs	Off-the-Shelf Courses [for CSOs and CBOs]
PFH	Population and Family Health
PIRS	Performance indicator reference sheet
PMP	Performance Management Plan
RFA	Request for Applications
RONGO(s)	Royal Non-Governmental Organization(s)
SIGI	Sisterhood is Global Institute
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math
USG	United States Government

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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, which will be entering its third year in late 2015. Given the dynamics in Jordan and the region since CIS's inception, the Mission requested a civil society sector assessment in 2015 to inform the CIS Mid-Term Performance Evaluation and its workplan, which will be developed in October 2015; and to inform broader USAID civil society assistance programming.

The Civil Society Assessment is foundational to this evaluation. It is therefore recommended that it be read as well. The assessment was conducted from May through June 2015 and had three objectives: 1) to provide an up-to-date, detailed and empirically-grounded analysis of the civil society sector; 2) to facilitate the evaluation of CIS through an enhanced understanding of sector dynamics, challenges, and opportunities that confront it; and 3) to formulate broader recommendations and suggest intervention priorities to guide USAID's efforts to support Jordanian civil society.

Implemented by FHI 360, CIS is a five-year, \$40 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. CIS awards grants to groups that carry out projects that respond to citizens' demands and are engaged in thematic areas that are in line with USAID's Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS). CIS also provides institutional strengthening customized to individual CSOs' needs and delivers technical assistance to facilitate coalition building among CSOs as well as dialogue between civil society and the government as appropriate and relevant to the supported grantees' projects. CIS activities fall under three program components: I) Sub-awards in support of Jordanian Civil Society Initiatives; II) Capacity Building for Sustainability; and III) Enhancing Government-Civil Society Engagement.

The purpose of this evaluation is to provide specific guidance for USAID and CIS's workplan development and implementation for the remainder of CIS. This is an evaluation of activity implementation as well as an evaluation of CIS program design and objectives. It evaluates the extent to which CIS's grant-making mechanisms and capacity-building activities are effective in supporting national and sub-national initiatives by CSOs; contribute to these CSOs' organizational development; improve their service-delivery capacity; and develop their understanding of advocacy and their inclination to engage in it.

To maximize the utility of the evaluation to CIS and to USAID, the evaluation team used a participatory planning approach that relied heavily on CIS staff input to finalize the evaluation questions and the approach. As a result, it was decided that the evaluation would focus on four of CIS's original program interventions. Those interventions were selected based on three criteria: size of funding (relative to overall program budget); number of CSOs that received assistance; and demonstrable results (or their absence). However, it is important to note that at the time of the evaluation most interviewed grantees had been operating for less than nine months, with the exception of Democracy, Human Rights & Governance (DRG) grantees who were approaching the completion of the first of their two-year grants.

Using those criteria, the two CIS program interventions that served as the basis for evaluating grant-making processes and mechanisms were the Civic Initiatives Support Fund (CISF) and the Democracy, Human Rights & Governance Grants (DRGG), while the interventions that were relied upon to assess

capacity building activities were the Internal Strengthening for Change (ISC) and the Off-the-Shelf Courses (OSCs) for CSOs and CBOs. In addition, the evaluation gathered and analyzed evidence on the extent to which CIS is increasing the frequency and quality of GoJ-civil society interaction. Following a comprehensive review of program documentation, fieldwork began in late July and extended through August 2015, involving extensive one-on-one interviews, group interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) with CIS staff, CIS grantees and capacity building beneficiaries, staff from the three intermediary support organizations (ISOs) through which CIS's ISC program component is delivered, rejected applicants for CISF and DRG grants, GoJ officials, civil society experts, and civil society activists.

The evaluation answered four questions as follows:

**Question 1: How effective are CIS's grant-making mechanisms, grant design, grant awarding processes, and grant management systems in supporting a) national and sub-national civic initiatives; b) organizational development; c) improved service-delivery capacity; and d) advocacy development?**

CIS's grant-making mechanisms, grant design, grant awarding process, and grant management systems directly support national and sub-national civic initiatives as defined by the program's 2013 Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (AMEP): "*An initiative is an action to address a common problem by a group of people or an organizational coalition.*" Organizational development is supported through short introductory courses that grantees receive on gender, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and grants management, and through continuous mentoring throughout the project. The 10 percent budget line item also provides an opportunity for organizational development if grantees decide to use it for this purpose. While improving service delivery was not a target objective, CIS participants' report that the capacity they have built in other areas has contributed to improving service delivery. CIS interventions have contributed to an awareness of advocacy among the nascent CBOs who started with no understanding of the concept, and have contributed more significantly to those organizations whose projects have an advocacy component.

Among the factors that shape the current CIS model are the structural weaknesses of the civil society sector in Jordan and USAID's aspiration to reach "beyond the usual suspects" (CSOs that have been supported by USAID for several years) in an attempt to cultivate nascent CSOs, particularly in underserved areas outside Amman. The Civil Society Assessment revealed that a majority of CSOs lack an organic connection to the communities they claim to serve and are failing to consult widely and meaningfully with the communities from which they emanate. Furthermore, the assessment found that CSOs lack the capacity to effectively conceptualize programmatic responses to the needs and issues they identify as well as the ability to implement projects. The advocacy component of civil society remains underdeveloped with CSOs insufficiently specialized and working on a vast array of activities. In its attempt to support new and less formal players in the sector, some organizations supported by CIS lack constituencies and connection to their own communities.

In the meantime, the lengthy grant review process may be causing some grantees to lose momentum. Some well-established CSOs point to USAID branding requirements as a deterrent to accessing USAID funds for substantive civic advocacy activities, and they could be accused of promoting a U.S. agenda that is not aligned with Jordanian culture.

While USAID is keen on reaching beyond the "usual suspects" of grant recipients within the sector, grant solicitations need to convey clearer guidance to attract innovative initiatives and to align award criteria with more ambitious objectives to address gaps identified by the Civil Society Assessment. With close mentoring of grantees, more carefully defined objectives could help capture the hidden gems in the sector while avoiding organizations that might only be interested in economic gain. Nonetheless, mentoring is not a guarantee of success, as evidenced by some who have been awarded grants based on good ideas and potential, but are not capable of implementing what they propose to do.

Working more intensely with a smaller number of nascent and more established organizations that demonstrate high potential, and applying an adaptive approach that includes just-in-time assistance and coaching could go a long way toward nurturing nascent organizations with potential.

While the Civil Society Assessment highlighted the sector's weak capacity for advocacy, capacity building was not the primary focus of CIS' original design, but simply one of many goals. For DRGGs, advocacy is built into every project, and grantees are able to clearly point to a newly acquired body of advocacy knowledge, skills and experience attained through CIS support. CISF grants are meant to foster nascent civic initiatives, and where relevant, work with grantees to build their capacity in advocacy.

Although letters to rejected applicants offer feedback on the proposal upon request, only a small number avail themselves of this opportunity; the high volume of applications precludes in-depth feedback to all applicants. While this approach may serve as self-selection for those who are most motivated, it may contribute to an unintended result of allegations that the process is based on favoritism and *wasta* (personal connections to members of the CIS team or USAID).<sup>1</sup> Many rejected applicants fail to understand that despite its open-ended nature, the application process is competitive. The prevailing assumption among grantees is that far more proposals will be funded, yet when funding fails to materialize and feedback is not provided on rejected applications, disappointment turns into resentment, which in turn prompts allegations of favoritism.

**Question 2: How effective is the training/capacity building component of CIS in supporting a) national and sub-national civic initiatives; b) organizational development; c) improved service delivery capacity; and d) advocacy development?**

This component provides limited offerings to support CSOs in designing and delivering national and sub-national civic initiatives. For organizational development, the majority of ISC beneficiaries report that CIS was effective. CIS trainings do not directly address improved service delivery capacity however the majority of ISC beneficiaries interviewed report that support indirectly contributed to improved service delivery. While training and capacity building in advocacy were not a primary focus for ISC, a majority of participants reflect a basic understanding of advocacy as a result.

CIS training and capacity building has effectively reached a large number of CSOs, each at different stages of development. CIS's capacity building initiatives were designed in response to a survey of USAID Implementing Partners (IPs), more than 500 CSOs attending the CIS Annual Program Statement (APS) solicitation workshops, and knowledge gained through implementation of CIS' predecessor, Civil Society Program (CSP). Following guidance from USAID to reach beyond the CSOs who had already benefitted from USAID support, CIS endeavored to cast a wide net in the hopes of cultivating nascent organizations that are 'gems in the rough' with motivation and good ideas but who have little experience in operationalizing ideas. "Potential to affect change" was not the basis for selection criteria of participating CSOs.

While the nascent CSOs have undoubtedly advanced their knowledge, focusing resources on a smaller number of organizations could result in deeper impact relative to building a culture of civil society with a focus on constituency building, needs assessment, and advocacy, areas flagged in the Civil Society Assessment. For ISC this would mean fewer but more targeted participants who are vetted through agreed upon criteria, longer and more focused three-stage training that includes the toolkit, Institutional Development Assessment (IDA), and strategic planning. Focusing on a smaller number of CSOs for deeper impact is consistent with CIS' experience that it is challenged reaching its target of 60 CSOs who are willing to commit to all three stages of capacity building.

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<sup>1</sup> *Wasta* can be loosely defined as the attempt to use the influence of family or friends to achieve certain objectives.

For OSC trainees, this would translate to fewer participants in training workshops, longer and tiered training with long-term mentoring, and a handful of experts able to deliver advanced and specialized training in niche areas who could rotate across a few organizations. This model would enable experts to become familiar with recipient CSOs, their staff, and their specific strengths, weaknesses, interests, and needs. Focusing on fewer organizations through tiered training, with the option of more advanced support by in-house experts or long-term mentors could result in more significant impact. Although mentoring is an optional component for most OSCs, CIS observes a low level of commitment among participants in fulfilling their mentoring assignments, further evidence that a smaller, more targeted group may be appropriate.

**Question 3: To what extent is CIS increasing the frequency and quality of GoJ-civil society interaction, and how can it best support collaboration between these two stakeholders to advance development and reform objectives?**

The government's tightened control over organizations receiving foreign funding confirms their reluctance to engage civil society. Engagement between government and CSOs is neither a requirement nor focus for CIS grants; as a result, activity in this area is limited to mentoring those whose grants are relevant. DRG grantees with more capacity to engage authorities could serve as models for others.

CIS has designed a number of interventions to enhance the readiness and capacity of the GoJ and civil society to engage with each other. Some have materialized while others, including the Civil Society Research Fund, are yet to be implemented. The government's engagement with CIS has very much depended on the government's receptiveness to the proposition of deeper engagement. Issues internal to the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) and to the political landscape affect CIS' ability to create opportunities for civil society-GoJ dialogue and engagement. CIS remains on standby to support the MoSD with specific activities contingent upon the approval of the Registry of Societies' strategic plan, the development of which CIS has supported. The Registry's strategic plan aside, CIS is increasing the frequency and quality of GoJ-civil society interaction through seven DRG grants. However, more could be done to promote such interaction through the CISF grantees. That said such interaction necessitates a responsive government that understands the role of civil society. While civil society would be well served through CIS efforts to engage the government, CIS believes that success of such an effort would require a shift of perspective within GOJ on how it engages with civil society to have more of a partnership than a relationship in which GOJ controls civil society.

**Question 4: Which key assistance gaps, including those identified by the Civil Society Assessment (2015) remain to be filled under each of CIS's two components (grant-making and capacity-building)? Which alterations should be made to each? Which opportunities present themselves (including due to prior CIS activities) to enable CIS to become more effective in achieving its stated objective of promoting the common interests of Jordanians?**

The evaluation identified the following assistance gaps that may be addressed through CIS:

1. Engagement of the private sector: As the Civil Society Assessment revealed, civil society's dependence on donors hinders its sustainability and is a disincentive for building organic relationships with local communities. Breaking that cycle is imperative if civil society is to become viable and credible. CSOs will therefore need to pro-actively seek financial support and begin to cultivate local donors. Unfortunately, almost all organizations interviewed believed they would be unsuccessful in presenting their causes to the private sector.
2. Support for coalitions: While coalitions are supported through CIS' DRG projects such as those implemented by Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists (CDFJ) and Sisterhood is Global Institute (SIGI), there is still a need to promote coalitions in other sectors and among CISF

supported CSOs. This would promote efficiency by combining resources and skills and leveraging the comparative advantage of various organizations within each coalition. This would also cluster efforts, promote continuity, and help avoid duplication in effort.

3. Capacity building for government staff dealing with civil society: As both the evaluation and assessment revealed, government staff interfacing with civil society need support to understand the role of the sector and how best to engage with it. To this end, CIS is awaiting the approval of the strategic plan by MoSD to move forward in facilitating improved GoJ-civil society partnership.
4. A pool of certified trainers outside Amman: A number of respondents bemoaned their ability to identify qualified trainers who could support their programs. Considering that the majority of CSOs undertake training activities, it would serve the sector well if there was a cadre of expert trainers available to them outside Amman.
5. Sector-wide research: Support for sector-wide research will help capture success stories and lessons learned in civil society work that takes stock of the intricacies of the Jordanian context and what works here.

## **Recommendations**

The common denominator of recommendations is sharpening 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.

### **General**

1. Review and revise CIS's mandate to ensure that objectives, outcomes, indicators, and activities are aligned accordingly. If the mandate is to empower civil society through improving CSOs' responsiveness to community needs, activities should be focused on getting CSOs to recognize and buy-into that model, and graduate them through tiered assistance to define their constituency, identify constituents'/community needs, and after they demonstrate capability, entering them into a grant and project implementation approach. If the mandate is to touch as many CSOs as possible, then align objectives, outcomes, indicators, and activities accordingly.
2. Support private sector partnerships with civil society and build the capacity of grantees to fundraise and cultivate local donors.
3. Support sector-wide research to capture lessons from high performing and under-performing organizations, and lessons of how civil society organizations succeed or fail in attaining empowerment. This would be a research and development component to reinforce the advocacy efforts supported through grant making. Such data can be used to help rebut allegations against the sector and improve its public image.
4. Facilitate the engagement of the GoJ and civil society through networking activities, grants, and capacity building.
5. Provide incentives to the GoJ to ensure the CIS program is able to train government staff on the role of civil society and how to engage with it. Part of the effort of convincing the government to engage civil society would be through creating models of excellence in the sector that can help improve its image and convince government detractors of the benefits of engaging with the sector.

### **Grants**

6. If an objective is to touch as many organizations as possible (regardless of their capacity or civic focus), facilitate this process from the solicitation phase through grant selection by defining "innovation" criteria that ensures that supported projects are organic grassroots-led initiatives.

Such initiatives would be expected to be innovative, have identified a communal problem supported with evidence, have identified past community and civil society sectors efforts to address it, and build upon past efforts.

7. For more established organizations and in order to achieve measurable change, concentrate resources on CSOs that show promise or that already have a record of achievement (i.e., have shown relevance and impact by providing needed services, being embedded in specific communities, and/or by working on issues that resonate with broad-based constituencies at the local or national levels).
8. If civic relevance is an objective, selection criteria should encourage and prioritize advocacy, needs analysis, constituency building, the engagement of government, and coalition building.
9. Consider revising the grant application mechanism to solicit concept papers instead of full-fledged applications to reduce staff time resources required for review. This process may help staff identify unpolished ideas that may otherwise be buried in a poor application.
10. Encourage applicants to build and expand upon past activities that clearly demonstrate need, identify past efforts by other organizations on similar or related issues, and encourage advocacy and collaboration with and engagement of other sectors including the government. Community/constituent needs assessments and how to conduct them should feature prominently in the CIS process. Grants could be spread over two phases, with the first one aimed at supporting a needs assessment.
11. Grant-making should emphasize organizations more than projects. Instead of supporting projects deemed to have promise and that happen to be carried out by organizations CIS should identify and support promising organizations that happen to carry out projects. Instead of asking: “Are there promising ideas out there that deserve to be funded?” (and then evaluating the organization that proposes to implement the relevant project or activities only from that angle), the alternative perspective would entail asking the following three questions:
  - a. “Which organizations are doing innovative and impactful work – work that meets clear community-level needs or that advocate on issues that resonate with large, broad-based constituencies?”
  - b. “What can CIS do to support that work and those organizations?”
  - c. “How can both the work and the organizations be leveraged to have a sector-wide impact, including by serving as a learning model to others?”
12. Establish and publicize parameters regarding the number and amounts of awards by location and/or thematic foci, review process, and evaluation criteria. More guidance on the kinds of projects CIS is interested in supporting in light of USAID’s priorities, combined with a clear definition of what a civic initiative is, will serve to increase the quality and reduce the number of proposals.
13. Provide feedback for all proposals to reduce allegations of bias and favoritism. Understanding that this is time-consuming, it could be assisted with a checklist or enlist interns rather than using senior staff time. Applications should be scored, both overall and by section so that successful and unsuccessful applicants alike can know how they fared under each section; scoring criteria should be made clear and explained to applicants during the solicitation process; and rejected applicants should be provided with detailed reviews of their applications.
14. Make awards to support projects over a longer period of time to allow sufficient time for meaningful impact and achievement of stated goals.
15. Ensure more grants supported projects have an advocacy component.
16. Provide more than 10 percent funding to cover CSOs’ operating costs of organizations that show promise and can demonstrate relevance to their community or constituency. Such funding should be provided in tranches with benchmarks for organizational development.
17. Support grantees (especially DRG) to build their capacity to define, subsequently assess, and measure specific project outcomes. Grantees should be assisted to develop tailored approaches

to capturing change in their projects. Building the capacity of grantees (especially DRG ones) to capture and demonstrate impact in their work will focus their efforts and encourage them to consider the cumulative effect of their programming.

18. Streamline processes and clarify the need for approvals/clearances to ensure such procedures do not impede the smooth operation of projects or jeopardize the relevance of their work.

## **Capacity Building**

19. Training participants should be vetted to determine their knowledge and level of sophistication relative to civil society, and should attend training geared to the appropriate level. CSOs should be placed into categories of “emerging,” “developing,” and “advancing” in order to reflect its capacity and development stage. For example, “emerging” CBOs that do not understand or buy-into the importance of organizational development should attend training to develop that ethos; organizations in the “advancing” tier may be assisted with experts embedded within the organization to work closely with its staff for a specified time period to address pre-identified gaps, build specialized capacity in areas of interest to the CSO, and provide customized support. The design and delivery of assistance would have to take into account the high turnover of staff throughout the sector; specific steps would be needed to ensure that skills acquired via in-house training would be retained by the recipient organization.
20. Identify niche or advanced training requirements common to several CSOs and consider providing in-house training and coaching tailored to those needs.
21. Lengthen training duration to make training more substantive and meaningful.
22. Ensure that training on advocacy is grounded in what works and what does not in the Jordanian context. Such training would include discussion of the relative effectiveness of various advocacy approaches tried within this context, whether at the local, governorate, or national levels.
23. Slightly expand the number of ISOs to be paired with CBOs to provide specialized and tailored assistance. This may create a healthy degree of competition among organizations delivering training.
24. Introduce ISC participants to social accountability mechanisms as a way to introduce advocacy alongside service delivery.

# EVALUATION PURPOSE AND EVALUATION QUESTIONS

## Evaluation Purpose

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 CIS Program, which will be entering its third year in late 2015. Given the dynamics in the region and Jordan since CIS's inception, the Mission requested both a Civil Society sector assessment and a performance evaluation of CIS in order to inform CIS's third-year workplan, which will be developed in October 2015. The purpose of this evaluation is to provide specific guidance for USAID and CIS's workplan development and implementation for the remainder of CIS. This is an evaluation of activity implementation as well as an evaluation of CIS program design and objectives in light of the Civil Society Assessment findings.

## Evaluation Questions

The main evaluation questions were finalized with USAID in July 2015 following extensive discussions with the CIS program staff:

**Question 1:** How effective<sup>2</sup> are CIS's grant-making mechanisms,<sup>3</sup> grant design, grant awarding processes, and grant management systems in supporting:

- a) National and sub-national civic initiatives;
- b) Organizational development;<sup>4</sup>
- c) Improved service-delivery capacity; and
- d) Advocacy development?<sup>5</sup>

**Question 2:** How effective is the training/capacity building component of CIS in supporting:

- a) National and sub-national civic initiatives;
- b) Organizational development;
- c) Improved service delivery capacity; and
- d) Advocacy development?

**Question 3:** To what extent is CIS increasing the frequency and quality of GoJ-civil society interaction, and how can it best support collaboration between these two stakeholders to advance development and reform objectives?<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> An effective intervention is defined here as one that meets two criteria: responsiveness and congruence. It must be *responsive* to the needs of the civic initiative it seeks to support and *congruent* with both the distinct profile of the recipient CSO (or CSOs) and the environment in which the latter operates. On "congruence" and its importance to civil society programming in Jordan, see the Civil Society Assessment.

<sup>3</sup> The "mechanisms" in question refer to two types of grants: those awarded through an Annual Program Statement (APS) and thematic ones. The evaluation was tasked with assessing the relative effectiveness of each mechanism and with determining whether grant making is generally effective as a tool for supporting civic initiatives.

<sup>4</sup> "Organizational development" is defined here as encompassing management systems (management of financial resources, operations, and staff/volunteers) and external relations (relations with constituencies, other CSOs, the media, the public and the government).

<sup>5</sup> Advocacy development is defined as involving three discrete but related components: a) improved understanding of why advocacy matters to a CSO's ability to achieve its objectives; 2) enhanced readiness to engage in it; and 3) stronger capacity to advocate (by the targeted CSO as well as its individual staff members).

**Question 4:** Which key assistance gaps, including those identified by the Civil Society Assessment, remain to be filled under each of CIS's two components (grant-making and capacity-building)? Which alterations should be made to each? And which opportunities present themselves (including due to prior CIS activities) to enable CIS to become more effective in achieving its stated objective of promoting the common interests of Jordanians?<sup>7</sup>

As the assessment is foundational to this evaluation it is recommended that the assessment is read as well. The assessment was conducted from May through June 2015 and had three objectives: 1) to provide an up-to-date, detailed and empirically-grounded analysis of the civil society sector; 2) to facilitate the evaluation of CIS through an enhanced understanding of sector dynamics, challenges, and opportunities that confront it; and 3) to formulate broader recommendations and suggest intervention priorities to guide USAID's efforts to support Jordanian civil society.

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<sup>6</sup> It was agreed with USAID that the evaluation would focus on three key dimensions of this question: a) through both its grant-making and capacity-building components, is CIS creating meaningful opportunities for GoJ-civil society dialogue, especially to address development and reform challenges?; b) what is the relative effectiveness of each component in this area?; and c) how can CIS enhance the readiness and capacity of both the GoJ and civil society to engage with each other to address development and reform challenges?

<sup>7</sup> For questions 1, 2, and 4, fieldwork was designed to capture the extent to which the approach followed by CIS a) was sensitive to and addressed gender differentials and/or gaps; and b) ensured relevant capacity development in the governorates (including support to CSOs/informal groups based outside Amman).

# PROJECT BACKGROUND

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**Project Title:** Civic Initiatives Support (CIS)

**Award Number:** RFA 278-13-000004

**Award Dates:** 2013-2018

**Funding:** \$40,000,000 - Phase I (\$15 million for Years I-III: 2013-2016) and Phase 2 (\$25 million for Years IV-V: 2016-2018)

**Procurement Mechanism:** Cooperative Agreement

**Implementing Partner:** FHI 360

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Implemented by FHI 360, CIS is a five-year 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 around common interests; endeavors to strengthen the organizational capacity of CSOs; and promotes collaboration between the GoJ and civil society to address the reform and development challenges facing the kingdom.<sup>8</sup>

CIS awards grants to groups that carry out projects that respond to citizens' demands and are engaged in thematic areas that are in line with USAID's

CDCS. CIS also provides institutional strengthening customized to individual CSOs' needs and delivers technical assistance to facilitate coalition building among CSOs as well as dialogue between civil society and government as appropriate and relevant to the supported grantees' projects. CIS activities fall under three program components: I) Sub-awards in support of Jordanian Civil Society Initiatives; II) Capacity Building for Sustainability; and III) Enhancing Government-Civil Society Engagement.

Support for Jordanian civil society actors working in the fields of DRG, economic development, education, energy, environment, health, and/or water 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 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 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.

Program interventions include:

- a. The Civic Initiatives Support Fund (CISF);
- b. Democracy, Human Rights & Governance Grants (DRGGs);
- c. Inclusive Development/Disability Rights Grants;
- d. The Civil Society Institutional Strengthening Fund;
- e. Internal Strengthening for Change (ISC);
- f. Partnerships for Jordan's Development;<sup>9</sup>
- g. Grants for Innovative Approaches in Engaging Students, Teachers, Communities & Parents to Combat Violence and Promote Social Justice;<sup>10</sup> and
- h. Capacity Building Opportunities for CSOs and CBOs, provided through OSCs.

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<sup>8</sup> "USAID Civic Initiatives Support Program: An Overview," December 2014.

<sup>9</sup> The Partnerships for Jordan's Development is meant to support innovative approaches to joint civil society and private sector partnerships that address Jordan's development challenges.

<sup>10</sup> This program intervention is an addition to the CIS program and is funded by the Education funds.

According to CIS senior management, CIS's workplan is designed to accommodate emerging opportunities in the sector. Throughout the first year of CIS, the program's activities were continually reviewed and revised (postponed, dropped and added) with USAID concurrence for others that seemed more promising. Important changes in the last two years include the design and launch of two new requests for applications (RFAs), one for innovative approaches to engaging students, teachers, communities, and parents to combat violence and promote social justice; and the second for supporting inclusive development/disability rights. CIS senior management also cites technical assistance support to the Higher Council for Affairs of Persons with Disabilities (HCD) as an important workplan revision.

Due to the larger than anticipated number of grant proposals and USAID's subsequent request to fund a larger than anticipated number of grants, two interventions that had been planned for Year II, the Networks for Action and the Societies Empowerment Program, were postponed.

CIS management also reports that minor revisions were made to its Results Framework and to enhance the gender and disability indicators for additional disaggregation.

The CIS AMEP describes the activity's theory of change as follows:

*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.*

The CIS project's Results Framework is as follows:<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> This is the 2013 version of the Results Framework. It has since been revised.

**USAID DO#2: Democratic Accountability Strengthened**

**USAID CIS Project Purpose: Civil society empowered to respond to and promote common interests through the implementation of initiatives at the national and sub-national level.**

P1: #/type of public policies changed consistent with CSO advocacy.

P2: % of targeted CSOs rate as showing improvement within the area of capacity building support received.

P3: # of instances of GoJ – Civil Society communications in which civic concerns are attempted to be addressed by local authorities.

P4: # of laws, policies or procedures, drafted, proposed or adopted in accordance to Jordan's international and national obligations.

**IR1: CSO engagement is effective.**

- 1.1: # of new laws, regulations or constitutional amendments that protect fundamental freedoms and are consistent with international human rights standards adopted with USG assistance.
- 1.2: # of laws, policies, and procedures proposed, or adopted to promote gender equality at the regional, national or local level.
- 1.3: # of coalitions created as a result of USG support.
- 1.4: % of targeted CSOs as showing improvement on an advocacy index adapted by USAID CIS.

**IR1.1: Civic Initiatives supported.**

- 1.1.1: # of CSOs receiving USG assistance engaged in advocacy interventions
- 1.1.2: # of domestic NGOs engaged in monitoring or advocacy work on human rights receiving USG support
- 1.1.3: # of local CSOs supported in conducting outreach, community mobilization and civic engagement.
- 1.1.4: # of organizations supported by USG.
- 1.1.5: # of beneficiaries from the grants.
- 1.1.6: # of initiatives led by informal groups with USAID CIS support
- 1.1.7: # of joint initiatives by CSOs and the private sector.
- 1.1.8: # of initiatives targeting marginalized groups (youth, women, disabilities and hosting communities).

**IR2: CSOs function more effectively**

- 2.1: # of CSOs receiving capacity building support.
- 2.2: # of CSOs implementing strategic plans.

**IR2.1: CSO capacity building efforts undertaken.**

- 2.1.1: # of CSOs that develop a strategic plan
- 2.1.2: # of individuals trained within USAID CIS direct interventions.

**IR2.2: ISO service provision strengthened**

- 2.2.1: # of CSOs and/or CBOs trained by ISOs

**IR3: CS-GoJ interaction is enhanced.**

- 3.1: # of public forums resulting from USG assistance in which national legislators and members of the public interact.
- 3.2: # of development issues addressed by CS-GoJ cooperation.

**IR3.1: Civil Society - GoJ dialogue increased**

- 3.1.1: # of opportunities for CS-GoJ dialogue supported.
- 3.1.2: # of research activities supported.

**IR3.2: GoJ capacity to engage CS improved.**

- 3.2.1: # of trainings or workshops on government capacity building.
- 3.2.2: # of GoJ staff trained.

# EVALUATION METHODS AND LIMITATIONS

## Methods

The evaluation employed a qualitative approach to answering the evaluation questions. Research began with a comprehensive review of CIS reports and documentation, as well as the Civil Society Assessment that was commissioned by USAID, conducted by the same team of independent consultants, and completed in August 2015.

To maximize the utility of the evaluation to CIS and USAID, the evaluation team used a participatory planning approach that relied heavily upon CIS staff input to finalize the evaluation questions and the approach. As a result, 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).

Using those criteria, the two program interventions selected to serve as the basis for evaluating grant-making interventions were the CISF (the highest-funded intervention thus far with approximately \$8 million out of \$20 million awarded to date) and the DRGGs (with a total of over \$3 million); the two program interventions selected to help evaluate institutional strengthening/capacity building interventions were ISC (with well over 700 beneficiary organizations to date) and the demand-driven OSCs for CSOs and CBOs. The participatory planning approach used also resulted in the decision to interview the following stakeholders:

- a. CIS staff;
- b. CIS grantees and capacity building beneficiaries;
- c. Staff from the three ISOs through which CIS's ISC program component is delivered;
- d. Rejected applicants for CISF and DRG grants;
- e. Government officials;
- f. Civil society experts; and
- g. Civil society activists (including at national CSOs and CBOs).

Fieldwork was conducted throughout August 2015. Data collection methods included FGDs, group interviews, and key informant interviews (KIs).

FGDs, group interviews, and KIs were all conducted in Arabic and were guided by semi-structured questionnaires covering the evaluation topics. Interview guides were tailored to each category of stakeholders. Guides were intended to preserve the potential for a relatively free-flowing conversation, while creating a standardized format to facilitate a reliable, comparative analysis of data (see Annex V).

Fourteen interviews were conducted with key informants who were selected based on their knowledge and affiliation of the sector through their professional experience, and/or their familiarity with the CIS program. The key informants consisted of civil society experts (including academics and journalists), GoI officials (including at the governorate level), and civil society activists.

Twenty-two FGDs were held with the following groups: four with rejected applicants (three CISF and one DRG), six with participants in the OSCs, and 12 with ISC beneficiaries.

Nineteen group interviews were conducted with CISF grantees, and another seven with DRG grantees.<sup>12</sup>

The sampling of respondents targeted for the evaluation reflected the four program interventions selected (CISF, DRGGs, ISC, and OSCs). Of the 28 Round I CISF grantees, 16 were chosen to represent all governorates in which Round I of the program is being implemented and to cover all USAID CDCS themes supported by CIS. The sample was selected randomly within each geographic location and constructed to ensure coverage of both registered CSOs and informal groups working on civic initiatives. The 14 selected key informants included experts with the ISOs through which training is delivered to various CBOs. Three of the four focus groups held with rejected applicants specifically targeted applicants for CISF grants, while one focus group concentrated on applicants to the DRGGs.

Type of Grantee	No. of Group Interviews	No. of Participants		
		Total	Female	Male
CISF (RI)	16	31	21	10
DRG	7	11	8	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>13</b>

The focus group with applicants to the DRGGs covered Amman only, as the vast majority of applicants (and therefore rejected ones) were from the capital. The breakdown per governorates of the three focus groups with rejected CISF applicants was as follows:

- One to cover Irbid, Mafrq, Jerash and Ajloun in the North;
- One for Amman, Zarqa Balqa and Madaba in the center; and
- One for Maan, Karak, Tafileh and Aqaba in the South.

Focus groups with participants in the OSCs included two focus groups for each of the following three regions:

- Irbid and Mafrq in the North;
- Amman, Jerash, Zarqa Ajloun and Madaba in the center; and
- Ma'an, Tafileh and Aqaba in the South.

Twelve focus groups were held with CBOs that have benefited from Round I and II of the ISC program. Organizations selected were from Karak, Tafileh, Madaba, Zarqa, Ma'an, Irbid, Aqaba, Balqa, Mafrq, and Amman, representing all governorates in which the program is implemented.

In addition, six FGDs were held with CSOs that have participated in CIS's OSCs<sup>13</sup> with particular focus on those who had attended training. For organizations in which trainees had left the organization, the head of the CSO was invited to participate in the FGD.

All electronic source data files are on the Monitoring and Evaluation Support Project (MESP) file server and hard copies are warehoused with MESP. Upon request from USAID or closure of MESP, both electronic and hard-copy data files will be transferred to USAID per USAID Data Policy. Prior to conducting the evaluation, all evaluation team members signed Conflict of Interest forms indicating that they had no conflicts of interest related to the evaluation; these forms are on file with Management System International's (MSI) home office and are available upon request.

<sup>12</sup> All seven DRG grantees were interviewed, as DRGGs amount to significant funding relative to overall program budget.

<sup>13</sup> The selection of these organizations was based on three factors: subject area of courses; male/female ratio; and regional distribution of governorates.

## Limitations

As customary with qualitative research, data collected through the group interviews, key informant interviews, and focus groups is self-reported and as such presents possible limitations. The limitations were mitigated through triangulation with CIS monthly and quarterly reports and interviews with CIS program staff. They were also mitigated through sampling at least five focus groups for each stakeholder group, defined by the four CIS interventions (DRG, CISF, ISC and OSC). In addition, all seven DRG grantees and more than half of the CISF Round I grantees were interviewed.

# FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

## Findings: Question I

**Question I: How effective are CIS's grant-making mechanisms, grant design, grant awarding processes, and grant management systems in supporting:**

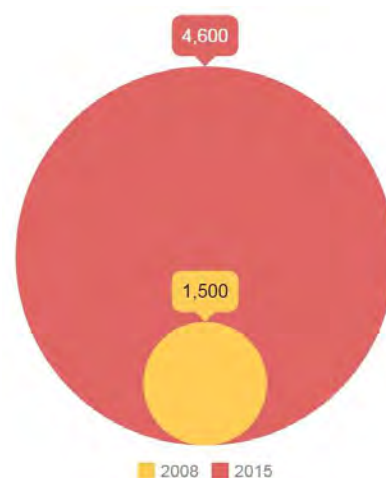
- a) National and sub-national civic initiatives;
- b) Organizational development;
- c) Improved service-delivery capacity; and
- d) Advocacy development.

This section evaluates the mechanisms and processes associated with CIS's grant-making and assesses the extent to which they are effective in supporting national and sub-national initiatives by CSOs; contribute to these CSOs' organizational development; improve their service-delivery capacity; and develop their understanding of advocacy and inclination to engage in it. The two CIS interventions that served as the basis for evaluating grant-making interventions are the CISF and the DRGG.

### National and Sub-National Civic Initiatives

The sector has experienced exponential growth since the late 2000s. In the past seven years alone, the number of officially registered CSOs has tripled from approximately 1,500 in 2008 to over 4,600 today.<sup>14</sup> Nonetheless, the sector assessment conducted in 2015 revealed that CSOs lack an organic connection to the communities they claim to serve and are failing to consult widely and meaningfully with the communities from which they emanate. Furthermore, the assessment found that the advocacy component of civil society remains underdeveloped and the sector is generally fragmented with CSOs insufficiently specialized and spread too thin.<sup>15</sup> This tremendous growth may be driven largely by individuals seeking to access the funding that donors allocate for civil society assistance.<sup>16</sup> This dynamic was captured by the following observation from a CISF rejected applicant who stated, "I established a non-governmental organization (NGO) to get grants. My application was rejected twice. I am desperate. I think training is more my thing."

Growth of Registered CSOs from 2008 to 2015



The objective of CIS is to empower civil society to respond to and promote common interests through the implementation of initiatives at the national and sub-national level,<sup>17</sup> as evidenced by CIS Intermediate Result (IR) 1.1, *Civic Initiatives Supported*. The CISF APS was designed in line with the original AMEP submitted in December 2013 and approved by USAID. The AMEP Performance Indicator Reference Sheet (PIRS) defines a "civic initiative" as "an action to address a common problem by a group of people or an organizational coalition."<sup>18</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, page 29.

<sup>15</sup> USAID draft "2015 Civil Society Assessment," page.28.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> "USAID Civic Initiatives Support Program YII Targets –as of 21 May 2015." USAID/FHI360.

<sup>18</sup> "USAID Civic Initiatives Support Program YI PMP PIRS December 2013. USAID/FHI360.

In order to expand the program's reach to go beyond "the usual suspects" and support social groups and local initiatives operating at the grassroots level, the Grants Evaluation Committee (GEC) opted to take a more liberal approach to approving applications that may not include hard evidence of community need but point to the likelihood of need based on the CSOs' past experience in a technical area and particular community, as well as the GEC's own knowledge of priorities.

Two-thirds of CISF respondents were able to clearly articulate their vision, constituency, and the communal need for the projects. One of which is an organization that provides educational opportunities supplemented by capacity building, and is trying to "revolutionize the tools to address civil society and break the cycles of elitism in civic education." This CSO reaches more than 600,000 followers on its Facebook page. Another organization is addressing systemic violence in schools by building students and teachers' capacity to address conflict. The organization has based its CIS supported project on the results of two studies conducted under a previous project and is hoping to incrementally scale-up its work.

That said, 33 percent of CISF respondents were unable to justify the communal need for their projects. When asked how the organization ascertained a need for the project, one organization said, "through our interaction with people," while another determined need "through my work in the organization, through teaching, and through personal observation." A CISF grantee who received funding for youth empowerment was unable to describe in simple terms the main challenges that confront Jordanian youth today.

Half of the 16 CISF-supported groups interviewed focused their projects on training activities that appear to have little civic relevance. Interviews with these civil society actors revealed a lack of grassroots constituencies, and a focus on "soft" issues with low mobilization potential that lack research and data to demonstrate the need for them. For instance, when a CISF grantee was asked to articulate the community needs that her CSO's project was meant to address, she answered, "We felt women need more training and found that there is currently no organization in the community to teach women cooking skills." When that same respondent was asked to identify her CSO's core constituency, she responded, "We focus on all constituencies, including kids, women, youth, and Syrian refugees." When prompted to discuss the core activities of her organization, she replied, "We do summer camps, offer typing lessons, hold cultural exhibitions, and distribute food items during Ramadan." She identified the biggest challenge confronting her organization as "being unable to find trainers with CVs." Such findings that point to weak constituencies and lack of specialization issues are indicative of the sector itself and consistent with the Civil Society Assessment.

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"I established an NGO to get grants. My application was rejected twice. I am desperate. I think training is more my thing"

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In communities where USAID and other donor funding is known to have supported projects that do not address communities needs and where projects did not result in tangible improvements in people's daily lives, community members are skeptical of the value of donor assistance and less likely to rally behind USAID-supported "civic initiatives." For instance, a CIS grantee in Irbid noted that when he started to implement his project it was difficult to generate buy-in from his community who told him that "over 70 USAID initiatives have already taken place in this community without people seeing any change."

## CISF Grant Selection, Awarding and Management Process

The CISF is announced as an APS, the main mechanism for grant-making through which proposals are accepted on a rolling basis over a 12-month period. According to CIS, APS was selected as the grant

mechanism in order to be “flexible and broad enough to fund unsolicited and sole-source proposals.”<sup>19</sup> During Round I, CIS received 253 CISF applications. Of these proposals, 28 grants were awarded.

According to CIS, the proposal review cycle takes months and entails the following stages: 1) applications are screened by CIS for eligibility and administrative compliance followed by an internal evaluation to determine whether proposals contain all the necessary documents and meet basic requirements specified in the APS; 2) proposals are reviewed by the GEC;<sup>20</sup> and 3) proposals are reviewed by the relevant USAID sector team for final validation prior to award (i.e., Economic Development and Energy (EDE), Education and Youth (EDY), Population and Family Health (PFH)). According to the grants manual, the GEC consists of “representatives of FHI360, USAID, and the donor community who are familiar with the goals of the FHI 360 grants programs.” The GEC is composed primarily of USAID staff and representatives from CIS; while each GEC has different members, the composition is typically two USAID staff and one CIS staff; although in some cases, it is three USAID staff and two CIS staff. Applications are based upon the following criteria:

- The proposed initiative, its relevance to the target audience and expected results (50 percent);
- Capacity and past performance of the applicant (20 percent);
- Engagement and inclusion approaches (10 percent); and
- Activities, approach to challenges, and innovation (20 percent).<sup>21</sup>

Once USAID has short-listed proposals (for full or partial funding, with or without conditions), proposals are returned to CIS for due diligence to confirm that short-listed applicants have the technical, administrative and financial capacity to manage the grant. By the time a grantee passes due diligence and the grant agreement between USAID and the CSO is signed, at least six months have passed. From there, the grantee must apply for GoJ approval, a process that takes at least several weeks, and sometimes months.



**11 of 23 CISF and DRG grantees**  
feel that the review process involves  
too many steps

Eleven of the 16 interviewed CISF-supported groups and seven DRG grantees felt that the review process involves too many steps and stakeholders. They commented on the frustration that this creates among applicants, and noted that the time spent waiting for the necessary approvals often impacts negatively not just the project’s timeline, but its very feasibility or relevance. As one grantee describes, “We applied in summer and CIS answered us in winter, which is the wrong time to hold cleaning campaigns.” Another commented that, “Our challenge was that once CIS gave us their okay, students had started their summer holiday and our plan was no longer possible.” One grantee reported waiting seven months for grant approval from CIS, and another seven months to secure approval from the GoJ, commenting that “after all this waiting, one loses momentum.”

<sup>19</sup> USAID CIS Program, “Summary Version of Final Approved Proposal,” August 8, 2013, page 5.

<sup>20</sup> An APS is open for a 12-month period and applications are evaluated periodically as per deadlines defined in the APS. The vast majority of applications however are received toward the end of the review period during which the APS is open. As a result, CIS staff review the bulk of applications during a short period.

<sup>21</sup> “USAID Civic Initiatives Support Fund Annual Program Statement Modification #2, Effective August 3, 2014,” page 7.

The extensive time and effort to manage the APS mechanism is a source of concern among CIS. As described by one, “Our work involves a lot of handholding, a lot of process and very little time to go to the field. We end up concentrating on the least capable grantees as a means of damage control. This is at the expense of supporting really good projects that have a lot of potential.” Four organizations expressed their disappointment with CIS for not visiting their activities, and contrasted that situation with CIS’s regular requests for progress reports. Respondents also commented that reporting requirements are excessively bureaucratic and cumbersome. Two organizations commented that delayed payments were causing hardship. “July and August have not been paid yet by CIS. If we weren’t such a strong organization we would not have lasted. We would have stopped the project. We are incurring a lot of debt.”

Although the initial solicitation document contained illustrative descriptions for projects of a civic nature, USAID requested that CIS remove them in order to broaden the applicant pool in an attempt to attract innovative ideas. Nonetheless, the solicitation instrument does not define what constitutes “innovation” or offer guidance to applicants in conceptualizing innovative ideas. According to CIS staff, casting such a wide net without guidance results in a large number of low quality and poorly conceived proposals that miss the mark on innovation and have little to do with civic initiatives.

Sixteen of the 23 CISF and DRG grantees interviewed said they had no problem with CIS’s reporting requirements, while seven grantees expressed some frustration with what they consider “excessive bureaucracy” and having to “always go back to USAID to make decisions.” One interviewee conveyed his irritation by noting, “We are always sending reports, but they [CIS’s staff] are still asking questions. We feel that they are not reading the reports we send. They keep asking for more meetings... We feel that we are sending sufficient information.” Another grantee remarked, “It usually takes a few months to establish a work flow with a donor, but this [working with CIS] has taken a lot of back and forth. We now have new reporting requirements and financial procedures. It is just too time consuming.”

Twenty-nine percent of respondents raised the issue of USAID’s branding requirements and requirements for communication approvals. One CISF grantee said, “USAID wants us to build a relationship with the media but the problem is that if you want to do a press release, you need to get it approved from USAID which takes up to 10 days by which time the press release is already old news.”<sup>22</sup>

USAID’s branding requirements are particularly worrying to DRG grantees, the small group of CSOs that have received relatively larger grants under a more targeted DRG grant. Four DRG grantees reported concern over possible public backlash for their USAID supported advocacy work. One DRG grantee observed, “USAID will need to ease its branding requirements, otherwise our advocacy work will be jeopardized.”

Throughout the fieldwork, there was an implicit recognition by DRG grantees that the nature of the bilateral relationship between the United States Government (USG) and the GoJ makes it difficult for CIS (or any other USG-funded program) to extend grants to CSOs working on sensitive political issues, and for CSOs engaged in such issues to accept USAID funding. For example, the Information Research Center-King Hussein Foundation (IRCKHF) spearheading the coalition that launched the campaign for nationality rights for the children of Jordanian women married to non-Jordanians – a citizenship issue that is central to both gender equality and the country’s broader reform process – decided not to apply for donor funding for the coalition. They claimed that publicizing foreign funding to support advocacy on highly sensitive issues might compromise the results; the campaign could be construed as a foreign agenda related more to Palestinians’ rights in Jordan and Jordanian identity politics rather than gender concerns. Instead, the IRCKHF opted to apply for a CIS DRG grant to assist with its work on a much

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<sup>22</sup> USAID staff report that when a concern is raised, lighter branding is considered by CIS and USAID.

less threatening, but also relatively less significant cause. The coalition was previously funded by FHI360's CSP and is currently led by the IRCKHF, one of CIS's seven DRG grantees.

### Service Delivery Capacity



**13 of 16 CISF grantees** recognize their capabilities were indirectly enhanced

Although CIS grants are focused on project outcomes rather than on enhancing service delivery, 13 of the 16 CISF grantees report that their capabilities in service delivery were indirectly enhanced through project implementation and attendance at CIS capacity building activities. This in turn enabled them to better serve their target constituencies. For example, a CIS grant allowed the Jubilee Institute to recruit the services of stem.org, an American organization that has supplied over 4,500 schools, NGOs, and government agencies with Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) programs that include credentialing, curriculum design, professional development, consulting and advocacy.<sup>23</sup> The U.S.-based organization will train Jordanian teachers to apply a new methodology to deliver STEM training to Jordanian students, thus contributing to sustained teaching of STEM subjects.

### Readiness and Capacity to Advocate

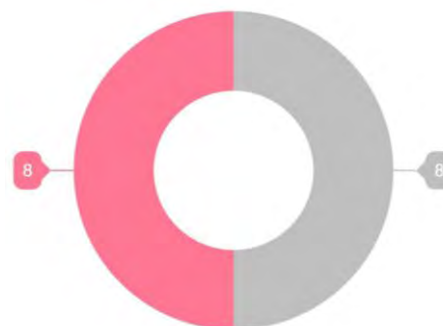
Advocacy is not required by CIS APS but instead is one of multiple options that grantees can undertake, and few applications contained advocacy initiatives.

CIS Year I AMEP and PIRS define advocacy as “a means for individuals, constituencies, or organizations to shape public agendas, change public policies, and influence other processes that impact their lives. Advocacy does not involve one march, meeting, or poster, but a series of strategic, interconnected, integrated activities designed to achieve a goal. It may include a wide range of activities, such as lobbying, public interest litigation, letter writing campaigns, civil disobedience, etc.”

There is a slight yet important discrepancy between the PIRS definition and that in the *CIS Summary Version of Final Approved Proposal (2013)* in which “advocacy” includes initiatives that range from “activities designed to affect positive change on the individual level to a participatory political process to influence public policy or resource allocation decisions.”<sup>24</sup> For reasons already described, CIS followed the more liberal definition in awarding grants.

As CISF focuses on reaching a broad base of nascent CSOs with good ideas, it should not be surprising that half of CISF interviewees were unable to describe why and how advocacy matters to their work. This is in line with the civil society sector assessment and not a shortcoming of the CISF, but perhaps points to a need for civic education among the population. Those few projects that had an advocacy component were of the public interest variety and involved “awareness raising” on the lower end of the advocacy continuum.

On the other hand, CIS designed the DRG RFA in two phases: research/consultation after which the design of long-term advocacy strategies would take place. Six DRG grantees said that their projects strengthened their organizational capacity to advocate through exposure to new methodologies. One DRG respondent said: “We appreciate CIS’s support of an advocacy continuum from research to



**8 of the 16 CISF grantees** were able to describe why and how advocacy matters to their work

<sup>23</sup> Stem.org

<sup>24</sup> USAID CIS Program, “Summary Version of Final Approved Proposal,” August 8, 2013, p.6.

legislative change with the readiness to allow us to change course if we were faced with challenges or identified new opportunities.” One DRG grantee has received considerable media coverage as it spearheads a campaign to abolish Article 308 of the Penal Code, which stipulates that rapists be spared punishment or legal prosecution if they marry their victims. The campaign has been successfully organized with a coalition comprising 52 civil community organizations.

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“We appreciate CIS’s support of an advocacy continuum from research to legislative change with the readiness to allow us to change course if we were faced with challenges or identified new opportunities”

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Thirty percent of the CISF grantees expressed keen interest in learning more about advocacy and in participating in CIS’s training workshops on the subject.

## Organizational Development

Almost all grantees said they benefited from the capacity building activities held by CIS and five of the 23 CISF and DRG grantees recognized additional benefit from interaction with CIS staff.

Even though CIS provides direct mentoring during project implementation, almost half of the 23 CISF and DRG grantees thought that training offered through CIS was short and should be augmented with follow-up and opportunity for practical application. Three grantees said they typically take part in training activities because they feel required to do so under the grant agreement, or because they believe doing so will help maintain the goodwill of CIS staff toward them.

To assess institutional capacity, CIS, depending on the size of the organization, utilizes either the Institutional Development Assessment (IDA) or the Institutional Capacity Assessment Tool (ICAT) tools. Both tools have a self-assessment component that assists organizations to reflect on their internal systems and structures, and design an institutional development plan.

Even though the evaluation did not explicitly inquire about the utility of the ICAT and IDA processes for CISF and DRG grantees, the subject surfaced during some interviews. When mentioned, most CISF and DRG grantees acknowledged the positive impact of these benchmark tools and have tried to incorporate recommendations into their activities. One of these organizations said: “The ICAT tool has provided an additional experience for staff, and helps confirm our confidence in selecting priorities to focus on for our ongoing development.” Another organization commented that it has incorporated ICAT recommendations into its projects and strategy, specifically a research and advocacy policy. Nonetheless, CIS observes that there is still a lack of recognition among some CSOs on the importance of capacity building, good governance, and strategic planning.

During CIS-conducted focus groups with large CIS and DRG grantees to collect data to inform USAID planning process for the grantees “end of project evaluation,” some DRG participants expressed concern about the upcoming evaluation and their ability to demonstrate impact. The grantees are worried that capturing “change” will be difficult because of the regional environment and local political landscape that, in their opinion, is affecting their work. CDFJ, Phenix Center and Al-Hayat Center agreed that it is becoming difficult to capture “measurable and solid” change in political reform efforts.<sup>25</sup> Grantees also said that reporting on output-level indicators, looking only at numbers and activities is easier than reporting on outcome indicators.

The networking events sponsored by CIS were deemed to be very helpful, with one interviewee noting that, “it was through the CIS program that we were introduced to the organizations with which we are currently working.” CIS held its second Civil Society Knowledge Forum in early October to allow

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<sup>25</sup> “EOP Evaluation Focus Group Report.” March 12, 2015, Page 3.

grantees an opportunity to exchange and share ideas and reflect on their work. The event was held in Arabic on the subject of change: how to define it; how to determine required change; how to effect change; and how to measure it. The event also included “innovation stations” that showcased the outstanding work of some CSOs. The “innovation stations” exposed a good number of participants to a large number of CSOs and their innovative methods. The event also highlighted the need for additional technical support on the subject of evaluations and the need to understand hierarchies of evidence.

The decision to allow grantees to set aside 10 percent (and in some cases more) of the amount of their award to address salient institutional needs was well-received by recipient organizations, however it is not possible to measure impact at this early stage. Many interviewees felt that being allowed to allocate a percentage of the grant to institutional development was very effective because they were able to utilize the allocation for specific capacity or equipment needs. Organizations used funds to address organizational strengthening priorities addressed by ICAT and IDA; improvements to their IT infrastructure; support for human resources; and improving financial systems. One organization used it to cover the cost of an in-house expert to train the organization’s staff on advocacy for one week.

## Gender

According to the 2014 CIS Gender Analysis and Workplan, CIS is to develop guidelines to ensure that every stage of the grant – needs assessment, design and formulation, implementation, management and monitoring and evaluation – is gender sensitive.

CIS has a gender advisor who works directly with grantees to ensure that gender-related considerations are mainstreamed throughout CIS components and grants. All CISF grantees go through a gender orientation session. For organizations that need more intensive support e.g., projects that have a gender component, CIS provides a two-day training session on gender and inclusion. Grantees attending this training are asked to resubmit their action plan for the project in light of what they have learned during the training. Each DRG project is required to identify a “gender focal point” tasked with ensuring that the project takes into consideration gender dimensions.

While CIS’s approach is gender sensitive, CSOs’ ability and willingness to integrate gender remains modest. According to CIS’s Senior Gender Advisor, analysis of issues remains shallow in grantees’ activity outputs such as research reports, position papers, and policies.<sup>26</sup> She also reported that gender issues are sometimes “marginalized” or “badly addressed” by some of the grantees, and that organizations’ discourse on gender does not match their actions in integrating gender into their work even with CIS’s support on the issue. Referring to two CISF grantees, she said, “Both organizations dealt superficially with the feedback delivered to them to an extent that suggests that they do not fully understand the comments or simply choose to ignore it.”

Within DRG grantees, gender focal points are facing challenges in their ability to mainstream gender into projects due to their foggy understanding of what constitutes gender issues, and which issues would be considered gender sensitive. Another reason relates to the gender focal points’ management authority within their own organizations (which affects the level of responsiveness of other staff to their efforts) and their knowledge of the subject. Despite the continuous support of the gender advisor, organizations receiving gender support still exhibit a weak capacity and more importantly a weakness of will to effectively address gender issues and to integrate and apply new knowledge gained through CIS support.<sup>27</sup> As the advisor notes in her report: “Although both CIS and the Gender Advisor confirm the Gender Advisor availability to support the gender focal points, hardly any contact her.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Ghosheh, Hala, “Draft Report for Period from March 1, 2015-June 30, 2015,” page 1.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid, page 3.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, page 6.

## Rejected Applicants

Round I resulted in 253 grant applications, out of which 44 were initially shortlisted. An email to those not selected stated, “USAID CIS will be more than happy to answer any inquiries you might have regarding your application” and included contact information for inquiries. According to CIS, feedback is provided to those applicants who ask for it as the volume of applications precludes detailed feedback. Some applicants took advantage of the feedback with 57 reapplying; three of these were shortlisted.

That said, almost all rejected applicants who were interviewed expressed frustration at the absence of feedback on why their application was rejected. Among applicants interviewed, most said they requested feedback but only one received a response (which the applicant described as generic and not particularly informative). Several rejected applicants expressed anger at “USAID” (not CIS) for not responding to their requests for information as to why their application was rejected. When the issue was probed, applicants were quick to point to favoritism and *wasta*, a common refrain in Jordan when people do not get what they want. “I heard that USAID gives grants to those organizations that have a good relationship with the *mukhabarat*” and “USAID gives grants to those with good *wasta*,” complained one applicant.

Several rejected applicants also complained about not knowing which organizations and projects had received funding, and where. They were of the opinion that for transparency purposes CIS should make it clear during the solicitation workshop how many organizations/projects will be funded in each governorate. One respondent observed that, “If selection criteria have nothing to do with thematic focus or location, and if grants are awarded based strictly on the relative strengths and merit of the proposals, then all grantees should be from Amman. If that is not the case, [CIS] should tell us clearly [ahead of time] how many projects will be funded in each governorate.” According to CIS, USAID has thus far preferred not to define governorate-level quotas for grants. An analysis of applications by governorates reveals that in some governorates, awardable applications are too few to meet a proposed quota.

A few rejected applicants from both Amman and the south felt that information on selection criteria provided in the solicitation workshop contradicted the actual selection criteria. As expressed by one applicant, “During the workshop, I was told that a proposal will receive a higher score if the project involves the government. But when my application was rejected, I was told that it was because the government had a role in the project.”

## Sustainability

Interviews revealed that securing funding from donors often becomes a CSO’s primary mission, a necessary survival mechanism for both grassroots CBOs, and national-level NGOs who by their own admission, “chase grants all the time.” Forty-three percent of respondents brought up the subject of scrambling to secure grants to sustain their organizations. One respondent said, “We need a lot of support to become sustainable. If I’m specialized and work well then focus on my organization. We want to expand. We want to do follow-on projects but funding limits us. Why do we always have to start new projects?” Another CIS grantee said, “There are now about 5,000 CSOs in Jordan. Why doesn’t USAID invest in those organizations that have been working with it for two, three, or four years; USAID should guide them and train them so they can take on bigger projects.” Another grantee said, “Most CSOs need budget support. The grant funds have to be for the project; it is a shame that I have to lose a girl I trained for six or eight months after the project ends.” Grantees blamed donors for this



**10 of 23 CISF and DRG grantees** say they are perpetually chasing grants to secure funding

state of affairs. One grantee said, “Grants are useful but USAID gives you a grant and then jumps to support another unrelated project. There is no sustainability to the projects they support.”

As a result, grantees seek to save a percentage of the grant in order to cover basic operational expenses. When that happens the project is not the end goal, but a means to securing a grant, and the grant’s main use is not to conduct the project, but to ensure the organization’s continued existence. As one applicant said: “We are running after these grants only to secure the 10 percent to cover our operational costs.”

## The CIS Team

Almost all CISF and DRG grantees provided unsolicited praise for the CIS team. They commented on members’ interpersonal skills and deep knowledge of the sector, professional demeanor, and evident commitment to CIS’ core mission. Grantees expressed appreciation for the quality of day-to-day communications with the CIS team and of their responsiveness to requests for advice and assistance, training, and feedback on existing and potential activities. They consistently lauded the personal qualities of individual members of the team, including their approachability. Several interviewees

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“Grants are useful but USAID gives you a grant and then jumps to support another unrelated project. There is no sustainability to the projects they support”

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specifically contrasted the pleasant and productive nature of their interaction with CIS staff with their far more negative recollections of prior experiences with implementers. One respondent volunteered that “CIS is very different from other donors. The wonderful thing is that they follow-up with continuous monitoring and capacity building.” Grantees also appreciated the flexibility to make justifiable adjustments to approved projects, so as to reflect unanticipated challenges and opportunities.

## Conclusions

CIS’s grant-making mechanisms, grant design, grant awarding process, and grant management systems directly support national and sub-national civic initiatives as defined by the program’s 2013 AMEP PIRS.

While CIS’ activities are aligned with the objectives described in the cooperative agreement, those objectives are not aligned with issues that the Civil Society Assessment highlighted as important for the sector in terms of building constituencies, a systematic approach to assessing communities’ needs, and deepening impact of civil society initiatives through cumulative change. In its attempt to support new and less formal players in the sector, CIS has supported organizations that lack large constituencies and needs analysis to substantiate the need for their projects.

If the intent of grants is to attract and support nascent and innovative CSOs, staff resources may need to be dedicated to identifying and mentoring those that have potential. While USAID is keen on reaching beyond the “usual suspects” of grant recipients within the sector, a clearer definition of “innovation” will need to be laid-out in the solicitation instrument and for the GEC to ensure that the program is able to nurture the hidden gems. Working more intensely with a smaller number of both nascent and more established organizations that demonstrate high potential with just-in-time assistance and coaching for to address the right issue at the right time would allow a more adaptive approach. This approach could also enhance sustainability of funded projects and CSOs, which is currently insufficiently addressed by CIS. It would also likely generate important lessons that could inform CIS’s future programming.

CIS’s technical support to CSOs is improving their ability to provide services to their constituents. Although improving service delivery is not a target objective, CSOs generally believe that their capabilities in service delivery are enhanced by virtue of their improved planning and management

resulting from CIS support. CSOs' capacity in advocacy is enhanced primarily when it is a focus of project support.

DRG grantees are clearly able to point to a newly acquired body of advocacy knowledge and skills attained through CIS support.

Because of the volume of applicants CIS is only able to provide basic feedback and to a limited number of rejected applicants. The absence of comprehensive feedback is foregoing a valuable opportunity for institutional development and feeds into suspicion that the process is "rigged" or based on *wasta* (personal connections to members of the CIS team or USAID).<sup>29</sup> Many rejected applicants had failed to understand that despite its open-ended nature, the application process would remain competitive. The prevailing assumption among grantees is that far more proposals will be funded, yet when funding fails to materialize and clear feedback is not received on reasons for rejection, disappointment turns into resentment, which in turn prompts allegations of favoritism.

## Findings: Question 2

**Question 2: How effective is the training/capacity building component of CIS in supporting:**

- a) National and sub-national civic initiatives;
- b) Organizational development;
- c) Improved service delivery capacity; and
- d) Advocacy development?

This section evaluates the extent to which CIS's capacity building activities are successful in supporting national and sub-national initiatives by CSOs; contribute to these CSOs' organizational development; improve their service-delivery capacity; and enhance their readiness and ability to engage in advocacy. The two CIS program interventions that served as the basis for this evaluation are ISC and OSCs for CSOs and CBOs. ISC is by far the more significant of these two components in terms of both funding and effort to reach out to a large number of CBOs across the country. ISC training is being delivered by three Jordanian ISOs selected through an open competition: the Jordan River Foundation (JRF), the Noor al-Hussein Foundation (NHF) and al-Thoria Center for Studies, Training and Consultation.

### Institutional Strengthening for Change

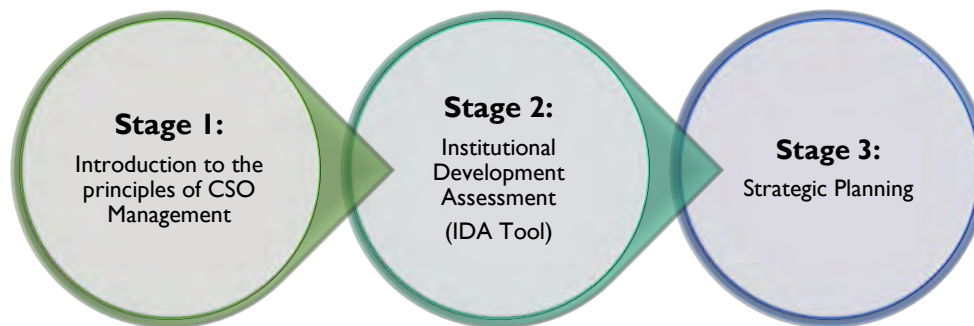
The ISC program primarily targets CBOs and newly-registered societies to introduce them to the fundamentals of sound institutional and program management. The program does not require that these organizations run civic initiatives; rather, ISC was designed to engage nascent organizations to provide them with training that could trigger interest in self-development and encourage them to use CIS specially tailored toolkit for Jordanian civil society.

Most of the organizations the program targets are engaged in small-scale charity activities and provide a limited range of welfare and relief services. Advanced stages of the ISC program require that organizations expand beyond charity work.

The program is delivered in three stages that assume progressively higher levels of institutional maturity by recipient organizations. Stage 1 provides an introduction to the principles of CSO management and good governance utilizing a "Societies Start-up Toolkit" previously developed under the USAID-funded Jordan Civil Society Program (CSP). In Stage 2, participants undergo an institutional development assessment using the IDA tool, while Stage 3 introduces some of them to strategic planning. In effect, stage 2 and 3 provide more in-depth interventions through the IDA, strategic planning, and one-on-one

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<sup>29</sup> *Wasta* can be loosely defined as the attempt to use the influence of family or friends to achieve certain objectives.



mentoring and to target more mature CBOs. Not all participants move through all stages. Only JRF and NHF deliver Stages 2 and 3 training.

ISC phase I reaches out to a large number of organizations with the toolkit training around 700 CSOs and introducing the concepts of CSO strengthening after which organizations can delve deeper to benefit from the IDA (target is 120 CSOs with 85 completed to date) and the strategic planning process (target is 60 CSOs with 42 completed to date). In response to CSO demand, CIS and the ISC partners designed a fourth component for one-on-one mentoring to further assist CSOs in organizational development (target is 20 CSOs).

To join, organizations submit an application and registration papers, and ensure that staff is computer literate. Requisites for the second stage include proof of registration and that the organization has been active for at least one year; annual income of at least JOD 1,500; at least one year remaining for the term of the current Board of Directors; and that the organization has attended stage one of the program. The third stage requires that the organization has successfully participated in the first two stages and that it has demonstrated commitment to the process through attendance and participation in the IDA process.

CIS has recently completed an initial assessment of Round I of the ISC program and determined revisions of the program, including the introduction of a fourth stage to provide further follow up to ISC participants. The team was not able to evaluate this new phase because of its recent implementation.

CIS's own assessment conducted in February 2015 revealed the following challenges faced by CSOs:<sup>30</sup>

1. The lack of basic computer competencies required for the Toolkit training;
2. Organizations not receiving a description of the training workshop and objectives beforehand;
3. Participation in the Toolkit training without providing an application or personal data; and
4. Insufficient duration of the training to fully understand the Toolkit contents.

The evaluation revealed that most FGD participants found the three-stage program useful while about 20 percent of organizations did not. Those who found it beneficial said that the toolkit training and subsequent stages helped them institutionalize their work and exposed them to new information that supported their organizational development. Almost half of the respondents were able to specify some changes they have instituted as a result of the knowledge gained; casual observation indicates that these organizations also have a higher level of organizational capacity than those who were unable to point to

<sup>30</sup> "ISC Assessment, Focus Group Discussions," February 5, 2015.

learning. The assessment that CIS conducted of the ISC program (mentioned earlier) revealed that Board of Director support in technical and financial issues is a significant determinant for CSOs to implement new management methods.<sup>31</sup>

The vast majority of those interviewed said the training improved their relationship with their constituents, and their ability to provide them services. Those participants found the toolkit informative and useful and were able to speak about subsequent assistance provided in the form of the IDA process and strategic planning support. Members of an Irbid-based CSO noted that they had all the systems in place before attending the training on the toolkit, but restructured them afterward to reflect their new knowledge and “the level of detail in the toolkit.” Members of other organizations volunteered that after attending the training they wrote down specific job descriptions for each position within the CBO and developed communication plans to engage the media. Those organizations were further able to describe how their participation in the program and the knowledge they acquired fed into their ability to offer improved services to their constituencies. One respondent said, “Now that we have a filing system I can easily keep a record of the people we serve and can easily find the names of our beneficiaries.”

Four respondents said that Stage 2 was too intensive to be conducted in the short time allotted for it. They cite the single day for IDA and expectation that participants develop an Institutional Development Plan (IDP) based on it. Participants voiced the limitation that a single day is insufficient for trainees to process and absorb the information to which they are exposed, and to develop an action plan to reflect the results. One respondent suggested that, “If they had divided it into stages, we would have benefited more.”

As the Civil Society Assessment demonstrated, the majority of CBOs have very limited capacity.<sup>32</sup> This general weakness on the part of CBOs was reflected in the evaluation when half of the interviewed organizations were unable to describe the new practices they introduced in their work as a result of the training. Second-tier CSO staff exhibited a shallower and often erroneous understanding of the support received through ISC. When asked what she had learned after attending all three stages of the ISC training, one participant answered, “Missions and things like that. We now know that one needs a mission for every project implemented.” These ISC participants were unable to demonstrate learning. One respondent said: “We took training; I just can’t remember on what.”

Those CBOs who only participated in Stage I (which is usually offered in two to three days) felt that the training period was too short, and lacked follow-up. These organizations did not seem aware that they could apply to participate in the follow-on stages of IDA, strategic planning and mentoring for organizational development. According to CIS, all CSOs are also welcome to participate in CIS open courses. Thirty-three ISC CSOs out of 105 who have completed their IDA have done so to date.

During the orientation session, applicants are clearly told that no funding is attached to this project. Despite that, 20 percent of respondents harbored expectations that participating in CIS’s training would lead to funding. As described by one CBO, “CIS trained us for 10 days and yet we only received a computer at the end. People who were smart enough to realize earlier that we would not be given grants at the end of the training pulled out of it.” Another respondent said, “training is useful but even when we implement changes, we still don’t get funded.”

Some respondents who had participated only in Stage I did not like being grouped with organizations of differing abilities and specializations. One respondent noted, “The training was redundant. The problem is that they do not differentiate between those who are working in this field for the very first time and those who have longer experience.” Two organizations suggested that it would be better to offer the Toolkit training to organizations working in the same field. One respondent said, “It makes no sense to

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> USAID, draft “2015 Civil Society Assessment”, page 23.

bring together an organization focused on empowering youth with another that provides assistance for burying the dead. We have nothing in common on which we could network.”

Three organizations out of those who attended Stage I commented about the lack of participants’ commitment. One respondent said, “You attend on day one and there are 20 people; the next day they are 15. The message is that I could do the same.”

Commenting on how they have become aware of the training offered, a few organizations confirmed findings by CIS’s own assessment, indicating they were contacted the night before the training and asked if they would be interested to join. When CIS assessed the program CSOs said they were recruited/invited verbally through acquaintances and other CSOs.<sup>33</sup> To ensure a minimum number of attendants, ISOs are tempted to relax recruitment and attendance requirements. Commenting on that, an ISO representative said, “We usually invite 10 CBOs to secure the participation of seven or eight, and then start scrambling to find the rest to get to 10. If a CBO representative needs to leave for a couple of hours for a family engagement I will let him.” CIS is aware of this problem and has taken steps to address it. An ISO representative told the evaluation team that CIS is now requiring that CIS staff participate in the selection and vetting process to ensure that participating CBOs exhibit the commitment and capacity to benefit from the training.

One ISO representative felt that the way training is evaluated does not reflect reality. He said that by the end of the training participants are usually tired and ready to leave, and they “just tick boxes on the forms without giving the questions much thought.” He further commented that the two-day training on the toolkit is far too short and basic to enable participants to answer many of the questions that they are asked to address on the third day.

The ISC program was not designed to build advocacy capacity but advocacy is addressed to some extent in the toolkit and within the strategic planning process. Consistent with the sector assessment, interviews and FGDs revealed that almost all members of CSOs who received ISC training had at most a rudimentary understanding of advocacy. Few understand advocacy to mean activities aimed at raising awareness of particular issues in the community; the notions of advocacy campaigns and lobbying authorities for change is foreign. As revealed in the assessment, the overwhelming majority of CBOs engage in service-delivery and charity so as to provide immediate, yet partial and temporary, relief from the crushing effects of poverty, disease, humanitarian crises, and other forms of hardship. They do not seek to tackle the root causes of those phenomena, addressing instead their manifestations, and even then, only for as long as they sustain access to the resources they need to conduct their circumscribed activities.<sup>34</sup>

Other than building the capacity of CBOs, the ISC program is supposed to build capacities of ISOs. Approximately 20 consultants and trainers from the three ISOs have participated in the strategic planning trainings, toolkit trainings and IDA facilitation. The three ISOs said they are building their capacity through their participation in the ISC program. NHF has taken on the IDA as a new tool that the organization can use beyond the ISC program and JRF used the strategic planning and mentoring developed through this project in their other projects. The three ISOs are using the toolkit themselves and have made organizational changes based on it; have gained exposure to new organizations in the field; and were able to train their staff in M&E techniques. They benefited directly from the institutional support fund, with one receiving a server and a computer. In addition, because CIS gave them access to its database of CBOs, they now are able to reach out to those CBOs for other non-ISC related projects, especially those already assessed through the IDA process.

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<sup>33</sup> “ISC Assessment, Focus Group Discussions,” February 5, 2015.

<sup>34</sup> USAID, draft “2015 Civil Society Assessment,” page 31.

According to JRF, “working with the Internal Strengthening for Change project staff at CIS and our local partners NHF and Al Thoria Center for Studies created a ‘one national team’ sense of responsibility as opposed to a responsibility towards our own organizations only. This joint responsibility came out clearly through the collaborative work in designing and implementing the different project phases, eventually resulting in ‘one voice’ and ‘one methodology’ in reaching out to our beneficiaries. This project allowed a group of experienced professionals from three national organizations to come together and exchange views and experiences on how we could best serve the capacity building needs of Jordanian civil society organizations. We always felt that we are partners in decision-making and in achievements, and that our institutional experiences are appreciated and leveraged.”

ISOs reported that they did not have problems recruiting female participants or women-led organizations. In fact, they found women more committed than men in their participation and attendance.

Almost all respondents expressed interest in additional training on financial management.

### Off-the-Shelf Courses

CIS’s open courses are clustered in three main themes: organizational management, project management, advocacy, and outreach. Courses target CIS grantees, other IP sub-awardees, CBOs and newly-registered societies enrolled under the ISC project, and any CSO interested in developing its capacity. Organizations interested in OSCs have to fill-out an application as well as a Learning Needs and Resources Assessment (LNRA). The clustering of training participants is according to their LNRA and courses offered. For example, CIS had conducted training on Project Design grouping larger organizations and smaller organizations separately.

While the majority of CISF and DRG grantees benefitted from OSC through organizational development and civic initiatives, almost half expressed reservations about the brevity of the training and the lack of follow-up to assist them in applying knowledge to their individual needs and interests. For instance, the open course focused on how to draft press releases is one half-day long. As one attendee observed, “It was good, but a four-hour workshop without practice is not very useful. With press releases, if you don’t write fifteen of them and receive feedback on each, you won’t be able to do it alone later on.” One respondent commented, “The course would have been more beneficial if there was time to discuss each attendees’ proposal so that I would know the strengths and weaknesses of what we’ve prepared.” Another respondent wished that the organizers shared “success stories” with the attendees.

Attendees commented that the M&E crash course offered by CIS was a first step in their understanding the importance of M&E but was insufficient for them to be able to apply M&E tools and practices. As one attendee explained, “The M&E training was really good but when I went back to my organization and tried to develop my own M&E plan I wasn’t able to do it.” Another DRG grantee commented that, “It was beneficial mostly in that it drew our attention to the need for more advanced M&E support and training.” CIS also offers a longer M&E course that includes a mentoring component where participants prepare their own M&E plans and receive feedback on them. CIS has delivered this course three times during the last two years.

Mentoring is a component of most Open Course curricula however; CSO response to this has been mixed, particularly with regard to commitment in fulfilling mentoring assignments. An in-house assessment of mentoring identified various challenges, which CIS has taken into consideration and are addressed in current capacity building design and delivery.

While most participants were satisfied with participant selection, small CBOs frequently have very few paid staff and training is attended by volunteers. This can present challenges, as described by one OSC attendee, “I would have really liked to apply what I learned on actual projects but the [CSO’s]

management did not allow me because I was a volunteer.” Some female trainees expressed the opinion that for cultural reasons it is preferable for them to have training workshops held close to their communities. Travelling to Amman proved to be somewhat difficult. One respondent said, “We want more training courses, but if the course finishes at 4:00 in Amman we do not reach home until 7:30.” Three CSOs explicitly requested specialized training on niche subjects, but noted that trainers with niche expertise are in short supply. Specific areas of training expertise mentioned include gender, online advocacy, family guidance, and health issues for women. Most respondents expressed keen interest in receiving advanced training in financial management, practical applications of M&E, and advocacy, as well as in having experts and specialized trainers housed in their respective organizations (or being shared among several of them)<sup>35</sup> so as to support their work in specific areas.

## Conclusions

CIS training provides limited offerings to support CSOs in designing and delivering national and sub-national civic initiatives through some of its training modules such as its Project Design and Proposal Writing Courses. For organizational development the ISC’s three-tiered approach allows for broad outreach to introduce the concepts of governance and institutional strengthening, the second and third phases of which provide an opportunity for committed CSOs to advance further. CIS-direct trainings do not address improved service delivery capacity whereas the 10 percent budget line item in its grants provides grantees an opportunity for support where self-identified. Training and mentoring on advocacy is limited to grantees whose projects focus on advocacy or have the potential to expand to advocacy.

Focusing more resources on a smaller number of recipient organizations with high potential could serve to deepen impact. For ISC this would mean fewer but more targeted participants who are vetted through agreed upon criteria, longer and more focused three-stage training that includes the toolkit, IDA, and strategic planning. For OSC trainees, this would also translate to fewer participants in training workshops, longer and tiered training with long-term mentoring and a handful of experts able to deliver advanced and specialized training in niche areas who could rotate across a few organizations. This model would enable experts to become familiar with recipient CSOs, their staff, and their specific strengths, weaknesses, interests, and needs. Focusing on fewer organizations through tiered training, with the option of more advanced support by in-house experts or long-term mentors could result in more significant impact.

While beneficiaries lament the need for more extensive training, follow-up, and mentoring, these services are available to those who request them. This could point to the need for better promotion of these services, or could simply be a reflection of those who are truly motivated taking advantage of the services, and for those who are not genuinely motivated, a convenient excuse.

## Findings: Question 3

**Question 3: To what extent is CIS increasing the frequency and quality of GoJ-civil society interaction, and how can it best support collaboration between these two stakeholders to advance development and reform objectives?**

This section assesses the extent to which CIS interventions (under the four program components that served as the basis for this evaluation) are increasing the frequency and quality of GoJ-civil society interaction. It focuses on three questions:

- a. Is CIS enhancing the *readiness* and *capacity* of the GoJ and civil society to engage with each other in order to address development and reform challenges?

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<sup>35</sup> One interviewee suggested that “five organizations could share one expert.”

- b. Is it creating meaningful *opportunities* for dialogue and engagement of these two stakeholders with each other?
- c. How do CIS's grant-making and capacity-building components compare to each other with regard to their *relative effectiveness* as vehicles for enhancing the quality and frequency of GoJ-civil society interaction?

### Readiness and Capacity of the GoJ and Civil Society to Engage

CIS's direct support to enhance the readiness and capacity of the GoJ to engage with civil society has been stalled due to internal issues within the government that have thus far precluded rigorous engagement. CIS support has therefore been intermittent and reactive to emerging opportunities. However, CIS has supported the development of a strategic plan for the MoSD that is expected to pave the way for the provision of more strategic support.

Support provided through CIS throughout Year I, includes technical assistance to the Registry of Societies at the MoSD, including consultations on the Law of Societies 51/2008 and its amendments; legal consultants who analyzed the law and proposed amendments; funding an analysis of the sector's contribution to the national economy; and a workshop for 91 GoJ staff who interface with civil society, during which priorities for capacity building and technical assistance were identified. In addition, CIS has also provided technical assistance support to the HCD that included support to the HCD's plan to introduce the new draft law on disability among its stakeholders.<sup>36</sup> Government officials interviewed for the evaluation have expressed their satisfaction with the support provided thus far but said that more is needed in the way of supporting the government to engage with civil society. A senior government official said that training provided to GoJ staff will need to be systematic and consistent. The government official added that CSOs would also benefit from a training center that would train and certify CSOs. Future funding, in her opinion, would be contingent on such certification. HCD officials were satisfied with technical assistance provided and found the visit that the delegation undertook with CIS support especially beneficial.

CIS also developed a strategic plan for the Registry and is awaiting the Registry's response to it. Once the plan is approved and the Registry's vision is clear, CIS will consider an assessment and business plan for a national training center for CSOs. According to a key informant, the approval process might become mired in political difficulties within the MoSD that houses competing visions for how to support and manage civil society. This in turn might affect the future status of the Registry of Societies.

Another intervention CIS has planned is the Civil Society Research Fund which is intended to address an important need for quality research in this area to define national priorities, utilize and build on the data captured within the Associations Information System, and undertake systematic data collection and analysis of the sector's achievements and its contributions to Jordan's development.<sup>37</sup>

Commenting on capacity needs required to open channels between the government and civil society, one government official said: "Skills needed to strengthen the relationship between the government and the civil society sector include advocacy and good governance and the ability of CSOs themselves to fight corrupt organizations that are ruining the sector's reputation."

The readiness of the government to engage with civil society is affected by what the Civil Society Assessment confirmed as "the generally negative view of the sector that prevails in government circles." The prevailing perception among government officials towards civil society is that the sector is rife with corruption and has little impact.<sup>38</sup> Four grantees and two key informants have confirmed that the

<sup>36</sup> "USAID Civic Initiatives Support Program Quarterly Performance Report," October 1-December 31, 2014, page 7.

<sup>37</sup> "USAID Civic Initiatives Support Program, Year II Workplan," September 4, 2014, page 13.

<sup>38</sup> "Civil Society Assessment" draft, August 11, 2015, page 44.

government has recently heightened oversight of civil society projects that have received foreign funding, and the government is auditing a number of CSOs. The GoJ has recently revealed a new mechanism for approving foreign funding that contains additional restrictions and requirements. For example, the draft application requires that CSOs link their project for which they are seeking funding to Jordan's national and development goals, a linkage that will prove challenging for rights-based organizations. Most significantly, the draft application requires that the authorized signatory of a CSO sign an acknowledgement stating that he or she bears legal liability for any mistake in the application, that the donor is legitimate, and that the funding "does not violate public order or morals."<sup>39</sup>

## CIS's Opportunities for CS-GoJ Dialogue and Engagement

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**"What does the government have to do with our work?"**

*Several CBO's posed the question*

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As part of its technical assistance support to the Registry of Societies, CIS facilitated consultations in all governorates on the subject of the existing law. Attendees totaling 1,385 (72 percent male) were given the opportunity to express their concerns about the law, including the need to reduce government intervention in CSOs while maintaining "reasonable" supervision and guidance.<sup>40</sup>

CIS supported a workshop for government staff responsible for civil society entitled "Towards a Partnership between the Government Sector and Civil Society." It provided the Registry the opportunity to orient government staff on international best practices and on CIS's "Societies Start-Up Toolkit." It also engaged the staff in a dialogue with a cross-section of civil society leaders and identified main capacity building priorities.<sup>41</sup> Overall, six priorities emerged from the workshop:

- Redefine roles, responsibilities and accountability of staff at the Registry;
- Increase recognition among the staff of the importance and value of the sector and its contributions to Jordan's development;
- Enhance understanding of Law No.51/2008, its regulations and procedures;
- Introduce best practices in CSO management to enable GoJ CSO staff to address challenges that emerge;
- Expand access/utilization of the Association Information System; and
- Address work place challenges (systematizing professional development opportunities, infrastructure issues, IT, etc.)

A senior government official said despite these activities, the GoJ is not currently seeking dialogue opportunities with civil society. Subsequent activities to build on the results of this workshop have not yet materialized including a CIS-supported, sustainable and institutionalized mechanism for CS-GOJ engagement and dialogue. CIS is awaiting the approval of the strategic plan upon which its future assistance and support to the Registry including opportunities for dialogue and engagement will be determined. Additional opportunities for CS-GoJ dialogue and engagement are being facilitated through CIS DRG projects with Al-Hayat, Health Care Accreditation Council (HCAC), the Phenix Center and CDFJ.<sup>42</sup>

## Relative Effectiveness of CIS's Grant-Making and Capacity-Building

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<sup>39</sup> ICNL. "Comments on Jordan's Draft Application Form for Foreign Funding," August 24, 2015, pages 1-5.

<sup>40</sup> "USAID Civic Initiatives Support Program Quarterly Performance Report," January 1, 2014-March 31, 2014, page 7.

<sup>41</sup> USAID Civic Initiatives Support Program Quarterly Performance Report," April 1, 2014-June 30, 2014, page 8.

<sup>42</sup> "USAID Civic Initiatives Support Program YII Targets –as of 21 May 2015."

CIS grant and capacity building mechanisms are not specifically designed to produce engagement with government. However, 25 percent of CISF grantees and most members of CSOs who received training through OSC said their organizations' relationship with the government improved as a result of the training but that additional support on advocacy is needed to more effectively engage government. Most ISC participating CBOs, on the other hand, exhibited little awareness of the relevance of engaging with the government suggesting that training does not cover this issue. In fact, the notion of engaging with the government appeared disconnected from their activities, as summarized by several CBOs' question, "What does the government have to do with our work?" Instead, CBOs see themselves as providing the community with a needed service and relieving hardship through charity work; they viewed the government as irrelevant to these endeavors. In fact, most ISC respondents viewed the idea of involving the authorities as counter-intuitive or illogical, illustrating their point with examples of the government treating them with adversity, typically when they are attempting to secure approvals or signatures. The comment, "They make us feel like beggars," was a common refrain among CSOs interviewed. When prompted to discuss interaction with the government, interviewees consistently complained about the contemptuous and dismissive attitude of government officials.



**4 of 16 CISF grantees** said their relationship with the government improved as a result of training

Another standard response to questions about engaging with the government was along the lines of: "Why don't you train the government [to engage with us]?" and "We cannot cooperate with the government if the government is not willing to cooperate with us." Government's readiness to engage with CSOs was viewed as reflecting personal relationships and family ties rather than the merits of a CSO's record of achievements. For example, when asked about the extent to which the government was receptive to civil society initiatives, a respondent from the Abbadi tribe in Salt explains, "What government are you talking about? When I enter a government office, I ask: 'Who is an Abbadi?' and if there is no one from my tribe, I say 'who here is from Salt?'" CIS is currently not providing any training to the GoJ.

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"What government are you talking about? When I enter a government office, I ask: 'Who is an Abbadi?' and if there is no one from my tribe, I say 'who here is from Salt?'"

Two Royal Non-Governmental Organizations (RONGOs) working with CIS, view the government's stance toward civil society as negative, and have sometimes given up on attempting cooperation with authorities to move projects forward. The case of the Information and Research Center (which is part of the King Hussein Foundation and is one of CIS' DRG grantees) is illustrative. The Center's CIS-supported project seeks to address the issue of discrimination against "orphans deprived of family ties" (i.e., orphans born out of wedlock). Initially, the project was designed to include a representative from the MoSD on a committee. The Center thus reached out to the

MoSD to explain the project and enlist the ministry's support for it, emphasizing that one key objective was to help the government address this issue. In response, the ministry first requested a memorandum of understanding (MOU), which took a month of back and forth exchanges. It then requested that the Center write an official letter to the minister, before refusing to provide it with a copy of the GoJ's 2012 national strategy for orphans. Ultimately, the Center was provided with a copy of the strategy, but was told that it was not the final draft. Furthermore, when after signing the MoU the Center asked the ministry to identify organizations that should be involved with the project, the ministry failed to respond. The Center finally gave up. In particular, it abandoned the idea of a committee with representatives of the MoSD, fearing that this endless bureaucratic hassle and the ministry's lack of responsiveness would recur whenever the committee would need to meet.

Considering the GEC's evaluation criteria mentioned earlier, whether a project considered for CISF funding entails significant engagement with the government or aims at promoting such interaction does not appear to be given much weight in the selection process. According to CIS, this criteria has not been part of the APS. No grants are set aside for projects that rely heavily on interaction between civil society and the GoJ. As importantly, the open-ended nature of the APS mechanism does not allow for specifying that engagement with the government should be a project priority, let alone for offering guidelines or recommendations in this regard. Training delivered under the ISC component includes specific instruction regarding advocacy without considering the set of distinct opportunities and constraints Jordanian CSOs face, or on what has been learned about the relative effectiveness of various approaches in this regard, whether at the local, governorate, and national levels. Similarly, an OSC workshop on advocacy is focused on promoting an understanding of advocacy without thoroughly imparting skills relevant to the Jordanian context. The OSC workshop introduces concepts of advocacy so that CSOs can recognize their role and how advocacy fits into their mission. As appropriate, CIS works with CSOs to gradually build their knowledge and skills on the advocacy continuum. For other grantees, customized advocacy planning workshops and mentoring are provided in the design and implementation of their projects.

DRG projects more directly enhance civil society decision-makers interaction and promote opportunities for government-civil society dialogue. Four DRG grantees said that their projects strengthened their relationship with the government. One respondent said, "At the end a certain amount of aid is earmarked for Jordan and some of it is specifically for civil society. We try to take some and benefit our community and strengthen democratic life. The government does not like this but they are forced to accept it because our country wants to maintain good relations with the international community." Two other DRG recipients said that they already enjoy good working relations with the government and have regularly been engaging it. One of them added, "Even though we have always had good relations with the government, the project exposed us to experts within the government who work in our field and that we were able to work with on the project." In general, DRG grantees already engage the government, whether by the very nature of their monitoring or policy-analysis activities, or from an operational perspective as their leaders activate personal relationships to decision-makers in order to facilitate their work.

## Conclusions

While the government is starting to tighten control over organizations receiving foreign funding which betrays a lack of genuine will to engage civil society, CIS does not seem to be emphasizing to its pool of beneficiaries the importance of engaging with the authorities and is not doing enough to impart the context-specific skills needed to facilitate this process. This is especially true in OSCs and for ISC participants and CISF grantees.

CIS has designed a number of interventions to enhance the readiness and capacity of the GoJ and civil society to engage with each other; however, the timing and terms of engagement rest with the GoJ. The political landscape affects the ability of CIS to create opportunities for CS-GoJ dialogue and engagement. The project remains on standby to support the MoSD with specific activities contingent upon the approval of the Registry's strategic plan the development of which CIS had supported. 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 CISF grantees and ISC participants, and stepping up efforts through training government staff and pro-actively seeking grantees focused on advocacy efforts towards the government. That said such interaction necessitates GoJ understanding the role of civil society, and receptiveness to working with it.

## Findings: Question 4

**Question 4: Which key assistance gaps, including those identified by the Civil Society Assessment (2015) remain to be filled under each of CIS's two components (grant-making and capacity-building)? Which alterations should be made to each? Which opportunities present themselves (including due to prior CIS activities) to enable CIS to become more effective in achieving its stated objective of promoting the common interests of Jordanians?**

As described in the Findings, the key gaps include:

1. Engagement of the private sector: As the Civil Society Assessment revealed, civil society's dependence on donors hinders its sustainability and is a disincentive for building organic relationships with local communities. Breaking out of that cycle is imperative if civil society is to become viable and credible. CSOs will therefore need to pro-actively seek financial support and begin to cultivate local donors. Unfortunately, almost all organizations interviewed believed they would be unsuccessful in presenting their causes to the private sector.

In general, private giving in the Arab region steers clear of rights-based causes in favor of health and education, community development and culture. There is an emerging appetite for high impact philanthropy, particularly for organizations that champion non-political causes.<sup>43</sup> A recommendation offered by the Civil Society Assessment for attracting private giving is through venture philanthropy, a model that leverages private sector skills in planning and management to support non-profit organizations and social initiatives that respond to genuine needs and have tangible impact.

CIS should consider developing a sustainability roadmap that includes a strategy to build CSOs' skills to mobilize a diverse range of funding resources. This could include concrete mechanisms such as:

- a) Endowment funds that target individual donors, companies and the public;
- b) Crowdfunding;
- c) Venture philanthropy, mentioned above, and through which intermediary organizations broker partnerships and build capacity to partner; and
- d) Public private partnerships.

CIS could also play a role in the facilitation of:

- a) Pro-bono private sector experts support or board membership;
- b) Establishing working groups;
- c) Networking events where CSOs can pitch their work to new audiences; and
- d) Supporting fundraising skills, and offering matching grants for those who are able to successfully enlist the support of corporations.

2. Support for coalitions: While coalitions are supported through DRG projects such as those implemented by CDFJ and SIGI, there is still a need to promote coalitions in other sectors and among CISF supported CSOs. This would promote efficiency by combining resources and skills to leverage comparative advantages of various organizations within each coalition. This would also cluster efforts, promote continuity, and help avoid duplication in effort.

3. Capacity building for government staff dealing with civil society: As both the evaluation and assessment revealed, government staff interfacing with civil society need support to understand the role of the sector and how best to engage with it. Concerning MoSD, this component is already on the CIS's radar but is awaiting the approval of the strategic plan by the ministry.

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<sup>43</sup> Ibrahim, Barbara. *Wealth and Giving in the Arab Region*. Middle East Institute, October 13, 2015.

4. A pool of certified trainers outside Amman: A number of respondents bemoaned their ability to identify qualified trainers who could support their programs. Considering that the majority of civil society organizations undertake training activities, it would serve the sector well if there was a cadre of expert trainers available to CSOs outside Amman.

5. Sector-wide research: Support for sector-wide research will help capture success stories and lessons learned on civil society work that takes stock of the intricacies of the Jordanian context and what works here.

Alterations and opportunities for CIS to address these gaps are presented in Recommendations that follow.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

The common denominator of recommendations is sharpening 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.

## General

1. Review and revise CIS's mandate to ensure that objectives, outcomes, indicators and activities are aligned accordingly. If the mandate is to empower civil society through improving CSOs' responsiveness to community needs, activities should be focused on getting CSOs to recognize and buy-into that model, and graduate them through tiered assistance to define their constituency, identify constituents'/community needs, and after they demonstrate capability, entering them into a grant and project implementation approach. If the mandate is to touch as many CSOs as possible, then align objectives, outcomes, indicators, and activities accordingly.
2. Support private sector partnerships with civil society and build the capacity of grantees to fundraise and cultivate local donors.
3. Support sector-wide research to capture lessons from high performing and under performing organizations, and lessons of how civil society organizations succeed or fail in attaining empowerment. This would be a research and development component to reinforce the advocacy efforts supported through grant making. Such data can be used to help rebut allegations against the sector and improve its public image.
4. Facilitate the engagement of the GoJ and civil society through networking activities, grants and capacity building.
5. Provide incentives to the GoJ to ensure the CIS program is able to train government staff on the role of civil society and how to engage with it. Part of the effort of convincing the government to engage civil society would be through creating models of excellence in the sector that can help improve its image and convince government detractors of the benefits of engaging with the sector.

## Grants

6. If an objective is to touch as many organizations as possible (regardless of their capacity or civic focus), facilitate this process from the solicitation phase through grant selection by defining "innovation" criteria that ensures that supported projects are organic grassroots-led initiatives. Such initiatives would be expected to be innovative, have identified a communal problem supported with evidence, have identified past community and civil society sectors efforts to address it, and build upon past efforts.
7. For more established organizations and in order to achieve measurable change, concentrate resources on CSOs that show promise or that already have a record of achievement (i.e., have shown relevance and impact by providing needed services, being embedded in specific communities, and/or by working on issues that resonate with broad-based constituencies at the local or national levels).
8. If civic relevance is an objective, selection criteria should encourage and prioritize advocacy, needs analysis, constituency building, the engagement of government, and coalition building.
9. Consider revising the grant application mechanism to solicit concept papers instead of full-fledged applications to reduce staff time resources required for review. This process may help staff identify unpolished ideas that may otherwise be buried in a poor application.

10. Encourage applicants to build and expand upon past activities that clearly demonstrate need, identify past efforts by other organizations on similar or related issues, and encourage advocacy and collaboration with and engagement of other sectors including the government. Community/constituent needs assessments and how to conduct them should feature prominently in the CIS process. Grants could be spread over two phases, with the first one aimed at supporting a needs assessment.
11. Grant-making should emphasize organizations more than projects. Instead of supporting projects deemed to have promise and that happen to be carried out by organizations CIS should identify and support promising organizations that happen to carry out projects. Instead of asking: “Are there promising ideas out there that deserve to be funded?” (and then evaluating the organization that proposes to implement the relevant project or activities only from that angle), the alternative perspective would entail asking the following three questions:
  - a. “Which organizations are doing innovative and impactful work – work that meets clear community-level needs or that advocate on issues that resonate with large, broad-based constituencies?”
  - b. “What can CIS do to support that work and those organizations?”
  - c. “How can both the work and the organizations be leveraged to have a sector-wide impact, including by serving as a learning model to others?”
12. Establish and publicize parameters regarding the number and amounts of awards by location and/or thematic foci, review process, and evaluation criteria. More guidance on the kinds of projects CIS is interested in supporting in light of USAID’s priorities, combined with a clear definition of what a civic initiative is, will serve to increase the quality and reduce the number of proposals.
13. Provide comprehensive feedback for all proposals to reduce allegations of bias and favoritism. Understanding that this is time-consuming, it could be assisted with a checklist or enlist interns rather than using senior staff time. Applications should be scored, both overall and by section so that successful and unsuccessful applicants alike can know how they fared under each section; scoring criteria should be made clear and explained to applicants during the solicitation process; and rejected applicants should be provided with detailed reviews of their applications.
14. Make awards to support projects over a longer period of time to allow sufficient time for meaningful impact and achievement of stated goals.
15. Ensure more grants supported projects have an advocacy component.
16. Provide more than 10 percent funding to cover CSOs’ operating costs of organizations that show promise and can demonstrate relevance to their community or constituency. Such funding should be provided in tranches with benchmarks for organizational development.
17. Support grantees (especially DRG) to build their capacity to define and subsequently assess and measure specific project outcomes. Grantees should be assisted to develop tailored approaches to capturing change in their projects. Building the capacity of grantees (especially DRG ones) to capture and demonstrate impact in their work will focus their efforts and encourage them to consider the cumulative effect of their programming.
18. Streamline processes and clarify the need for approvals/clearances to ensure such procedures do not impede the smooth operation of projects or jeopardize the relevance of their work.

## Capacity Building

19. Training participants should be vetted to determine their knowledge and level of sophistication relative to civil society, and should attend training geared to the appropriate level. CSOs should be placed into categories of “emerging,” “developing,” and “advancing” in order to reflect its capacity and development stage. For example, “emerging” CBOs that do not understand or buy-into the importance of organizational development should attend training to develop that ethos;

organizations in the “advancing” tier may be assisted with experts embedded within the organization to work closely with its staff for a specified time period to address pre-identified gaps, build specialized capacity in areas of interest to the CSO, and provide customized support. The design and delivery of assistance would have to take into account the high turnover of staff throughout the sector; specific steps would be needed to ensure that skills acquired via in-house training would be retained by the recipient organization.

20. Identify niche or advanced training requirements common to several CSOs and consider providing in-house training and coaching tailored to those needs.
21. Lengthen training duration to make training more substantive and meaningful.
22. Ensure that training on advocacy is grounded in what works and what does not in the Jordanian context. Such training would include discussion of the relative effectiveness of various advocacy approaches tried within this context, whether at the local, governorate, or national levels.
23. Slightly expand the number of ISOs to be paired with CBOs to provide specialized and tailored assistance. This may create a healthy degree of competition among organizations delivering training.
24. Introduce ISC participants to social accountability mechanisms as a way to introduce advocacy alongside service delivery.

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# ANNEXES

## ANNEX I: EVALUATION STATEMENT OF WORK

### Civil Society Sector Assessment and Civic Initiatives Support Program (CIS) Performance Evaluation

#### STATEMENT OF WORK

April 26, 2015

#### I. INTRODUCTION

The Civic Initiatives Support (CIS) Program that focuses on building a vibrant civil society will be entering its third year of operations in late 2015. Given the dynamics in the region since the activity's inception and USAID's commitment to supporting the civil society sector, USAID is requesting a civil society sector assessment and a project evaluation to inform CIS's third year work plan, which will be developed in October 2015.

The assessment will be conducted first so that its findings can inform the final tool development for the evaluation. Both the assessment and the evaluation will use a primarily qualitative approach. As discussed further in the "Assessment Questions" section below, the assessment will focus on identifying the nature, scope, strengths and limitations of civil society's contributions to key national objectives; it will seek to capture the perceptions of civil society by the general public, Government of Jordan (GOJ) officials, and donors, as well as civil society's perceptions of GOJ officials and donors' engagement with civil society; and it will build on that analysis to zero-in on the challenges and opportunities faced by Jordan's civil society as it endeavors to increase its contributions to key national objectives. Those conclusions, in turn, will suggest intervention priorities for USAID's civil society programming, including but not limited to CIS.

With input from the assessment, the evaluation will seek to gauge the effectiveness of CIS's grant mechanisms and capacity-building activities in the following areas: supporting advocacy, community mobilization, and civic engagement; furthering Civil Society Organizations' (CSOs) organizational development and ability to achieve their objectives, including addressing community needs; improving the quality and quantity of interaction between civil society and the GOJ; reaching out to CSOs and CBOs outside Amman; and ensuring that women and men have equitable access to, participation in, and benefit from program activities.

Based on their findings, both the assessment and the evaluation will make practical and actionable recommendations for the next CIS work plan that will be developed in October 2015. Recommendations will include those for component continuation, modifications, and potential future programming for civil society.

Details of the project to be evaluated:

Project Title:	USAID – Civic Initiatives Support Program
Implementing Partner:	FHI 360
Total Cost:	\$20 million for 2013-2016; \$30 million estimated for 2016-2018
Duration:	2013-2018

## **II. BACKGROUND**

### **A. CONTEXT**

The civic sector in Jordan is playing a growing role in governance and development. Relative political openness has enabled many organizations to increase their influence and overall impact as they engage in civil, social and political activities. Civil society is activating citizen participation, meeting needs and shaping policy. It provides a myriad of services to the population and is at the forefront of the humanitarian response to the ongoing influx of Syrian refugees into the country.

Until 2008, the Law on Societies and Social Bodies (Law 33 of 1966) governed CSOs in Jordan, subjecting the sector to government interference. In 2008, the Law on Societies (Law 51 of 2008) was enacted, removing a number of restrictions on the civic sector. In 2009 the Law Amending the Law on Societies (Law 22 of 2009) was passed in response to public criticisms that the 2008 law had not met civil society's aspirations for a wider margin of maneuver. Recently, there have been discussions about new draft amendments within the Ministry of Social Development but suggested changes have not yet been made public.

Civil society in Jordan can play a more substantive role in the Kingdom's reform and overall development process. However, it is handicapped by financial, organizational and contextual constraints; by high levels of internal fragmentation and dependence on foreign assistance; and by the concentration of the more capable organizations in Amman. Building the capacity of CSOs to design, implement, manage, monitor and evaluate their activities while supporting a more enabling environment in which they can operate will enhance the sector's ability to carry-out development and advocacy projects and to serve as a lever for positive change.

### **B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Implemented by FHI 360, CIS is a five-year activity with the objective of cultivating a strong and vibrant civil society in Jordan by supporting a broad range of civic initiatives. Working at both national and local levels, CIS supports civic initiatives and advocacy responding to common interests, strengthens the organizational capacity of CSOs and promotes GOJ-civil society collaboration efforts to address reform and development challenges. CIS support includes grants to groups to advance programs that respond to citizens' demands and for thematic areas identified by USAID; institutional strengthening customized to individual CSO needs; coalition building; and facilitating dialogue between citizens and government.

CIS work plan activities are contained within three program components: Component I: Sub-awards in support of Jordanian Civil Society Initiatives; Component II: Capacity Building for Sustainability, and Component III: Enhancing Government-Civil Society Engagement.

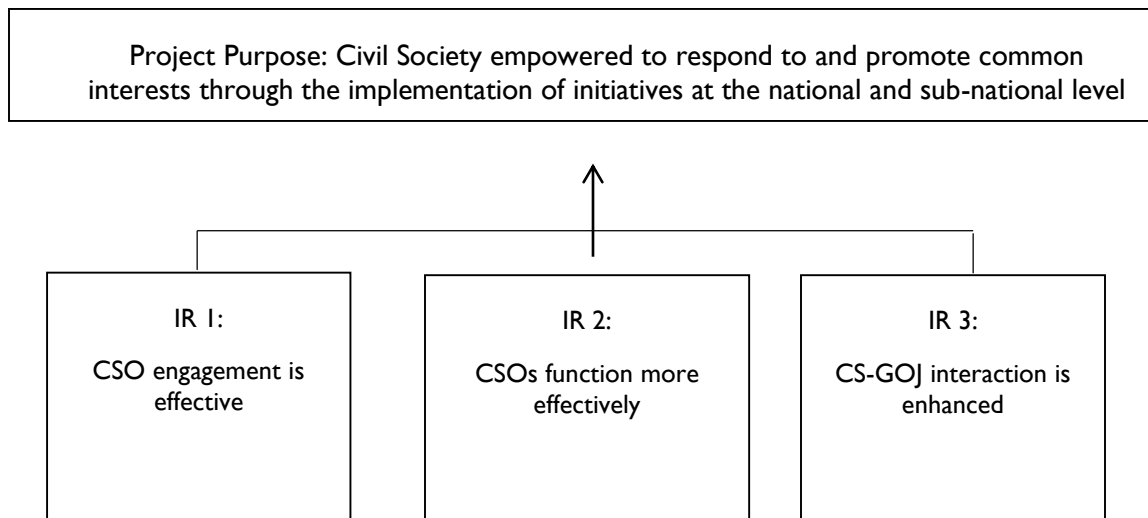
Support to Jordanian civil society actors working in the fields of democracy, human rights and governance, economic development, education, energy, environment, health and/or water are provided through:

- Sub-awards and technical assistance in support of Jordanian civic initiatives;
- Institutional strengthening and capacity building support to CSOs at all levels including Jordanian intermediary support organizations;
- Targeted technical assistance to USAID implementing partner sub-award recipients from across the Mission's portfolio of programs;
- Enhancing the capacities of Government of Jordan staff at the Registry of Societies and other relevant Ministries that engage with civil society;
- Funding for research on the civil society sector; and
- Supporting opportunities for Government of Jordan-civil society dialogue.

Program interventions include:

- Civic Initiatives Support Fund
- Democracy, Human Rights & Governance Grants
- Inclusive Development/Disability Rights Grants
- Civil Society Institutional Strengthening Fund
- Internal Strengthening for Change
- Partnerships for Jordan's Development
- Grants for Innovative Approaches in Engaging Students, Teachers, Communities & Parents to Combat Violence and Promote Social Justice
- Capacity Building Opportunities for CSOs and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)

## C. CIS RESULTS FRAMEWORK AND THEORY OF CHANGE



The CIS AMEP describes the activity theory of change as follows:

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.

### III. ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

The civil society assessment will address the following six questions. Particular emphasis will be placed on questions 2, 4, 5, and 6. Those six questions constitute the proposed outline for the assessment report. Question 6 will be addressed in a detailed conclusion and drives the entire exercise.

1. What is the current profile of the civil society sector in Jordan?
2. What are the nature, scope, strengths and limitations of civil society's contributions to six key national objectives?
  - a. social sector development
  - b. Economic growth
  - c. Improvements in service delivery
  - d. Political reform
  - e. Countering violent extremism
  - f. Coping with the humanitarian and socioeconomic impacts of the Syrian refugee crisis
3. How have other donors engaged with civil society?
4. What are the primary sets of perceptions associated with civil society in Jordan?
5. What key challenges does civil society in Jordan confront today, and is likely to face in the coming years, as it seeks to increase its contributions to national objectives? Conversely, into which opportunities can it tap, or should be able to take advantage of in the coming years, to further those same objectives?
6. What do the assessment's findings mean for USAID's programming in the civil society sector?

### IV. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The proposed approach will proceed in three separate steps that build on each other.

#### Phase One: Foundation

Phase one will consist of the following four tasks:

- **Desk Review:** The assessment will identify, secure access to and review documents on, or directly relevant to, Jordanian civil society and its current environment.
- **Identification of Key Informants and Focus Group Participants:** Key informants and focus group participants will be identified and efforts to secure their participation will be made. The key informants and focus group participants will consist of a diverse group of civil society experts (including academics and journalists), CSO leaders and staff, GOJ officials (including at the governorate and municipal levels), parliamentarians, representatives of the donor community and Jordanian citizens.
- **Development of Guides for Informant Interviews and FGDs:** Questions will be based upon the assessment questions, but will vary depending on the identity of the informants and focus group participants. Questions asked to some informants or focus group participants may not be asked to others. The relative weight placed on each question may vary as well. Many questions will need to be cast slightly differently to take into account the identity of the informants or focus group. To reflect those differences, separate questionnaires will be developed for different categories of respondents (government officials, civil society activists, civil society experts, general public). Interview guides will take into account the need to capture gender differentials. Answers will be gender disaggregated.

**Sampling:** The sampling plan will be designed to cover the various constituencies targeted by the assessment including government representatives, CSOs, and the general public. Government representatives will be selected from parliament, municipal councils and relevant Jordanian ministries. The selection of participating CSOs will depend on CSO population size, type and mandate of CSO and geographical region. The sample will cover CSOs from six governorates from the north, middle, and south of Jordan. A cross-section of men and women representing various age groups and geographical diversity will also be selected from the three regions of Jordan.

The six governorates selected to represent the north, middle and south of Jordan (two governorates for each of those three regions) are:

North: Mafrq and Irbid  
South: Ma'an and Tafilah  
Center: Amman and Zarqa

**Gender:** All people-level questions will be gender disaggregated. The team will also identify the questions that will require examination of gender specific or gender differential effects.

### **Phase Two: Data Collection**

- The data gathering process will begin with extensive interviews of CIS staff. These interviews will be spread over several two-hour sessions. In addition to CIS, the team will also communicate with Mission staff and other implementing partners such as NDI and CEP. During the first week the team will conduct interviews of the few donors with significant ongoing or recent civil society programming and/or knowledge of Jordanian civil society (e.g., European Union, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, and Open Society Institute). Other informant interviews will focus on informants identified during Phase One. Those informants will in turn be a source of additional contacts that will be incorporated into the interview list.
- Planning for FGDs will be completed and the process of conducting FGDs to capture public perceptions will be pilot tested in Amman.
- FGDs will be conducted both in and outside Amman. Outside Amman, separate FGDs will involve the following constituencies: general public; members of municipal councils; civil society activists and leaders. Separate interviews with individual civil society leaders may also be conducted.
- Preliminary planning for the CIS evaluation will begin.

### **Phase Three: Analyze findings and Write Civil Society Assessment Report**

Phase One research and Phase Two data collection findings will be processed and integrated into a civil society assessment report due on August 10.

## **V. EVALUATION QUESTIONS**

Given that the purpose of the evaluation is to provide specific guidance for CIS's work plan, the following questions are recommended in order of priority. It is anticipated that the assessment may bring to light some issues that can be explored in-depth through the evaluation. The questions may therefore be altered in light of the assessment findings.

1. How effective are CIS's grant mechanisms and programs in supporting CSOs' engagement in the following areas:<sup>1</sup>
  - a. Advocacy interventions;
  - b. Monitoring or advocacy work on human rights;
  - c. Conducting outreach, community mobilization and civic engagement; and
  - d. Targeting marginalized groups (youth, women, disabilities and hosting communities).
2. How do CIS's grant mechanisms differ in terms of their effectiveness in contributing to the program's purpose of empowering civil society to respond to and promote common interests through national and sub-national initiatives?
3. To what extent are common needs and priorities being addressed in projects funded by CIS grants?
4. To what extent have the various capacity building and technical assistance opportunities provided by CIS contributed to CSOs' ability to pursue their missions? What key capacity building and technical assistance gaps still need to be filled?
5. How effective have the governorate outreach activities of CIS's grants and capacity building program components been at recruiting new CSOs based outside Amman?
6. To what extent is the program enhancing interaction between civil society and GOJ? What gaps and opportunities exist on the way to a strengthened state-civil society engagement?
7. How did CIS address gender differential constraints in terms of accessing, participating in or benefiting from program activities?

## VI. EVALUATION METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The evaluation will focus on CIS's grants mechanisms and capacity building interventions. It will pay less attention to the interaction between civil society and the GOJ, as the effects of CIS' intermittent activities under this component have not yet been demonstrated.

CIS reports supporting organizations as follows:

- 27 currently awarded under the Civic Initiatives Support Fund
- 7 under the Democracy, Human Rights & Governance Grants
- 4 under the Civil Society Institutional Strengthening Fund
- 762 under the Internal Strengthening for Change
- 109 under the Capacity Building Opportunities for CSOs and CBOs

Evaluation methods will include the following:

- **Desk Review (Q1, Q2, Q5):** An in-depth document review and desk research of all relevant CIS project documents and secondary data resources. Project documents available to the team will be provided by the AOR in collaboration with CIS staff.
- **Key Informant Interviews (Q1, Q3, Q4, Q6):** In-depth interviews will be conducted with CIS grantees and unsuccessful applicants, USAID and GOJ representatives, CIS management staff, and sector specialists with first-hand knowledge of the program.
- **Focus Group Discussions (Q2, Q3, Q4, Q5):** To delve into specific issues, triangulate data, and solicit the input of CIS beneficiary CSOs, FGDs will be conducted with a wide range of beneficiary CSOs, as well as non-beneficiary civil society organizations working at the national and sub-national levels.

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<sup>1</sup> Due to CIS's early stages of implementation, the evaluation question addresses the PMP's sub-IRs.

**Sampling:** Sample selection of direct and indirect beneficiaries will be statistically representative of CIS's various program interventions, including grant awards and capacity building activities. It will also include interviews with applicants who were not successful in receiving grants. Sample selection will take into consideration the distribution of funds across various program components.

**Gender:** All people-level questions will be gender disaggregated. The team will also identify the questions that require an examination of gender specific or gender differential effects.

## **VII. EXISTING ASSESSMENT RELATED AND PERFORMANCE INFORMATION SOURCES**

- For the evaluation, USAID will provide the initial list of in-country contacts for the key informant interviews;
- The desk research and document review will include the following sources:
  - a. CIS quarterly reports
  - b. Project AMEP
  - c. Project work plan
  - d. Project fact sheets and special studies
  - e. Grants files and training curricula
  - f. USAID 2012 CSO Sustainability Index for the Middle East and North Africa
  - g. Sheiwi, Dr. Musa. The Role of Civil Society Organizations in the Political Reform in Jordan, 2011
  - h. Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy, *Map of the Political Parties and Movements in Jordan*, 2013-2014
  - i. EU-Mapping Study of Non-State Actors in Jordan, July 2010
  - j. Al-Urdun Al-Jadid. The Contemporary Jordanian Civil Society: Characteristics, Challenges and Tasks, 2010
  - k. USAID Jordan DG Assessment, 2011
  - l. Raei, Lamia. Mapping of Non-Partisan Political and Social Groups in Jordan, 2012
  - m. Booklet for the Classification of Societies According to Area of Specialization (2013)
  - n. JNCW and CIDA, Women and Gender Programming in Jordan: A Map of NGO Work
  - o. Perceptions of Civil Society in Jordan: Key Findings from Focus Group Research, A Qualitative Research Brief, July 2009
  - p. Jarrah, Sameer. Civil Society and Public Freedom in Jordan: The Path of Democratic Reform, 2009
  - q. Dajani, Rula. Review of Women Networks, Unions and Coalitions in Jordan, 2008

## VIII. DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINE

Assessment Activity	Timeline <sup>2</sup>
USAID in-brief	April 6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Assessment and evaluation work plan</li><li>Assessment design report (design, methodology, work plan, instruments)</li></ul>	April 9-May 20
Assessment tool pilot testing	May 25-28
Assessment data collection	May 31-June 18
Assessment data analysis	June 21-30
Assessment PowerPoint presentation to USAID, draft assessment report	August 10
Evaluation design report (design methodology, work plan, instruments)	July 1-30
Evaluation tool pilot testing	August 1-6
Evaluation data collection	August 7-30
Evaluation data analysis	September 1-16
Evaluation PowerPoint presentation to USAID	October 15
Draft evaluation report	October 15

## IX. TEAM COMPOSITION

The assessment and evaluation will be conducted by one team.

In accordance with guidance provided in USAID ADS 203 the proposed evaluation team is composed of experts with significant knowledge of civil society in developing countries and in Jordan in particular, with skills and experience in the following areas:

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<sup>2</sup> The holy month of Ramadan and Eid-al-Fitir, which is a national holiday in Jordan, falls within the assessment/evaluation timeframe. In 2015 Ramadan will begin in mid-June and Eid will occur in mid-July.

- Experience in evaluation and assessment design methodologies;
- Experience implementing and conducting USAID assessments and evaluations;
- Expertise in Jordanian civil society;
- Experience in managing evaluations and assessments;
- Excellent writing and communication skills with experience in producing team-based, collaborative reports that are learning-oriented;
- Skills in qualitative data analysis;
- Local language skills; and
- Familiarity with USAID evaluation policy.

In order to meet the requirements of team composition, ensure data quality, and contribute to building capacity of local evaluation specialists, the following is suggested for team composition:

1. Team Leader/Senior Evaluation/Assessment Specialist
2. MENA Civil Society Specialist
3. Civil Society Sector Advisor (through local partner Integrated Solutions)
4. Quality Manager (through local partner Integrated Solutions)
5. MESP Senior M&E Advisor
6. MESP Technical Specialist

### **Proposed Team Members and Roles**

1. **Team Leader:** Primary point of contact for assignment with responsibility for assigning team duties, managing activities, resources, and team member performance to meet objectives; leadership role in analysis, final reporting and presentation. Leads meetings with USAID; leads in creating design methodology and instruments; conducts literature review; participates in interviewing and data collection; assigns team activities and facilitates smooth team operations; ensures that findings, conclusions, and recommendations answer evaluation and assessment questions and meet USAID purposes; produces/finalizes evaluation tools and final report; ensures final reporting meets USAID evaluation requirements.
2. **MENA Civil Society Specialist:** Contributes to design methodology and data collection instruments; participates in pilot testing for data collection; participates in data analysis and interpretation; produces report sections as assigned by Team Lead. Ensures assessment and evaluation processes and reporting adhere to USAID requirements.
3. **Civil Society Sector Advisor:** Provides culturally and contextually relevant information about environment in which civil society operates. Contributes to design methodology and data collection instruments; participates in pilot testing for data collection and data collection efforts; participates in data analysis and interpretation; produces report sections as assigned by Team Lead. Ensures assessment and evaluation processes and reporting adhere to USAID requirements.
4. **Quality Manager:** Develops logistical plan, ensures data collection and data entry protocols are followed; ensures integrity of focus group transcripts and translation; participates in data collection.

Members of the team are all expected to sign statements confirming that there are no conflicts of interests with their working on the assessment and evaluation.

## **X. PERFORMANCE PERIOD**

The assessment and evaluation are expected to take place from mid-April to October 2015 with the final report submitted no later than October 30, 2015 so as to inform the design of CIS' work plan.

Logistics for the assessment and evaluation will be provided by MESP.

## **XI. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDELINES**

- Reporting on the assessment and evaluation will be done separately;
- Information resulting from assessment will be a data source for the evaluation;
- Draft assessment and evaluation reports will be submitted excluding annexes and executive summaries;
- The length of the final assessment and evaluation reports will not exceed 25 pages each, consistent with USAID branding policy and exclusive of annexes and executive summaries;
- The reports will address each of the questions identified in the relevant sections of the SOW and any other factors the team considers to have a bearing on the objectives of the assessment or evaluation;
- All assessment and evaluation questions must be answered, and recommendations must be stated in an actionable way with defined responsibility for the action;
- Sources of information will be properly identified and listed in an annex;
- The assessment and evaluation reports must each include a table of contents, list of acronyms, and executive summary.
- The assessment and evaluation reports will be published on USAID's Development Experience Clearinghouse at [edec.usaid.gov](http://edec.usaid.gov).
- Upon request from USAID or closure of MESP, both electronic and hard copy data files will be transferred to USAID. In the meantime, electronic files are on the MESP file and hard copies are warehoused at MESP.

## ANNEX II: EVALUATION DESIGN REPORT

### Introduction

The primary USAID civil society program currently operating in Jordan is USAID's Civic Initiatives Support (CIS) Program, which will be entering its third year of operations in late 2015. Given the dynamics in the region since the activity's inception and USAID's commitment to supporting the civil society sector, USAID has requested a civil society sector assessment and a project performance evaluation to inform CIS's third year workplan, which will be developed in October 2015.

Implemented by FHI 360, CIS is a five-year activity with the objective of cultivating a strong and vibrant civil society in Jordan by supporting a broad range of civic initiatives. Working at both national and local levels, CIS supports civic initiatives and advocacy responding to common interests, strengthens the organizational capacity of CSOs and promotes GOJ-civil society collaboration efforts to address reform and development challenges. CIS support includes grants to groups to advance programs that respond to citizens' demands and for thematic areas identified by USAID; institutional strengthening customized to individual CSO needs; coalition building; and facilitating dialogue between the civil society sector and government.

CIS workplan activities are contained within three program components: Component I: Sub-awards in support of Jordanian Civil Society Initiatives; Component II: Capacity Building for Sustainability, and Component III: Enhancing Government-Civil Society Engagement.

Support to Jordanian civil society actors working in the fields of democracy, human rights and governance, economic development, education, energy, environment, health and/or water are provided through:

- Sub-awards and technical assistance in support of Jordanian civic initiatives;
- Institutional strengthening and capacity building support to CSOs at all levels including Jordanian intermediary support organizations;
- Targeted technical assistance to USAID implementing partner sub-award recipients from across the Mission's portfolio of programs;
- Enhancing the capacities of Government of Jordan (GOJ) staff at the Registry of Societies and other relevant ministries that engage with civil society;
- Funding for research on the civil society sector; and
- Supporting opportunities for GOJ-civil society dialogue.

Program interventions include:

- Civic Initiatives Support Fund (CIS)
- Democracy, Human Rights & Governance Grants (DRG)
- Inclusive Development/Disability Rights Grants
- Civil Society Institutional Strengthening Fund
- Internal Strengthening for Change (ISC)
- Partnerships for Jordan's Development

- Grants for Innovative Approaches in Engaging Students, Teachers, Communities & Parents to Combat Violence and Promote Social Justice
- Capacity Building Opportunities for CSOs and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs): Off-the-Shelf Courses

The evaluation comes on the heels of a civil society sector assessment that has helped identify the nature, scope, strengths and limitations of civil society's contributions to key national objectives in Jordan; has shed light on perceptions of civil society by the general public, GOJ officials, and donors, as well as civil society's perceptions of GOJ officials and donors' engagement with civil society; and has zeroed-in on the challenges and opportunities faced by Jordan's civil society as it endeavors to increase its contributions to Jordan's development and reform process. The assessment identified intervention priorities for USAID's civil society programming, including but not limited to CIS.

### **Evaluation Purpose and Scope**

The purpose of the evaluation is to provide specific guidance for the CIS program. The evaluation will make practical and actionable recommendations for the next CIS workplan that will be developed in October 2015. Recommendations will include those for component continuation, modifications, and potential future programming for civil society.

The CIS performance evaluation questions originally agreed upon with USAID in late April 2015 have been refined following the assessment to reflect discussions held with the CIS program staff. Discussions centered on identifying an approach to program evaluation that can inform CIS's workplan and provide maximum utility for both USAID and CIS. The four evaluation questions agreed upon constitute the proposed outline for the evaluation report. The evaluation questions are as follows:

**Question 1:** *How effective are CIS's grant-making mechanisms and design, awarding processes, and grant-management systems in supporting:*

1. *National and sub-national civic initiatives;*
2. *Organizational development;*
3. *Improved service-delivery capacity; and*
4. *Advocacy development.*

The evaluation will take into account the extent to which the approach followed by CIS a) *was sensitive to and addressed gender differentials and/or gaps;* and b) *ensured relevant capacity development in the governorates (including support to CSOs/informal groups based outside Amman).*

### **Elaboration**

- a. An effective intervention is defined here as one that meets two criteria: responsiveness and congruence. It must be *responsive* to the needs of the civic initiative it seeks to

support and *congruent* with the distinct profile of the recipient CSO (or CSOs) and the environment in which the latter operates.

- b. The “mechanisms” above refer to two types of grants: APS and thematic. The evaluation will seek to assess the relative effectiveness of each. It will zero-in on whether grant-making is generally the most effective means of supporting civic initiatives.
- c. “Organizational development” is defined here as encompassing:
  - Management systems: Management of financial resources; management of operations; and management of staff/volunteers.
  - External relations: Relations with constituencies; relations with the media and the public; and relations with other CSOs.
- d. Advocacy development is defined as follows:
  - Improved understanding of why advocacy matters to a CSO’s ability to achieve its objectives, and enhanced readiness to engage in it.
  - Stronger capacity to advocate (by the targeted CSO as a whole and by its individual staff members).

**Question 2:** *How effective is the capacity building/technical assistance delivery component of CIS in supporting:*

1. *National and sub-national civic initiatives;*
2. *Organizational development;*
3. *Improved service delivery capacity; and*
4. *Advocacy development.*

The evaluation will take into account the extent to which the approach followed by CIS a) *was sensitive to and addressed gender differentials and/or gaps;* and b) *ensured relevant capacity development in the governorates* (including by providing needed support to CSOs/informal groups based outside Amman).

**Question 3:** *To what extent is CIS increasing the frequency and quality of GOJ-civil society interaction, and how can it best support collaboration between these two stakeholders?*

#### Elaboration

The question will focus on the following components:

- *How can CIS enhance the readiness and capacity of both the GOJ and civil society to engage with each other to address development and reform challenges?*

- Through both its grant-making and capacity-building components, is CIS *creating meaningful opportunities for GoJ-civil society dialogue*, especially to address development and reform challenges? What is the relative effectiveness of each component in this regard?

**Question 4:** *Which key assistance gaps, including those identified by the civil society assessment, remain to be filled under each of CIS's two components (grant-making and capacity-building)? Which alterations might need to be made to each? And which opportunities present themselves (including due to prior project activities) to enable CIS to become more effective in achieving its stated objective of promoting the common interests of Jordanians?*

#### Elaboration

The answer to this question will draw heavily on, and synthesize the content of, the answers to the previous questions. Potential assistance gaps, opportunities and course corrections will fall into two main categories: those that relate to CIS's direct engagement with CSOs and those that pertain to strengthening state-civil society interaction. The evaluation will be sensitive to potential gender differentials and gaps, and to the need to ensure relevant capacity development in the governorates (including by providing needed support to CSOs/informal groups based outside Amman).

#### **Evaluation Design**

The evaluation will employ a qualitative approach to answer the evaluation questions. The methodology will rely on focus groups, group interviews and key informant interviews (KIs) to facilitate a deep understanding of how effective the CIS program has been in supporting civil society organizations to play a more visible, effective and consequential role in Jordan's development and reform process capturing the nuances in individual cases and perspectives.

To inform the evaluation design and its implementation, the evaluation team employed a participatory planning approach that included CIS staff and their input into evaluation questions and approach in order to maximize utility for CIS' work planning. In light of these participatory consultations, the evaluation will focus on four of CIS' seven original program interventions that were selected based upon the following criteria:

- The size of funding (relative to overall program budget);
- The number of CSOs that received assistance under the program; and
- Whether or not implemented interventions had demonstrable results.

The four program interventions selected are as follows:

#### **Grant-making interventions**

- The Civic Initiatives Support Fund (the best-funded program intervention thus far with approximately \$8 million out of \$20 million spent to date).
- Democracy, Human Rights & Governance grants (over \$3 million).

#### **Institutional strengthening/Capacity building interventions:**

- Internal Strengthening for Change (ISC) with well over 700 beneficiaries to date.
- Demand-Driven Off-the-Shelf Courses.

In order to answer the evaluation questions, the following stakeholders and groups will be consulted:

- CIS staff
- CIS grantees and capacity building beneficiaries
- CIS intermediary organizations
- Rejected applicants
- Government officials
- Civil society experts
- Civil society activists (including at national Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs))

## **Data Collection Methods**

In addition to a comprehensive desk review, data collection methods will include focus groups, group interviews and key informant interviews.

The focus groups, group interviews and key informant interviews will be guided by semi-structured questionnaires covering the evaluation topics; interview guides have been tailored to each of the six stakeholder clusters: grantees of the CIS Fund, DRG grantees, ISC grantees, participants in the Off-the-Shelf Courses for CSOs and CBOs, government officials and civil society experts and activists and rejected applicants. Each interview guide contains an average of nine questions that are intended to preserve the potential for a relatively free-flowing conversation, while creating a standardized format to facilitate a reliable, comparative analysis of data. Questions are based on the evaluation's overarching questions, but vary depending upon the identity of the interviewees. Questions asked of some interviewees may not be asked to others; relative importance of questions varies by the type of stakeholder.

Interview guides were designed to take into account the need to capture gender differentials. Answers will be gender disaggregated.

## **Literature Review**

Documentation and reports reviewed in the process of this evaluation included the following:

1. Year I Workplan
2. Year II Workplan
3. CIS Performance Management Plan (PMP)
4. Summary Version of Final Approved Proposal
5. CIS quarterly reports
6. CIS monthly reports
7. Project fact sheets and special studies

8. Grants files and training curricula
9. ISC Assessment Presentation
10. ISC Assessment Focus Group Discussions

### Key Informant Interviews

Fourteen interviews will be conducted with key informants drawn from government and civil society experts and activists. Interviewees were selected based on their knowledge of the sector, their affiliation with it through their professional experience, and/or their familiarity with the CIS program. The key informants consist of a group of civil society experts (including academics and journalists), GOJ officials (including at the governorate and municipal levels), and civil society activists.

### Focus Group Discussions

Twenty-two focus groups will be conducted with the following groups:

- 4 focus groups with rejected applicants (3 CIS and 1 DRG)
- 6 focus groups with participants in the Off-the-Shelf courses
- 12 focus groups with ISC beneficiaries

### Group Interviews

Twenty-six group interviews will be conducted with the following groups:

- 19 group interviews with CIS grantees
- 7 group interviews with DRG grantees

The focus groups and group interviews will consist of both female and male participants. The recruitment criteria will require having as even a male to female ratio as possible.

Table I below lists the data collection methods used in answering the evaluation questions.

Table I: Data Collection Methods					
Evaluation Questions		Data Collection Methods			
		Group Interviews	Focus Groups	KII	Desk Review
I	How effective are CIS's grant-making mechanisms and design, awarding processes, and grant-management systems in supporting:	x	x	x	x

	1. National and sub-national civic initiatives; 2. Organizational development; 3. Improved service-delivery capacity; and 4. Advocacy development.				
2	How effective is the capacity building/technical assistance delivery component of CIS in supporting:  1. National and sub-national civic initiatives; 2. Organizational development; 3. Improved service delivery capacity; and 4. Advocacy development.	x	x	x	x
3	To what extent is CIS increasing the frequency and quality of GOJ-civil society interaction, and how can it best support collaboration between these two stakeholders?	x	x	x	
4	Which key assistance gaps, including those identified by the civil society assessment, remain to be filled under each of CIS's two components (grant-making and capacity-building)? Which alterations might need to be made to each? And which opportunities present themselves (including due to prior project activities) to enable CIS to become more effective in achieving its stated objective of promoting the common interests of Jordanians?	x	x	x	

## Sampling Plan

The sampling of respondents targeted for the evaluation is based upon the stakeholder type with a focus on four CIS program interventions:

- The Civic Initiatives Support Fund
- Democracy, Human Rights and Governance Grants
- Internal Strengthening for Change
- Capacity Building Open Courses

Nineteen Round I CIS grantees (out of 28 grantees) were selected to represent all governorates in which Round I of the program is being implemented and to cover all CDCS themes supported by CIS. The sample was selected randomly within each geographic location, and constructed to ensure coverage of both registered CSOs and informal groups working on civic initiatives.

All seven DRG grantees will be interviewed, as this component receives significant funding relative to overall program budget.

Fourteen government officials and civil society experts were selected for interview based on their familiarity of the program and/or knowledge of civil society. The group includes the three intermediary organizations through which the CIS ISC program component is delivered to various CBOs.

Three of the four focus groups to be held with rejected applicants will specifically target applicants for CIS grants while one focus group will concentrate on applicants to the DRG grants. The three focus groups with rejected CIS applicants will cover the governorates as follows:

- One focus group to cover Irbid, Mafraq, Jerash and Ajloun in the North;
- One focus group to cover Amman, Zarqa Balqa and Madaba in the center; and
- One focus group to cover Maan, Karak, Tafileh and Aqaba in the South.

The focus group with the applicants to the DRG grants will cover Amman only as the majority of applicants and therefore rejected applicants were from the capital.

Focus groups with participants in the Off-the-Shelf Courses will include two focus groups from each of the following regions as follows:

- North
  - Irbid
  - Mafraq
- Center
  - Amman
  - Jerash, Zarqa, Ajloun and Madaba
- South
  - Ma'an
  - Tafileh and Aqaba

Twelve focus groups will be held with CBOs that have benefited from Round I and II of the ISC program. Organizations were selected from Karak, Tafileh, Madaba, Zarqa, Ma'an, Irbid, Aqaba, Balqa, Mafraq, and Amman, representing all governorates in which the program is implemented.

In addition, six focus groups will be conducted with CSOs that have participated in CIS's open courses. The selection of these organizations was based on three factors:

- Subject area of courses
- Male/female ratio

- Regional distribution of governorates

The team will seek to meet with the actual trainees who attended training. In the case that they have left the organization, the team will invite the head of the CSO to participate in the focus group discussions.

A snowball methodology will be used to identify additional informants and organizations as findings emerge that require further investigation. If informants and organizations are unavailable, replacement organizations matching the original sampling criteria will be identified using the same methodology.

### **Data Analysis Methods**

Data analysis will be structured by the evaluation's primary questions and sub-questions. Preliminary data analysis will commence as patterns and themes emerge. Theme frequencies will be compared and frequency co-occurrence among stakeholder clusters will be recorded and analyzed to establish relationships between the emerging themes.

Data collected through qualitative methods will be triangulated for each question, e.g., information collected from interviews with government officials will be compared to responses of CIS grantees working on the engagement of government, and validated with civil society experts.

## ANNEX III: LIST OF GROUP INTERVIEWS, KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

<b>CIS Round I Grantees</b> 19 Group Interviews (Total Number of Grantees: 28)				
	<b>Name of Organization/Informal Group</b>	<b>Governorate</b>	<b>Implementation</b>	<b>CDCS Theme</b>
1	Ahl Alazm Young Group, Informal Group	Irbid	Irbid	DRG
2	Quailebah Association for Training and Young Empowerment	Irbid	Irbid	WRE
3	Good Land for Development and Environment	Mafraq	Mafraq and Irbid	WRE
4	Today Reader Tomorrow Leader, Informal Group	Mafraq	Mafraq	EDY
5	Musa Al-Saket for Development Organization	Balqa	Balqa	EDE
6	Forest Protection and Rehab, Informal Group	Jerash	Jerash	WRE
7	Family Guidance and Awareness Center	Zarqa	Zarqa	GEFE
8	We can Do it, Informal Group	Madaba	Madaba	GEFE
9	Beyond Excellence Training and Consulting	Amman	Irbid, Tafileh and Karak	EDE
10	Generations for Peace	Amman (Amman Zarqa Irbid Mafraq)	Amman, Zarqa, Irbid and Mafraq	EDY
11	Haya Cultural Center	Amman	Amman, Russeifeh, Irbid and Karak	EDY
12	Jubilee Institute	Amman	Irbid	EDY
13	Leaders of Tomorrow	Amman	Nationwide	EDE
14	Jordan Innovators	Amman	Ajloun, Amman and Aqaba	EDE
15	Rights and Development	Amman	Amman	DRG
16	Sanady, Informal Group	Amman	Nationwide	PFH
17	Disi Women Cooperative	Aqaba	Aqaba	GEFE

18	Al Qantara for Human Resources Development	Ma'an	Ma'an	DRG
19	Tafilah's Women Charitable Society	Tafileh	Tafileh	GEFE

<b>DRG Grantees</b> 7 Group Interviews (Total Number of Grantees: 7)				
	<b>Name of Organization</b>	<b>Governorate</b>		
1	Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists	Amman		
2	Al Hayat Center for Civil Society Development	Amman		
3	Greyscale Films	Amman		
4	Health Care Accreditation Council	Amman		
5	Information and Research Center/King Hussein Foundation	Amman		
6	Phoenix Center for Economic and Informatics Studies	Amman		
7	Sisterhood is Global Institute	Amman		

<b>Rejected Applicants (CIS RII, RIII and DRG)</b> 4 Focus Groups 3 CIS (Irbid, Mafrq, Jerash, Ajloun) (Amman, Zarqa, Balqa, Madaba) (Maan, Karak, Tafileh, Aqaba) 1 DRG				
	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Proposal/Sector</b>	<b>Governorate</b>	<b>Sector</b>
<b>CIS RII</b>				
1	Woujoud for Empowering Civil Society	National Consciousness: Article 308 between Jordanians and Syrian Refugees	Amman	DRG
2	Advisory Center for Human Rights	Terrorism	Amman	DRG
3	Al Qaser Tamim Bin Aws AIDari Association	Bridge the gap between academic EDY outputs and labor market requirements in addition to quality housewives to manage pilot projects	Karak	EDE
4	Al Karak Association of Welfare of	Karak government hospital Friend for People with Disabilities	Karak	PFH

	Persons with Disability			
5	Abu Aljman Association for Wildlife	Environment Awareness	Ma'an	WRE
6	Talha al-Shamaseen and his Partner_PII	Petra Reform Initiative for Modern EDY (PRIME)	Ma'an	EDY
7	Al Hanan Charity	Tomorrow is Better	Irbid	Other
8	Friends of Archeology and Heritage Society	Tourism Destination Management: Towards A Responsible and Sustainable Development in the North of Jordan Irbid, Ajloun and Jerash	Irbid	EDE
9	Dalal Abdulla Qasem Muhammad and partner company	Child's right to play and learn	Zarqa	EDY
10	Saleem Ibraheem AL-Faqeer and his Partners Company	Rendering early learning to pre-school age by establishing modern kindergarten in AL-Tafilah- AL-Eis town.	Tafileh	EDY
11	Mowatanh center for civic development	Apply to build a future generation	Tafileh	EDY
<b>CIS R I I</b>				
12	Zarqa Theater Troop Society	Ihna Mish Haik	Zarqa	DRG
13	Souq by the Sea Association	Souk by the Sea	Aqaba	EDE
14	Shabab Al Ghad Center for Local Community Development	Moderation Ambassadors	Aqaba	Education
15	AlHanonneh Charity Association	Dream Initiative	Jerash	Education
16	Jordanian society for human development	Build it...Don't Destroy it	Jerash	DRG
17	Northern Badia Association for Social Development	Discuss and talk to me	Mafrq	Education
18	Levant Local Community Development	Partners in Change: Youth Employment Partnership Program	Mafrq	EDE
19	Rural Women's Association	Garden from Grey Water	Madaba	WE

20	General federation of Jordan women (MADABA Women UNION)	Legal Literacy	Madaba	DRG
21	Balqa Governorate Regional Cooperation (consisting of 55 Association)	Civic Education and think Green	Balqaa	WE
22	United Charitable Godliness for Women ( Al Taqwa )	Our Abilities	Balqaa	Education
23	Forum cultural colors	Hand Craft Center For Woman ( HCCW)	Ajloun	GEFE
24	Turab Association for Human Rights	My Decision	Ajloun	GEFE
<b>DRG</b>				
25	Adaleh Center for Human Rights Studies	Enhancing Human Rights Environment in Jordan	Amman	DRG
26	Arab Women Media Center AWMC	Stands for Media for Special Purposes to Supporting Democracy, rights and Governance in Jordan	Amman	DRG
27	Essam Omari and his Partner Organization	Equal Rights for Orphaned Youth	Amman	DRG
28	Visions Center for Strategic and Development Studies	Jordanian Initiatives for Syrian Refugees	Amman	DRG
29	Arab Network for Human Rights and Citizenship Education	Promoting Quality inclusive Education Policies for Children	Amman	DRG
30	Community Media Network CMN	Supporting Rights of Marginalized Labor Sector in Jordan	Amman	DRG
31	Land and Human To Advocate Progress LHAP	Motive of Democracy Development, Rights Protection and Policy Change	Amman	DRG

**Demand-Driven Off-the-Shelf courses during Sept 2014 - June 2015**

(Total Number: 64 Organizations)

6 Focus Groups:

- Amman
- Jerash, Zarqa, Ajloun Madaba
- Mafrq
- Irbid
- Maan
- Tafleh and Aqaba

	<b>Name of Organization</b>	<b>Course</b>	<b>Governorate</b>	<b>Gender</b>
1	Queen Rania Teacher Academy	Organizational M&E Foundations Project Design and Proposal Writing	Amman, Ajloun	1 Male 1 Female
2	Justice Center for Legal Aid	Organizational M&E Foundations Project Design and Proposal Writing	Amman	2 Females
3		Project Design and Proposal Writing Organizational M&E Foundations	Amman	2 Females
4	Phoenix Center for Economic and Informatics	Organizational M&E Foundations Project Design and Proposal Writing	Amman	1 Male 2 Females
5	Queen Rania Teacher Academy	Project Design and Proposal Writing	Ajloun	1 Female
6	Princess Basma Youth Center	Project Design and Proposal Writing	Madaba	2 Females
7	Darb As Sufsaf Charity Society	Project Design and Proposal Writing	Jarash	1 Male
8	Justice Center for Training on Human Rights	Project Design and Proposal Writing Documentation and Report Writing	Zarqa	1 Male
9	Suzan Al Sawalmeh	Project Design and Proposal Writing	Jerash	1 Female
10	Irada	Project Design and Proposal Writing	Zarqa	1 Male

11	Jordan Environment Society	Project Design and Proposal Writing	Ajloun	1 Female
12	Northern Western Badia Association	Documentation & Report Writing Budgeting for Proposals	Mafraq	3 Males
13	INJAZ for the Creation of Economic Opportunities	Budgeting for Proposals.	Mafraq	1 Male
14	Vocational Training Corporation Housing Society	Budgeting for Proposals	Mafraq	1 Female
15	Zamlet Prince Ghazi for Social Development	Budgeting for Proposals Documentation and Report Writing	Mafraq	1 Female 1 Male
16	Good Land for Development and Environment	Budgeting for Proposals	Mafraq	1 Female
17	Queen Zein Al-Sharaf Association	Project Design and Proposal Writing	Mafraq	1 Female
18	Kufursoum Cooperative Society	Introduction to Advocacy Budgeting for Proposals	Irbid	3 Males
19	Tamkeen Women Association	Introduction To Advocacy Budgeting for Proposals	Irbid	3 Females
20	White hands Association for Social Development	Introduction to Advocacy	Irbid	1 Female 1 Male
21	Darb Al-Sufsaf Charity Society	Introduction to Advocacy Project Design and Proposal Writing	Irbid	3 Males
22	Together We Smile Non-Profit Company	Project Design and Proposal Writing	Ma'an	2 Females
23	Beer Al Sabba Association for Righteousness	Project Design and Proposal Writing	Ma'an	2 Males
24	Al Qantara Center for Human Resources Development	Project Design and Proposal Writing Organizational M& E Foundations	Ma'an	2 Males
25	Maharat Association	Proposal Design and Proposal Writing, Budgeting for Proposals	Ma'an	3 Females
26	We Are All Jordan Youth Commission	Project Design and Proposal Writing	Tafileh and Aqaba	5 Females 3 Males
27	The General Union of Voluntary Societies	Project Design and Proposal Writing	Tafileh	1 Female 2 Males

		Documentation and Report Writing		
28	Princess Basma Youth Center	Project Management Basics	Aqaba	2 Females 1 Male
29	Jordan Environment Society	Project Design and Proposal Writing	Aqaba	3 Males 1 Female

<b>ISC Beneficiaries</b> (Total Number: Over 700) 12 Focus Groups			
	Organization	Location	Number of FG Participants
Jordan River Foundation			
1	Mrood Charitable Association (RI-SP)	Karak	
2	Alashiqaa Cooperative Association (RI-SP)	Karak	
3	Merwed for Environment and Combatting Desertification Association (RI-SP)	Karak	
4	Ghore Almazra'a Center for Orphans	Karak	
5	Ghour Almzazra'a and Al Hadeetha Association for Social Development.	Karak	
6	Fifa Association for Nature Concerns	Karak	
7	Ghore Fifa for Social Development Association (RI-IDA)	Karak	
8	A'abel Youth Club (RI-SP)	Tafileh	
9	Association for Retired and Users Cement Factory (RI-SP)	Tafileh	
10	Irweem Charitable Society (RI-SP)	Tafileh	
11	Association for Retired Military (RI-IDA)	Tafileh	
12	Al Hesa Charitable Association for Orphans (RI-IDA)	Tafileh	
13	Shabat Mleih Association for Social Development (RII-IDA)	Madaba	
14	Fatayat Al-Badiya Charitable Association for Training and Development (RII-IDA)	Madaba	

15	Ayadi Al-A'tta' Cooperative Association (RII-IDA)	Madaba	
16	Al-Jaheth Charitable Association for Orphans, Widows and Special Needs Well-Being (RII-IDA)	Madaba	
17	Al-Sahabeh Charitable Association	Madaba	
18	Fatayat Bani Hamida Charitable Association	Madaba	
19	Al-Takreem Charitable Association (RII-IDA)	Madaba	
20	Jeeran Al Ard Charitable Association (R2-SP)	Zarqa	
21	Anwar Al-Rahman Charitable Association (R2-SP)	Zarqa	
22	Nashmiyyat Al-Janoub Charitable Association (R2-SP)	Zarqa	
23	Tayseer Sobul Al-Zawaj Charitable Association (R2-IDA)	Zarqa	
24	Al-Waha Charitable Association (R2-IDA)	Zarqa	
25	Family Welfare Charitable Association (R2-SP)	Zarqa	
26	Al-Qanieh Cooperative Association	Zarqa	
27	Al-Hayat Charitable Association for Social Development (R2-SP)	Zarqa/	
28	Al-Wadi Women Association for Social Development (RII-SP)	Ma'an	
29	Al-Rajef Charitable Association (RII-SP)	Ma'an	
30	Al-Jnoub Charitable Association for Special Needs (RII-SP)	Ma'an	
31	Wadi Mousa Widowers Charitable Association (RII-SP)	Ma'an	
32	Al-Qantara Center (RII-SP)	Ma'an	
33	Al-Raya Al-Hashimiyyeh Charitable Association (RII-IDA)	Ma'an	
34	Al-Hashimieyeh Women Charitable Association (RII-IDA)	Ma'an	
<b>NHF</b>			
35	Ekram Al-Mota Charity (RI-SP)	Irbid	

36	Al-Zmaleh for Ladies Charity (RI-SP)	Irbid	
37	Qwilbeh Center for Development and Youth Empowerment (R2-SP)	Irbid	
38	Johfeah Charity (RI-SP)	Irbid	
39	Entrepreneurship Cooperative for Women (RI-SP)	Irbid	
40	Abu Obeidah Charity (RI-SP)	Irbid	
41	Wadi Al-Rayyan Women Charity (RI-IDA)	Irbid	
42	Abna' Al Shobak Charity (RI-SP)	Aqaba	
43	Arous Al-Janoob Association (RI-SP)	Aqaba	
44	Beer Al Sabba Association for Righteousness and Charity (RI-SP))	Aqaba	
45	Will Makers Association for People with Disabilities (RI-SP)	Aqaba	
46	Friends of Autism Charity (RI-SP)	Aqaba	
47	Aqaba Gulf for Social Development	Aqaba	
48	Al Qweira charitable Association (RI-IDA)	Aqaba	
49	Al Beera Charitable Association (RII-IDA)	Balqaa	
50	Righteousness and Brotherhood Charitable Association (RII-IDA)	Balqaa	
51	Jordanian Women Union of Al-Balqaa Governorate (RII-IDA)	Balqaa	
52	Sultan Al Takaful Charitable Organization (RII-IDA)	Balqaa	
53	Women of Giving and Goodness Society for the Care of Orphans (RII-IDA)	Balqaa	
54	Al Azzam Charitable Organization	Balqaa	
55	Northern Twal Charity	Balqaa	
56	Women of Northern Twal Charity	Balqaa	
57	Al-Mshrefa for Social Development (RI-IDA)	Mafrq	
58	Al-Harameen Al-Shareefen Charitable Association (RII-IDA)	Mafrq	

59	Al-Huda and Giving Charitable Association (RI-IDA)	Mafraq	
60	Al-Khalida Women Charitable Association for Children and Family Care (RI-IDA)	Mafraq	
61	Alshafaqa Charitable Association (RII-SP)	Mafraq	
62	Good Land Charitable Association (R2-SP)	Mafraq	
63	Manshyet Bani Hassan Charitable Association (R2-SP)	Mafraq	
64	Shaqaeq Alrijal Charitable Association (R2-SP)	Mafraq	
65	Relief and Aid Charity Association (RI-IDA)	Amman	
66	Um-Rasas Women Charitable Association (RI-IDA)	Amman	
67	All Jordan Charity Association (RII-SP)	Amman	
68	Tawheed and Hedaieh Charity Association (RII-SP)	Amman	
69	Manara Charity Association (RII-SP)	Amman	
70	Nashama Al-Badia Forum Association (RII-SP)	Amman	
<b>Al-Thoria</b>			
71	Bright Future Charitable Association	Amman	
72	Thehabat Al-Dham for Social Development	Amman	
73	Al-Hashemiyya Western Charitable association	Amman	
74	Association of Retired Military	Amman	
75	Al Ktafa for Social Development	Amman	
76	Dar Khar Charitable Association	Amman	
77	Farah for Children Care Charity Association	Amman	
78	Omar Ben Khattab Charity Association	Ma'an	
79	Al Mansoura for Social Development Charity Association	Ma'an	
80	Future Charity Association for Training and Development	Ma'an	

81	Bair Khadad for Social Development	Ma'an	
82	Wadi Mousa Charity Association	Ma'an	
83	Hamel Mesk Charity Association	Ma'an	
84	Eal Charity Association	Ma'an	
85	Baidaa Marigha Women Charity Association	Ma'an	

### **Key Informant Interviews (Government and Civil Society Experts)**

1. Registry of Societies
2. Higher Council for Affairs of Persons with Disabilities
3. Dima Jweihan
4. Hana Shaheen
5. Hala Ghosheh
6. Nisreen Haj Ahmad
7. Samar Dudin
8. Mohammad Abu Rumman
9. Ibrahim Gharaybeh
10. 3 MOSD Directorates
11. Yousef Mansour
12. Jordan River Foundation
13. Nour Al Hussein Foundation
14. Al Thoria

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## ANNEX V: DISCUSSION GUIDES

### Interview Guide for Grantees of the Civic Initiative Support Fund (CISF)

#### Introduction

Thank you very much for meeting with us today and for being willing to answer our questions.

As part of its planning for the next few years, USAID has asked us to conduct an evaluation of its Civic Initiative Support Project, which seeks to support the civil society sector in Jordan through open and thematic grants and capacity building activities. We aim to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the project as a whole, and the nature and extent of its contributions to the development of civil society. We would like to determine how these contributions can be of greater significance and how obstacles may be overcome.

Overall, the purpose of this study is to help ensure that USAID's assistance to civil society organizations becomes more effective and maximizes the benefits to both Jordanian civil society organizations and the Jordanian population at large.

We intend to ask you 14 questions, a few of which may entail follow-up questions. Of course, your answers will be kept confidential and the report developed from this study will not attribute any particular comment to any particular individual, or for that matter to any particular group of respondents. Before we proceed, do you have any questions?

#### Questions

1. What is your CIS-supported project trying to achieve and how did you determine that there was a need for it in the community?
2. What is your organization's core constituency and how do you communicate with it?
3. Which specific services does your organization provide to the community and how do you get feedback from the community about those services?
4. Does the grant from CIS address the most significant needs of your organization? Can you think of particular weaknesses of your organization or challenges to its ability to achieve its goals that this grant does not help address?
5. From your perspective, are CIS's awarding process and grant management system adequate? How could either or both be improved?
6. Does the CIS grant support the development of your management systems (financial management, management of operations and management of staff/volunteers? Could your needs in those areas be met more effectively, and, if so, how?
7. Does the CIS-supported project help build a closer relationship between your organization and its core constituency, the media or other CSOs? How?
8. Does the CIS-supported project enhance your relationship with the government, and, if so, how?

9. Does the CIS-supported project help you improve your service-delivery capacity, and, if so, how?
10. Do you think advocacy is important to help your organization achieve its objectives? Why/why not? Is the CIS-supported project strengthening your organization's capacity to advocate, and, if so, how?
11. How effective were the training modules you received at the start of the CIS-supported project?
12. From your perspective, is the awarding of grants the most effective way to help your organization achieve its goals, or can you think of other means that should be considered?
13. What capacity building support do you wish you had been given, but were not, and why would that support be important?
14. During the course of the project's implementation, did you encounter any specific challenge that we have not discussed already?

## **Interview Guide for the Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DRG) Grantees**

### **Introduction**

Thank you very much for meeting with us today and for being willing to answer our questions.

As part of its planning for the next few years, USAID has asked us to conduct an evaluation of its Civic Initiative Support Project, which seeks to support the civil society sector in Jordan through open and thematic grants and capacity building activities. We aim to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the project as a whole, and the nature and extent of its contributions to the development of civil society. We would like to determine how these contributions can be of greater significance and how obstacles may be overcome.

Overall, the purpose of this study is to help ensure that USAID's assistance to civil society organizations becomes more effective and maximizes the benefits to both Jordanian civil society organizations and the Jordanian population at large.

We intend to ask you 14 questions, a few of which may entail follow-up questions. Of course, your answers will be kept confidential and the report developed from this study will not attribute any particular comment to any particular individual, or for that matter to any particular group of respondents. Before we proceed, do you have any questions?

### **Questions**

1. What is your CIS-supported project trying to achieve and how did you determine that there was a need for it in the community?
2. What is your organization's core constituency and how do you communicate with it?
3. To achieve greater impact, should grants have geographic and/or thematic priorities? Or should they instead be flexible and responsive to the needs of, and priorities set by, the organizations themselves?
4. Does the grant from CIS address the most significant needs of your organization? Can you think of particular weaknesses of your organization or challenges to its ability to achieve its goals that this grant does not help address?
5. From your perspective, are CIS's awarding process and grant management system adequate? How could either or both be improved?
6. Does the CIS grant support the development of your management systems (financial management, management of operations and management of staff/volunteers? Could your needs in those areas be met more effectively, and, if so, how?
7. Does the CIS-supported project help build a closer relationship between your organization and its core constituency, the media or other CSOs? How?
8. Does the CIS-supported project enhance your relationship with the government, and, if so, how?

9. Is the CIS-supported project strengthening your organization's capacity to advocate and, if so, how?
10. In your view, why haven't there been more advocacy successes in Jordan at the national and local levels?
11. How effective were the training modules that you received at the start of the project?
12. From your perspective, is the awarding of grants the most effective way to help your organization achieve its goals, or can you think of other means that should be considered?
13. What capacity-building support do you wish you had been given, but were not, and why would that support be important?
14. During the course of the project's implementation, did you encounter any specific challenge that we have not discussed already?

## **Interview Guide for the Internal Strengthening for Change (ISC) Grantees**

### **Introduction**

Thank you very much for meeting with us today and for being willing to answer our questions.

As part of its planning for the next few years, USAID has asked us to conduct an evaluation of its Civic Initiative Support Project, which seeks to support the civil society sector in Jordan through open and thematic grants and capacity building activities. We aim to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the project as a whole, and the nature and extent of its contributions to the development of civil society. We would like to determine how these contributions can be of greater significance and how obstacles may be overcome.

Overall, the purpose of this study is to help ensure that USAID's assistance to civil society organizations becomes more effective and maximizes the benefits to both Jordanian civil society organizations and the Jordanian population at large.

We intend to ask you 8 questions, a few of which may entail follow-up questions. Of course, your answers will be kept confidential and the report developed from this study will not attribute any particular comment to any particular individual, or for that matter to any particular group of respondents. Before we proceed, do you have any questions?

### **Questions**

1. Was the support you received through the first, second or all three stages of the program beneficial to your organization? What did you do with it? What objectives did it help you achieve?
2. Did the support provided by CIS help your organization improve its management systems (financial management, management of operations and management of staff/volunteers? In light of the main challenges faced by your organization, do you think the amount of attention that the CIS project paid to improving management systems was insufficient, adequate, or excessive?
3. Did the support provided by CIS enhance your organization's relations with its constituency, the media or other CSOs, and, if so, how?
4. Did the program support your organization's service-delivery efforts, and, if so, how?
5. Did the program make you more aware of the importance of advocacy to your organization's ability to achieve its objectives, and, if so, how? Did the support CIS provided help improve your organization's capacity to advocate, and, if so, how?
6. Did the support your organization receive help create a more productive relationship with the local or national government, and, if so, how? What kind of support would help your organization become more effective at engaging with the government?
7. In light of what you have learned since your organization began receiving technical assistance from CIS, what modifications would you make to the support you were provided under this program?

8. What capacity building support do you wish you had been given, but were not, and why would that support be important?

## **Interview Guide for Participants in the Off-the-Shelf Courses (OSCs) for CSOs and CBOs**

### **Introduction**

Thank you very much for meeting with us today and for being willing to answer our questions.

As part of its planning for the next few years, USAID has asked us to conduct an evaluation of its Civic Initiative Support Project, which seeks to support the civil society sector in Jordan through open and thematic grants and capacity building activities. We aim to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the project as a whole, and the nature and extent of its contributions to the development of civil society. We would like to determine how these contributions can be of greater significance and how obstacles may be overcome.

Overall, the purpose of this study is to help ensure that USAID's assistance to civil society organizations becomes more effective and maximizes the benefits to both Jordanian civil society organizations and the Jordanian population at large.

We intend to ask you 8 questions, a few of which may entail follow-up questions. Of course, your answers will be kept confidential and the report developed from this study will not attribute any particular comment to any particular individual, or for that matter to any particular group of respondents. Before we proceed, do you have any questions?

### **Questions**

1. Which open courses did you participate in? Were the skills you gained beneficial to your organization, and, if so, how? What did you do with these skills? What objectives did they help you achieve?
2. Did the support provided by CIS help your organization improve its management systems (financial management, management of operations and management of staff/volunteers? In light of the main challenges faced by your organization, do you think the amount of attention that the CIS project paid to improving management systems was insufficient, adequate, or excessive?
3. Did the support provided by CIS enhance your organization's relations with its constituency, the media or other CSOs, and, if so, how?
4. Did the program support your organization's service-delivery efforts, and, if so, how?
5. Did the program make you more aware of the importance of advocacy to your organization's ability to achieve its objectives, and, if so, how? Did the support CIS provided help improve your organization's capacity to advocate, and, if so, how?
6. Did the support your organization received help create a more productive relationship with the local or national government, and, if so, how? What kind of support would help your organization become more effective at engaging with the government?
7. In light of what you have learned since your organization began receiving technical assistance from CIS, what modifications would you make to the support you were provided under this program?

8. What capacity building support do you wish you had been given, but were not, and why would that support be important?

## **Interview Guide for Key Informants (Government officials and Civil Society Experts and Activists)**

### **Introduction**

Thank you very much for meeting with us today and for being willing to answer our questions.

As part of its planning for the next few years, USAID has asked us to conduct an evaluation of its Civic Initiative Support Project, which seeks to support the civil society sector in Jordan through open and thematic grants and capacity building activities. We aim to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the project as a whole, and the nature and extent of its contributions to the development of civil society. We would like to determine how these contributions can be of greater significance and how obstacles may be overcome.

Overall, the purpose of this study is to help ensure that USAID's assistance to civil society organizations becomes more effective and maximizes the benefits to both Jordanian civil society organizations and the Jordanian population at large.

We intend to ask you 6 questions, a few of which may entail follow-up questions. Of course, your answers will be kept confidential and the report developed from this study will not attribute any particular comment to any particular individual, or for that matter to any particular group of respondents. Before we proceed, do you have any questions?

### **Questions**

1. Considering the weaknesses of the civil society sector in Jordan, do you think grants are the best way to support it? Why/Why not? What other specific interventions can support CSOs and the sector as a whole?
2. To achieve greater impact, should grants have geographic and/or thematic priorities? Or should they instead be flexible and responsive to the needs of, and priorities set by, the organizations themselves?
3. Are the most successful civil society organizations inspiring others or providing them with valuable lessons? Are their achievements helping to move forward the sector as a whole, and, if so, how? How can lessons learned from successful civil society activities, advocacy initiatives and interventions be better shared amongst other organizations in the sector?
4. Are the relief, development-oriented, and service-delivery activities currently performed by most CSOs sufficient to create the base of social trust and community support that these organizations will need to engage in advocacy? Why/why not?
5. What could enhance the relationship between civil society and the government? What skills does civil society need to become more effective at engaging government?
6. What modifications would you suggest to the CIS program to enable it to better support the civil society sector in Jordan?

## **Interview Guide for Rejected Applicants (CIS and DRG)**

### **Introduction**

Thank you very much for meeting with us today and for being willing to answer our questions.

As part of its planning for the next few years, USAID has asked us to conduct an evaluation of its Civic Initiative Support Project, which seeks to support the civil society sector in Jordan through open and thematic grants and capacity building activities. We aim to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the project as a whole, and the nature and extent of its contributions to the development of civil society. We would like to determine how these contributions can be of greater significance and how obstacles may be overcome.

Overall, the purpose of this study is to help ensure that USAID's assistance to civil society organizations becomes more effective and maximizes the benefits to both Jordanian civil society organizations and the Jordanian population at large.

We intend to ask you 9 questions, a few of which may entail follow-up questions. Of course, your answers will be kept confidential and the report developed from this study will not attribute any particular comment to any particular individual, or for that matter to any particular group of respondents. Before we proceed, do you have any questions?

### **Questions**

1. What was the project for which you applied for CIS support and how did you determine that there was a need for it in the community?
2. What is your organization's core constituency and how do you communicate with it?
3. Which specific services does your organization provide to the community and how do you get feedback from the community about those services?
4. Do you think that, in general, grants are an effective way of helping you address the weaknesses of your organization, or the challenges it faces? Can you think of specific weaknesses or challenges that grants do not help address? If so, what might be preferable mechanisms to help your organization grow and achieve its goals?
5. To achieve greater impact, should grants have geographic and/or thematic priorities? Or should they instead be flexible and responsive to the needs of, and priorities set by, CSOs themselves?
6. From your perspective, was CIS's communication/feedback for rejected applicants adequate? Did you understand why your application was rejected? How could that communication process be improved? Are you planning to reapply to CIS?
7. Do you think advocacy is important to help your organization achieve its objectives? Why/why not?
8. What capacity building support do you wish donors would provide, but are not, and why would that support be important?

9. What kind of support would help your organization become more effective at engaging with the government?