



# IDENTITY CENTER

ANNUAL REPORT  
2012



The Identity Center works toward a world where people are empowered to shape and control their identities and destinies.







# LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



More than two years after the start of the Arab Spring, with continuous protests expressing political and economic unrest and the passing of two elections, it is clear the region is undergoing a fundamental change. The people want to organize, reform and have their voices heard in an unprecedented way. Identity Center plays an important role in empowering people and building civil society to actively and effectively engage in this process through outreach, advocacy and training. 2012 was a pivotal year for the Identity Center, one which saw exponential growth in the number of international partners supporting and working with us. Locally and regionally, the Center extended its reach and partnerships, increasing its networks with civil society and establishing a permanent office in Iraq.

In 2012, Identity Center led projects in the fields of political affairs, elections, youth empowerment, and good governance. Our Youth Academy, now in its third year, gave young Jordanians the tools to become effective leaders in their communities and society at large. The Center published nine comprehensive Jordan Reform Watch reports documenting progress in socio-economic and political reforms. The Center placed great emphasis in the second half of the year in advocacy and education around the 2013 Parliamentary election, which was the first election that Jordanian citizens were legally allowed to independently monitor. The Identity Center led the 'Integrity Coalition' of 50 national NGOs with 1,700 observers monitoring the process across all 12 Governorates. In addition we launched a comprehensive multimedia campaign targeting all demographics of society, informing them about the election law, individual electoral rights, and election violations.

In 2013 we look forward to further growth, extended partnerships and the establishment of new offices within Jordan and across the region. A Policy Unit is being established which will produce participatory research through the year responding to key political and socio-economic issues facing the region. Through this the Center will be able to bring together partnerships, policy and practice to better empower people.

I want to thank all of the staff; volunteers and supporters, whose contributions have made all the achievements of the Center possible and I look forward to continuing our partnerships into 2013 and beyond.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Suhad Talabany'.

Suhad Talabany  
Executive Director, Identity Center

# ABOUT US

**Vision:**

The Identity Center works toward a world where people are empowered to shape and control their identities and destinies.

**Mission:**

The Identity Center is an independent institution helping to lead development in the Middle East. The Center empowers people to fully participate in political, economic, and social development through outreach, advocacy, and training.

**Values:**

Transparency, collaboration, free flow of ideas and information, learning from other cultures, gender equality, improved accountability and social justice.

**Fields of Work:**

Local democracy and decentralization  
Democracy and participation  
Political and socio-economic development  
Youth  
Parliamentary affairs  
Civil and political rights  
Social and economic rights



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# PROJECT SUMMARIES

## Jordan Reform Watch

This project carefully examines all aspects of political and socio-economic reform, including news, legislation, governmental actions, and public reactions. JRW is the finger on the pulse of reform issues, creating comprehensive monthly reports on relevant and specific themes.

## Youth Leaders Academy

Designed to inspire youth to participate in civil society and prepare them to become future leaders, this 18-month intensive program guides 30 young Jordanians in the fields of civil rights, team-building, and political analysis.

## Jordan 2013 Parliamentary Election Monitoring

The Integrity Coalition for Election Observation, led by Identity Center, mobilized 1,700 short-term and 70 long-term observers to monitor all phases of the election and report regarding candidate and voter registration, the objections process, campaign fairness, and vote buying and selling.

## "My Choice" Campaign

"My Choice," a comprehensive and far-reaching public awareness campaign that aided in increasing voter confidence and knowledge of their rights, the voting system, the electoral law, and illegal election practices.

## "If They Are In Power"

The project gave participating political parties a chance to educate voters about their specific platforms on a wide range of issues. They took part in in-depth interviews with Identity Center, which were published in Al-Ghad newspaper and in publicly-available booklets.

## Supporting Political Parties and Groups Through Dialogue

This project produced a map of all 43 Jordanian political parties, movements, and entities that are currently active in Jordan. Each entry includes the entity's name, headquarters, founding date, current leader, mission, and platforms. This project is set to continue with workshops across Jordan in 2013.

## Supporting Political Reform

Identity Center and Democracy Reporting International published a detailed analysis on the electoral legislation including expert recommendations. The project also included trainings for civil society organisations including the three domestic election coalitions in the areas of international standards for election monitoring, report-writing and advocacy.

## Policy Development Unit

In 2012 Identity Center established an in-house policy unit. This new unit published three groundbreaking policy papers for the National Democratic Institute and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung: "Increasing Democratic Political Engagement among University Students in Jordan," "The State Contribution in Financing Political Parties in Jordan," and "The Regulations Concerning Voting and Counting Votes in the Jordanian Parliamentary Election."

## Iraq as a Civil State and its Impact on the Political Scene

To evaluate Iraq's progress towards becoming a democratic state, the project analysed the impact of political developments within the country and produced concrete recommendations for key stakeholders in Iraq that would contribute to the nation's civic progress.

## Weekly Radio Talk Show

A weekly radio talk show ran in 2012 to encourage dialogue about the political and socio-economic reform process and to highlight minority representatives and disenfranchised groups. Notable participants included but were not limited to ministers, parliamentarians, media representatives, academics, experts, and activists.

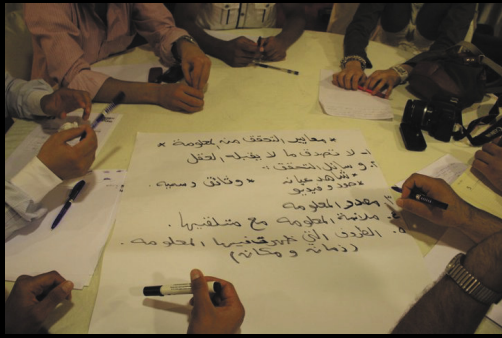


# YOUTH LEADERS ACADEMY



"THE NEXT GENERATION OF YOUTH WILL INHERIT GREAT CHALLENGES... YOUTH LEADERS ACADEMY WILL PREPARE YOUNG PEOPLE TO BECOME SELF ASSURED AND PREPARED LEADERS WHEN IT IS THEIR TURN TO ADDRESS THESE ISSUES IN THE NOT SO DISTANT FUTURE."





## "YOUTH HAVE BEEN ACTIVELY PURSUING A LARGER ROLE IN REFORM."



Identity Center addresses one of Jordan's most complex and pressing issues through the Youth Leaders Academy: the lack of socio-economic and political participation by youth.

The Academy creates a network of youth activists in each Governorate of Jordan and prepares them to be leaders on both a local and national level. The project began in 2010, and has flourished over the last two years as it continues to display steadily increasing public awareness of the project, interest from the media, and participation from Jordanian youth.

With half of Jordan's population under the age of 25 years old, youth empowerment was one of 2012's most important issues for the Hashemite Kingdom. Attitudes towards political participation are pessimistic and marked by a general sense of apathy, an issue compounded by widespread disenfranchisement and unemployment, despite the group's powerful demographic power. As youth have been actively pursuing a larger role in reform, Youth Leaders Academy met this need with a roster of practical activities that will prepare young people to become self-assured and

*Identity Centre helped us improve our skills through the Youth Leaders Academy's workshops, empowering us as future leaders. The Academy presented us with the opportunity to propose and implement initiatives to tackle our generation's lack of civil participation; my project focused on young people, developing their life skills and educating them on principles of human rights. – **Rasha Albazayaah***



prepared leaders when it is their turn to address these issues in the not- so-distant future. Recognizing youth as a key asset in Jordan's development and reform, Identity Center established the academy with the aim of providing young citizens with the confidence, knowledge, and passion necessary to realize their potential in the broader scope of the country's future.

30 young activists are painstakingly selected by Identity Center, in cooperation with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, and take part in each-18 month intensive program. Each phase of the activities strengthens key skills for future leaders: team-building sessions teach conflict resolution methods, leadership studies and group dynamics; political and civil rights training educates participants about human and constitutional rights on both international and local levels; and political analyses and reporting training teaches participants the methodology of analyzing information, writing political reports, and utilizing social media as a tool for change.

- Through discussions and training, participants were educated about critical topics related to their respective regions such as unemployment, nuclear energy, child labor, and the impact of tourism.
- 30 young activists were trained in how to channel their passions into meaningful political participation.

**Key Accomplishments**



# JORDAN REFORM WATCH

“We should **not**  
**UNDERESTIMATE**  
the **NEED** and **POTENTIAL**  
for **genuine** and **lasting** **CHANGE**.  
The public **APPETITE** for **reform** is  
**STRONG.**”





In the wake of a series of public protests that began in January 2010 caused by public frustration with corruption, the rising cost of living, and widespread unemployment, the Jordan Reform Watch addresses the need for up-to-date and publicly-accessible information related to reform in Jordan.

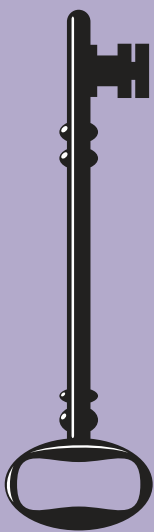
In addition to comprehensive economic solutions that address poverty and unemployment in Jordan, protesters vocally sought a more representative and responsive government. Statements from H.M. King Abdullah II expressed a desire for a reform process consisting of “quick, concrete, and practical steps” in order to strengthen democracy and provide citizens with “the dignified life that they deserve.”

Jordan Reform Watch has comprehensively monitored and documented the progression and regression of political and socio-economic reforms in relation to public statements and promises from Jordan’s government in a series of monthly reports. Each report documents the efforts related to transparency and anti-corruption, political reform and economic and social policies.

The monthly reports adapt the country’s changing political climate, taking into account any issues that may arise and the public and governmental response to these problems. Reform progress is examined by a team of 10 Jordanian experts, who quantify development on each issue by ranking progress from 1– 10 as well as giving professional recommendations for stakeholders on how to improve existing reform strategies. These reports are distributed in Arabic and English, and are available online at [www.reformjo.net](http://www.reformjo.net).



## Key Accomplishments



- Last year, Jordan Reform Watch published nine ground-breaking reports, encompassing themes such as “The November Uprising,” “Cancelling Subsidies on Fuel Prices,” “Press and Publication Law,” “Corruption and Anti-Reform,” and “Boycotting the Parliamentary Elections.”
- In early 2013 a comprehensive report on Reform in Jordan in 2012 was published highlighting achievements and areas for improvement across the various sectors.
- 59 key recommendations were published in the reports calling for stakeholders to make meaningful change. Many of these were adopted by the Government by the end of the year.
- Identity Center was invited by UNDP to present and discuss the project at a regional conference in Cairo.



# PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS



With the aim of increasing confidence among the Jordanian people in regards to the 2013's Parliamentary Elections, Identity Center undertook three significant projects: The **Integrity Coalition of Election Observers** was established to observe the election process. The **My Choice Voter Awareness Campaign** raised the knowledge of voters surrounding the election law and a **comprehensive report and recommendations** surrounding the new election law was produced in association with an international partner.



Over 1.5 million voters across Jordan were educated through a multi media awareness campaign about the new election law, their civic rights and responsibilities and illegal procedures as part of the My Choice voter awareness campaign.

The electoral legislation of Jordan was analysed against international standards in a comprehensive report produced by IdentityCenter and Democracy Reporting International as a means to promote electoral reforms.

## Key Accomplishments

1,700 short-term and 70 Long term observers tracked every stage of the electoral process in order to limit perceived and real manipulation.

Identity Center led a coalition of 50 national NGOs from across Jordan to monitor the Parliamentary Election process.

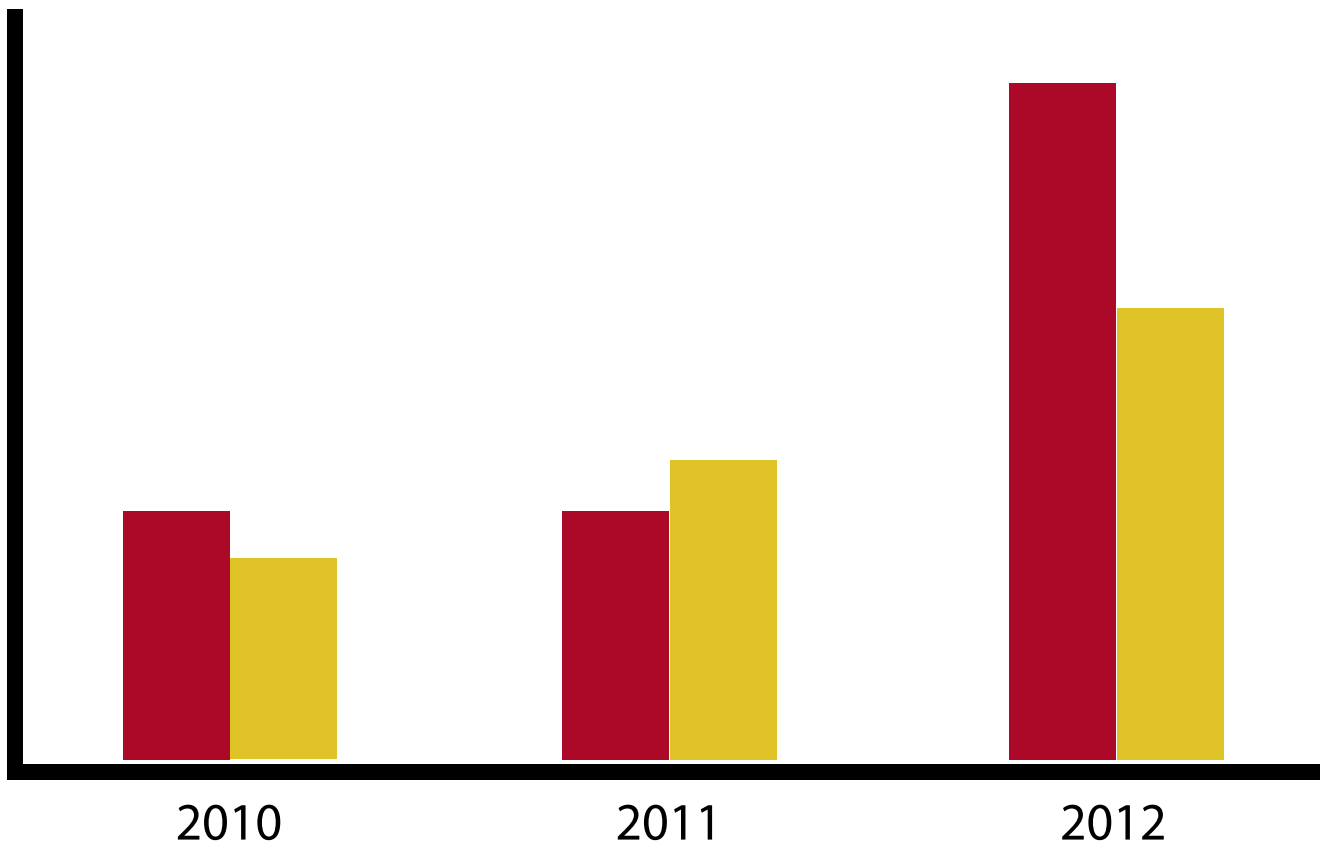
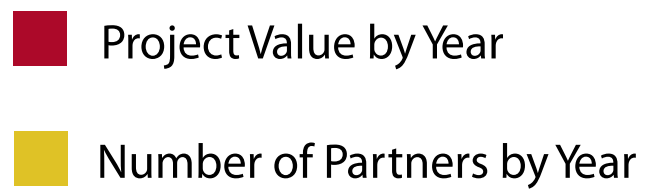
**“Election Observation”;** With the aim of increasing confidence among the Jordanian people regarding the legitimacy of 2013’s parliamentary elections, Identity Center led a group of 50 NGOs across the kingdom and 15 local NGOs from an umbrella organization in Tafleh to monitor and report on each stage of the election. Identity Center and “The Integrity Coalition for Election Observation,” conducted a range of activities to foster a transparent and representative electoral process. The coalition produced detailed reports containing observations and recommendations covering the topics of voter registration, the objection process, candidate registration, and vote buying and selling. In line with Identity Center’s commitment to transpar

ency and accountability, **“Supporting Political Reform in Jordan”** was created in collaboration with Democracy Reporting International. The project’s focus was reviewing electoral legislation in relation to international standards, and in turn, raising stakeholder understanding of Jordan’s international obligations in relation to elections. Based on a legal review of electoral legislation and consultations, DRI and Identity Center provided an in-depth analysis of the electoral framework and a comprehensive report that gave detailed recommendations for improvement. This was followed by a stakeholder workshop to raise understanding and awareness of reform and electoral issues, as well as trainings for CSOs that will develop their members’ skills for analysis,

reporting, and advocacy. To enhance voter awareness in this year’s elections, Identity Center embarked on the **“My Choice”** campaign, which aimed to increase understanding about voters’ rights, the voting system, election laws, and illegal practices. The campaign reached out to citizens using an unprecedented range of techniques: 40-second radio spots, 34,000 brochures, SMS and emails to 25,000 citizens, social media and online promotion, and TV and radio talk shows. Public workshops in each governorate prior to the elections integrated activists, public figures, community leaders, and the general public to create a public forum for questions and concerns about all aspects of the electoral process.

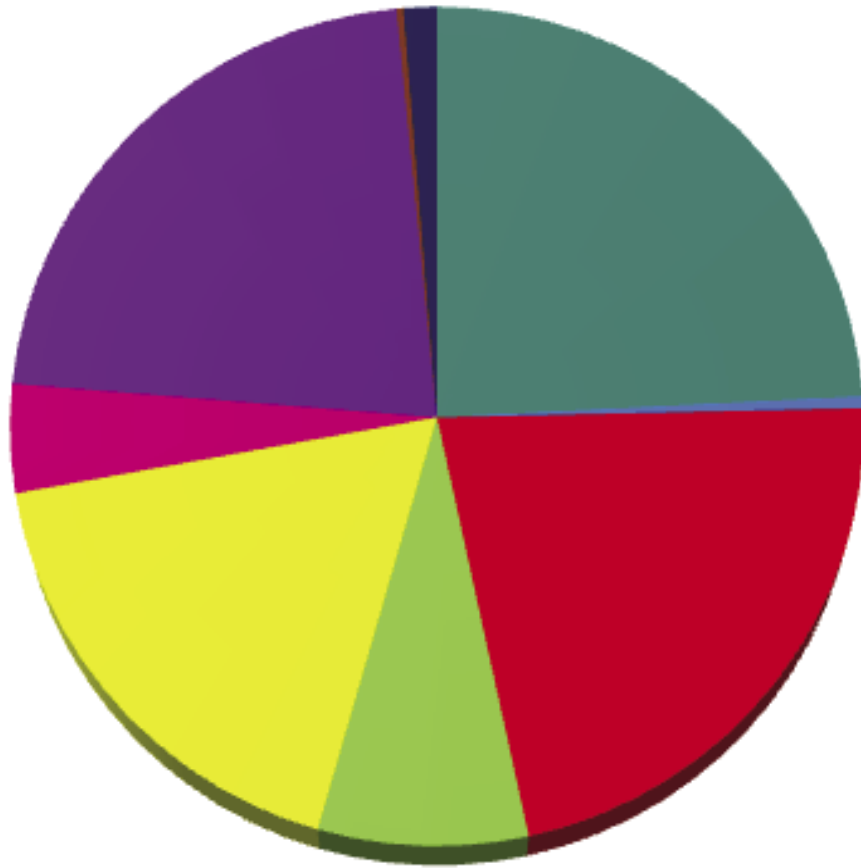
# FINANCIAL REVIEW 2012

## Yearly Growth





# Project Value by Partner in 2012



-  The British Embassy Amman
-  Embassy of Canada to Jordan
-  Spanish Agency for International Corporation
-  Netherlands Institute for Multi-Party Decocracy
-  National Democratic Institute
-  Democracy Reporting International
-  Friedrich Ebert Foundation
-  Embassy of the Czech Republic
-  The Embassy of Switzerland in Jordan

# PARTNERS



**UKaid**  
from the British people



Kingdom of the Netherlands



Netherlands Institute for  
**Multiparty Democracy**



**FRIEDRICH  
EBERT  
STIFTUNG**



**HUMAN RELIEF  
FOUNDATION**  
Jordan Office



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Embassy of Switzerland in Jordan

**DEMOCRACY  
REPORTING  
INTERNATIONAL**

**Canada** 

# TESTIMONIALS

"The Identity Center is considered one of the most important civil society organizations in Jordan, with deep knowledge, experience, and accumulated quality of work the Center has gained from the number of its activities and partners over the past few years. The programs and objectives of the center show a desire for the interest of the country and its safe democratic transformation. May god grant you success in your endeavor."

**Musa Ma'ayta**

*Former Minister of Political Development (2009 & 2010)*



"We were pleased to be a partner in the Identity Center's important work in monitoring the Jordanian Parliamentary Elections in January 2013. The Center approached its mission in a professional and constructive manner, and provided recommendations for further improvements to the electoral process that were both valuable for our analysis and beneficial for the Independent Elections Commission."

**Mark Gwozdecky**

*Ambassador of Canada to Jordan*

"Identity Center is a crucial addition to civil society in Jordan because of its courageous work. It provides an unparalleled platform for engagement and dialogue on extremely relevant and important political issues, incorporating all parts of society. In short, I am extremely proud of the work of the Identity Center."

**Abla Abu Olbeh**

*First Secretary of the People's Democratic Party and MP in the 16th Parliament*







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