



## Final Performance Evaluation of the Youth for the Future (Y4F) Project

### Y4F Project Funding:

\$30 million

### Y4F Project Duration:

March 2009 — December 2014

### Y4F Prime and Local Partners:

Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) 13 Community Based Organizations (CBOs), Ministry of Labor (MoL), Vocational Training Corporation and Centers (VTCs), and the Higher Council of Youth (HCY). The implementing partner is the International Youth Foundation

### Y4F Geographic Coverage:

Zarqa, Russeifeh, Irbid, Jordan Valley and Southern Shouneh, Maan, Mafraq, East Amman and Sahab

### Stakeholders Consulted

Observation visits to 17 youth spaces, interviews with almost 90 youth service providers, group discussions with almost 100 parents, and surveys with over 435 youth.

### Evaluation Timeframe:

September — November 2014.



Job seeker at the Ministry of Labor One Stop Shop in Abdali.

## SUMMARY

Y4F was designed with the long-term goal of establishing an enabling environment to more effectively serve at-risk youth. Targeting vulnerable populations aged 15-24 years, Y4F objectives were to improve the approaches of local partners for working with youth; build capacity of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to provide access to long-term employment for youth; and improve provision of youth friendly services. While the original project design was broad-based with a wide range of local partners and included initiatives in policy and civic participation, the focus was narrowed in Phase II. Y4F worked through local CBOs and with Vocational Training Centers (VTCs) and the Ministry of Labor to provide life skills training; to provide technical work skills training; and to provide services linking youth with employers. In order to sustain these services for youth, the project endeavored to build both the management and programming capacity of CBO partners and select public sector institutions to better meet the needs of targeted youth populations.

The focus of this evaluation was to assess Phase II of the Youth for the Future (Y4F) project outcomes for youth and capacity building for local partners with the purpose of providing recommendations for positive youth development strategies and best practices for youth-serving institutions that may be incorporated into future programming.

A number of successful approaches were identified through Y4F as follows:

- The synergy of life skills training and vocational training appears to be critical in youth transitioning to work. Working with VTCs and recognized colleges added a level of prestige to training, served youth who could not otherwise have afforded it, and linked participants to jobs. When surveyed on 17 behavior dimensions, 86-94% of youth report a positive impact from life skills training, an observation confirmed by parents and employers.
- Recognizing the value of life skills training, the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) was supported by Y4F in certifying in-life skills staff as trainers and making it mandatory in hospitality curricula. Combined with employer linkages in high-growth employment sectors, VTCs offer enormous potential for youth employment.
- CBOs and partners have increased capacity in service provision. Organizational and management capacity increased more among more established CBOs with permanent staff and alternative funding streams.
- CBOs were most effective in reaching youth due to community trust and location within the community which encouraged attendance, particularly for females.
- The One Stop Shop model for employment centers (introduced in Abdali and Irbid) with youth services and networking with the private sector through job fairs and referral to potential



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Al-Qweismeh center for young women in Amman.



English Club in That-Alnetaqen CBO in Deir-Alla.

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employers are likely to be sustained as these services and systems have been fully integrated into the centers' work flow.

- Although the Y4F did not initially consider gender-based disparities in participation, CBOs responded by sex-segregating training and transportation, and meeting with parents who were resistant to females participating.

Important lessons for future youth programming were also gained from areas that proved less successful:

- Technical training exclusively in the high-growth employment sectors identified through the National Employment Strategy sectors is not effective for youth who live in geographic areas without jobs in these sectors, and excludes females, as these sectors are frequently considered culturally inappropriate.
- One result of life skills training was increased conflict in the home, as parents had not been informed of or involved in the activity.
- Smaller CBOs without funding sources have little activity and therefore minimal opportunity to fully integrate new systems.
- While technical training through recognized colleges added a level of prestige, graduates often held unrealistically high expectations of resultant jobs and salaries.

Recommendations resulting from the evaluation include the following:

- Support all partners to incorporate life skills training into youth programming and engage parents to create an enabling environment in the home.
- Manage youth expectations with career counseling, work site visits, and meeting youth already working in the sector in order to mitigate youth leaving the workforce due to post-employment disillusionment.
- Select areas of technical skills training that are appropriate for local job markets and that are accessible to females.
- Design future activities addressing youth to be in alignment with USAID Gender policies. This may require challenging social norms and should be done in close consultation with females, families, community members and employers.
- Facilitate collaboration and support local partners to leverage each one's strengths: CBOs for outreach to and mobilization of youth and parents and youth friendly spaces; VTCs for technical training and employer linkages; and One Stop Shops for job placement.
- Conduct participatory research to identify effective ways to engage parents to create an enabling environment for youth.
- Conduct research to determine the extent to which financial need and perceived lack of socio-economic mobility discourages youth from re-enrolling in school.