

Mid-term Evaluation of Youth:Work Jordan (YWJ) Project

Report¹

Dr. Haiyan Hua and Dr. Nevein Dous

World Education, Inc.

July 30, 2011

¹ This mid-term evaluation was requested by the USAID mission in Jordan. World Education, Inc. was contracted to conduct the evaluation in May 2011. The evaluation report was completed on the 30th of July, 2011.

[DISCLAIMER: The study is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the terms of Purchase Order Contract No. AID-278-O-11-.00041. The contents, however, are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.]

Acknowledgement

This mid-term evaluation is made possible by support from USAID/Jordan. We are very grateful to USAID officers, Ms. Haya Shubailat and Ms. Susan Ayari, for their strong and unwavering support to our evaluation consultancy. We would also like to express our heartfelt gratitude to Ms. Rana Al Turk, Country Director of IYF Jordan; Mr. Nicola Musa, M&E Specialist at International Youth Foundation (IYF) Jordan; Ms. Linda Tubaishat, Senior Advisor at IYF Jordan; Ms. Natalie Batshon, Grants Officer at IYF Jordan; Ms. Mayyada Abu-Jaber, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Jordan Career Education Foundation (JCEF); Ms. Zain Quandour, Project Manager at JCEF; Ms. Haya Qadoumi, Project Manager at JOHUD; Mr. Mohamad M. Odeh, Youth Unit Manager at Jordan River Foundation (JRF), for their organizational support and coordination of logistics and their willingness to share data and information for this evaluation, without interference in the external evaluation process. We would also like to thank all who shared their candid thoughts and ideas with us about their experience and participation in YWJ project work and youth development in Jordan. These include many wonderful staffers from JCEF, Jordan Hashemite Fund for Human Development (JOHUD), JRF, Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), ZAD company, selected Community Based Organizations (CBOs) in East Amman, Irbid, Ma'an, Zarqa, Jordan Valley, and Russeifeh, as well as the impressive youth we interviewed and surveyed in these communities and some of their parents. Their honesty and willingness to share their thoughts and ideas enthused and inspired us. Without the above-mentioned support, our evaluation consultancy trip to Jordan would not have been nearly as productive and successful. Finally, we are indebted to three staff at World Education, Inc.: David Noyes, Sophie Sikina, and Corrie Blankenbeckler. Without their assistance in entering data (in Arabic) and part of the descriptive data analysis, we would not have had the strong data evidence necessary for this evaluation report.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	1
Background	1
Major Findings	1
Key Recommendations:	6
Summary	10
1. Introduction	11
1.1 Context under which Youth:Work Jordan (YWJ) project is implemented	11
1.2 Brief description of YWJ project and its core mission	12
2. Objectives of the Evaluation	13
3. Methodology.....	14
3.1 Overall design and approach	14
3.2 Range of Methods.....	15
3.2.1 Desk Review of Documents	15
3.2.2 Focus Groups and Interviews.....	15
3.2.3 Quick Surveys	16
3.3 Databases used for this evaluation.....	16
3.4 Limitation of the evaluation.....	17
4. Evaluation Findings	17
4.1 Current Achievement against Expected Outcomes	18
4.1.1 Overall Project Progress.....	19
4.1.2 YWJ Project Training Programs.....	20
4.1.3 Internships and Employment.....	25
4.1.4 Youth-Friendly Services.....	29
4.1.5 Civic Engagement and Volunteerism	31
4.1.6 Policy	33
4.1.7 Capacity Building.....	34
4.2 YWJ Project Management Model and Implementation Approach.....	34
4.2.1 YWJ Project Management Structure and Implementation Model	35
4.2.2 SWOT Analysis.....	36
4.2.3 M&E system	37

4.2.4 Information and Communication	39
4.3 Cultural Challenges	40
4.3.1 Culture of Shame	40
4.3.2 Expectation Gap between Employers and Youth	41
4.3.3 Gender Gap	41
4.4 Satisfaction of Stakeholders: Youth, Parents, and CBOs	41
4.4.1 Youth and Parents Overall Satisfaction.....	42
4.4.2 CBOs' and MoSD's Satisfaction	44
4.5 Impact Evaluation	45
5. Recommendations	48
5.1 Project Components	48
5.1.1 Expand Policy Work	48
5.1.2 Project Training.....	49
5.1.3 Internship and employment	50
5.1.4 Youth-Friendly Services.....	51
5.1.5 Civic Engagement and Volunteerism	51
5.2 YWJ Model and Approach.....	52
5.2.1 Hierarchical nested structure	52
5.2.2 Improving the communication and information process	52
5.2.3 Reducing M&E Burden but strengthen M&E Analytics	53
5.3 Sustainability:.....	53
6. Conclusion	54
7. List of Documents Reviewed.....	56
Appendix 1: Term of Reference (USAID).....	57
Appendix 2: Field Notes	61
Other Documents and Data Available Upon Request.....	83

Mid-term Evaluation of **Youth:Work Jordan (YWJ) Project**

Draft Report

Dr. Haiyan Hua and Dr. Nevein Dous

World Education, Inc.

Executive Summary

Background

Youth development is one of the most strategic developments a country may face today. It is a cornerstone to nation building and development for the 21st century. A nation's political, social, and economic well-being depends on the youth population and its education and economic contribution to the society. USAID has played a significant role in supporting youth development in Jordan. With funding from USAID/Jordan, Youth:Work Jordan (YWJ) has become one of the largest youth development projects in the country. The YWJ project is a \$30 million, five-year, community-based project that seeks to improve the life and job prospects of Jordan's most disadvantaged youth (or youth at risk), ages 15-24. Its primary goals are:

- To provide life, employability and entrepreneurship skills for the 21st century to youth;
- To provide youth-friendly services;
- To improve community infrastructure/environment; and,
- To improve youth-related policy development processes and coordination.

This report presents the results of a mid-term evaluation of the YWJ project in Jordan, carried out by World Education, Inc. The evaluation uses a range of methods, interviews, surveys, and focus groups to address three major areas of interests: 1) current achievements against expected outcomes; 2) clients' satisfaction and comments; and 3) the current project model and implementation approach.

Major Findings

YWJ has made tremendous efforts to improve youth prospects for employment through training, civic engagement, and other social and volunteering activities and has organized and managed a large and

complex project implementation in a challenging environment. However, YWJ has fallen behind its expected outcome targets in almost all project goal areas, including the provision of training, employment, civic engagement and volunteering, youth-friendly services, and youth policy. This has not been a complete surprise to many; however, factors that can explain this underachievement must be identified. Is it due to over-estimated targets or under-estimated challenges in the first place? Is the implementation model or strategy at fault? Or is it because of weak local capacity in managing and implementing project components? We will address these questions throughout the report. Below is a summary of our findings:

1) Youth Training

YWJ has conducted training programs in 6 regions of the country covering many subjects. However, the training target, a key quantitative target of the project, has not been met. The project target is to train 9,600 youth by the end of the YWJ project, Program Management Plan (PMP April-2011). To date (by the mid-term), the project has met 18.5% of this target. We understand that project spending has also lagged, indicating that there more training programs could have been implemented. However, other factors may also help explain this underachievement, including: 1) delays in project implementation; 2) difficulty and delays in logistics because of a wide geographic coverage, and diverse training types and subjects; 3) difficulty and delays in identifying a wide variety of service providers for all the subjects; 4) an inefficient mechanism for approving contracts; 5) difficulty in recruiting youth; and/or, 6) the target was impractical or overestimated. It is not easy to determine which of the above- mentioned factors are relevant. On a more positive note, YWJ has been able to "catch up" significantly in the last two quarters. In nearly all six regions² through CNGOs and their contracted service providers, extraordinary progress has been made, which is projected to continue for the next few quarters. If this trend continues, YWJ may be able to meet the end-term target.

2) Youth Internships and Employment

YWJ Project has also missed the target of "providing internships or hands-on work experience, and provide job replacement" by a large margin. For internships, there are no data or evidence indicating a significant number of youth who have worked as interns in local companies, following participation in the YWJ training program. Regarding youth employment, according to the PMP, the project target is to help a total of 2,576 youth obtain employment, of which YWJ had reached 11.3% (290 youth) by the first quarter of 2011 (*January-March 2011 Quarterly Report*). This is, in fact, the most important and most challenging goal to achieve in this project. We also believe that many factors may help explain the underachievement. For example, in addition to those mentioned earlier, factors such as "culture of shame," youths' attitudes toward certain types of jobs, lack of family support, and gender bias may have prevented the project from achieving its initial target. Once again, we also noticed that the latest quarterly progress report showed the largest growth toward meeting this target since the project's inception.

² Six regions YWJ project works in are East Amman, Irbid, Ma'an, Zarqa, Jordan Valley, and Russeifeh.

3) Civic Engagement and Volunteering Activities

Civic engagement in this project has been limited to volunteerism. YWJ does seem to have successfully implemented volunteerism and community service programs in all project communities. We find that parents and youth highly value these volunteer activities and many have vivid individual success stories. A significant level of awareness exists among CBOs, youth, and parents about volunteering; however, in terms of establishing a new culture of "community service" or creating a critical mass of civic or voluntary activities considered a local norm, significant work remains to be done. Some level of youth hesitation or resistance still exists, particularly around true civic engagement and voluntary activities that are self-motivated. YWJ must be more innovative to create social incentives for volunteerism, such as encouraging the inclusion of volunteer work in additional criteria for admitting students to local universities or encouraging employers to value volunteering or community service as part of job requirements. We support a continuous and sustained project effort, even though we are fully aware that tangible evidence of a change of culture is difficult to capture and often only takes place over the long-term.

4) Policies on youth issues

Engaging in policy planning or working on policy change is not emphasized, as one would expect it to be in this project. After our evaluation, particularly the field work component, we are increasingly convinced that policy planning and analysis, especially capacity building in this area, could have the largest potential to impact YWJ's stated mission and goals. However, policy-level work must comprise more than merely engaging with the MoSD, the project must take a holistic approach to youth policy development for the country. We believe that an insufficient level of effort has been made to engage policy makers in youth policy dialogue, planning, analysis, or change. We suggest that YWJ expand and intensify its engagement with government agencies and policy makers and with capacity building, as well as add the Ministry of Education (MoE) and Ministry of Labor (MoL) as policy partners. This could also be an extremely timely initiative in the current climate of political reform in Jordan. Instead of simply keeping government stakeholders informed of YWJ project developments, IYF should strive for meaningful engagement with the full range of relevant policy-making structures around policy analysis on youth-related issues.

5) Project Implementation Model and Approach

YWJ is a large project (\$30 million over five years), with activities implemented nationwide by multiple partners in a hierarchically nested structure³ (IYF-PMU, CNGOs and CBOs). The nested layers of management and implementation, which are often necessary, even critical, to reaching "far and wide and in depth" (we think that YWJ is qualified to implement this model), must be supported by a healthy flow of information and well-established communication system. Based on our field interviews and

³ This is a typical system hierarchy that IYF at top, 3 Coordination NGOs (CNGO) are directly under IYF and a few CBOs under each CNGOs. In this kind of nested hierarchy, operational level units (CNGOs and CBOs) do not interact horizontally with other operational level units.

observations, it is clear that YWJ project currently faces a significant challenge in this area, which requires significant management attention. Inadequate flow of information and ineffective communication systems may have caused unnecessary confusion, redundancies, mistrust, and administrative frustrations that, eventually, negatively affected project implementation and effectiveness. This must be addressed by the project management.

6) Project M&E System

A major contributor to the problem described above is the comprehensive M&E system developed by IYF, which is comprised of many routine data collection instruments. Unfortunately this system seems to be overly complicated, resulting in unwanted consequences, such as excessive burden, and the M&E process may have become an impediment to effective project implementation. We believe that too many routine data collection forms have been developed, collection is required too frequently, and much redundancy has occurred. As a result, M&E may have become too burdensome and overwhelming for implementing CNGOs and CBOs. Some of these burdens can be significantly reduced. Furthermore, IYF should spend more time compiling data from the raw data that has already been collected instead of asking CBOs or CNGOs to reenter aggregate data. We suggest that IYF focus on utilizing YWJ data for reporting on indicators and conducting higher-order data analyses for policy or planning purpose, which has not been focused on as expected.

7) "Culture of Shame"

We learned that many jobs in Jordan, even in rural areas or in impoverished communities, are considered "shameful jobs" for Jordanians. Workers in manufacture assembly plants, waiters in restaurants, cashiers at gas stations or grocery stores are considered jobs for "foreign workers." They are considered to be low-level, service-oriented, and under-paid "shameful" jobs. This is referred to as the "culture of shame" in Jordan and is a major contextual factor that may prevent the project from successfully meeting its targets. For YWJ, we would like to raise a policy question: should the project focus on those jobs youth want, which are considered as "non-shameful," or should the project focus on transforming youth attitudes so that they are willing to take the "shameful jobs?" We hope to encourage a dialogue or discussion among YWJ partners about how best to address the issues posed by the prevalence of the "culture of shame" in Jordan.

8) Client Satisfaction

To ascertain whether youth, parents and CBOs are satisfied with the YWJ experience, we conducted two surveys for youth and parents and six focus groups discussions with CBOs in six regions. We developed a satisfaction composite score based on a common dimension of the core measures of satisfaction for both youth and parents⁴ and examined how each of 149 youth in all six communities, for example, rated their level of satisfaction. The total composite score ranges from 15 to 75. Three categories of

⁴ For testing the reliability of the composite score, we used three statistical tests, 1) item to total composite correlation test, 2) split-half correlation test, and 3) item removal sensitivity test. The overall alpha coefficients of statistical reliability are very high at 0.91 for youth and 0.93 for parents respectively.

satisfaction level were determined, based on the original rating. Scores within 15-34 on the composite would be considered as "not satisfied," 35-59 "not so sure," 60-75 "quite satisfied or very satisfied." The satisfaction findings show that youth in the YWJ project are quite satisfied with the YWJ experience. A total of 69.1% of all surveyed youth felt satisfied or very satisfied with the YWJ project experience. Only 0.7% (a single youth) expressed a dissatisfaction and 30.2% were not so sure (or somewhere between satisfied and not satisfied). We posed the same questions to parents to ascertain their satisfaction level. The results show that parents are even more satisfied than their children. A total of 86.3% are satisfied or very satisfied, are 9.8% not sure, and 3.9% are not satisfied. In addition, when we asked youth and parents in our focus group discussions in all communities, their open responses strongly confirmed the statistical results shown above. However, for CBOs, their satisfaction level is mixed. Since their satisfaction is more related to their job experience, they "complained" about project management, communication problem, and M&E data demands, etc.

9) Capacity Building and Sustainability

YWJ considers capacity building a centerpiece of the project. IYF is ultimately responsible for building capacity at all levels throughout the project: CBOs, CNGOs, and MoSD. Many workshops were delivered by YWJ, including: 1) training in finance for non-financial managers; 2) M&E training; 3) training in USAID financial regulations; 4) training in organizational assessments; 5) training on management of human resources; 6) orientation to Management Information Systems (MIS); 7) training of trainers in volunteerism and civic engagement; and, 8) training of trainers in psycho-social support (limited). However, CBOs' capacity remains limited in youth programming and development, project management (including accounting), data management, and data literacy. Many CBOs continue to demand additional capacity building or training support in these areas. It was expected that CBOs would have limited capacity in managing USAID project activities, understanding of how to meet certain requirements, and playing a responsible role in supporting youth in the communities. These may be some of the reasons that have affected CBOs' ability to deliver anticipated results. One of the widely recognized keys to sustainability is making a significant effort to empower local partners (in this case, CNGOs and CBOs) with the necessary capacity to own project products and processes. This largely depends on the extent to which local partners and stakeholders are empowered to own or be part of the process of decision-making and planning. We think that this is an important aspect that IYF can make an extra effort to support and provide.

10) Potential Impact Evaluation?

Throughout the mid-term evaluation, we were able to assess the potential for conducting an impact evaluation at the end of the YWJ project. We reviewed the PMP document, examined data instruments, and, more importantly, assessed the key databases. Our conclusion is that it will not be possible to truly evaluate the impact of the project interventions on outcomes observed at the end of the project. This is largely due to the absence of a design at the beginning of the project that would be required to assess project impact (randomized assignment, valid "counterfactual," well-quantified outcome measures such as unemployment rate for youth 15-24 at local neighborhood level). In other words, it is almost

impossible with the existing data or future collection of these data to answer impact related questions such as: 1) what is the change in the local youth employment rate that is attributable to YWJ project? (or, asked in a different way, what would the local employment rates be in various communities without the interventions implemented by YWJ?); 2) Has YWJ training significantly increased the chance for youth to obtain employment in Jordan (and if so, which trainings)?; or, 3) To what extent has the risk factor been reduced among the targeted youth-at-risk due to their participation in YWJ project? These questions are true impact-related inquiries and require specific project designs and measures that unfortunately are not available in the YWJ project.

However, the existing databases that YWJ has collected can still be quite valuable, particularly in analyzing the project progress, targeted youth perception and behavior, all project indicators, and some level of higher order inquiries. The current data would typically provide answers to such inquiries as: 1) what is pre-YWJ and post-YWJ difference in youth's knowledge, attitude and behavior (possible but difficult)? 2) What did youth think of their training experience or overall YWJ project experience? and, 3) what proportion of youth find jobs or not after training within 6 months? or are youth from lower household income groups more likely to get jobs than youth from higher household income groups (considered as a higher-order inquiry)? The later inquiries can be answered with the existing data in the project but require a systemic analytics plan.

Key Recommendations:

Based on our findings, we have made recommendations for addressing the challenges and solving the many of the problems. Our recommended strategies, ideas and activities for improving the project's results have touched on nearly all major aspects of the YWJ project, notably: project components, management and structure, monitoring and evaluation, future sustainability, and capacity building. Although we fully understand that each recommendation would require a significant level of effort and/or resources, we admit that the resource factors are not taken into account in our recommendations.

1) Expand policy work

We recommend that YWJ engage additional policy makers as partners, specifically with Ministry of Education (MoE) and Ministry of Labor (MoL), to conduct policy analysis on youth and employment issues. Forming an analytical think-tank and analyzing YWJ data together with data from MoE and MoL and MoSD could make and jointly developing youth policy papers on youth development in Jordan could create a value-added policy synergy. YWJ must also revitalize the partnership with MoSD. IYF should reinforce its participatory decision-making process, team up for tasking, and share M&E responsibilities with MoSD staff. This issue is far too critical to go unresolved.

2) Develop a social marketing plan

Given the large scope of the project, its attention to youth policy in Jordan and internationally, and the wide range of social, economic and cultural challenges, a social marketing strategy is necessary to effectively communicate project goals, activities, and successes with all major public stakeholders. We

recommend that YWJ prepare a social marketing plan and launch social marketing activities in six months. This will not only increase the project visibility, but should also include a public education campaign for youth training and employment. It may also highlight critical issues for a national dialogue and debate on the "culture of shame."

3) Avoid "misguided expectation"

The project is commended for the range of training subjects offered, diverse service providers recruited, and high level of satisfaction with the training by youth and parents. However, there is a disconnect between youth and parent expectations of training outcomes and the services that YWJ actually provides following training. It seems that youth participants and their parents have been led to understand that youth will obtain employment after participating in YWJ training. However, YWJ does not create jobs or provide employment. YWJ instead works with public and private sectors to help youth find employment. Given this, we think it is necessary to present appropriate "messages" and encourage realistic expectations of program outcomes. The expectation that YWJ would provide youth with internships or employment is incorrect. We recommend that YWJ correct this expectation and emphasize that YWJ project will work hard with public and private sectors in Jordan to help youth find internships and employment following their training.

4) Conduct workshops for parents

Some parents were not well informed about the training their children were receiving. Some asked why English was necessary or how life skills would help youth get jobs. Although most parents trusted their local CBO and would allow their children to attend training, informing parents about content of training is necessary and should increase their involvement in and support for the program. We recommend that YWJ offer training workshops to parents or send parents training brochures detailing the different subjects offered or course contents. This added information and communication with parents may bring about the following benefits: 1) parents are better informed about the subjects their children are learning; 2) parents' expectations are more in line with project realities; and, 3) parents are more supportive of and engaged or involved in the YWJ project.

5) Revamp internship program

We recommend that YWJ revamp its program to focus on 1) partnering with employers to offer internships for youth; and, 2) helping or persuading youth seek internships. Internships are a highly valued concept and experience by both employers and youth in many other countries, and benefits surely outweigh drawbacks for both employers and youth. During our evaluation, we did not come across any particular rationale or local barriers which would explain the absence of a strong internship program in the YWJ project. We think that YWJ can work out specific and locally-feasible incentive programs to boost interest in internships among both employers and youth.

6) Create a national Public Private Partnership model with Jordanian flagship companies

We recommend that YWJ expand its efforts to create a new public and private partnership for employment opportunity for youth. YWJ should get well-established Jordanian flagship companies to participate in supporting this initiative. If the new partnership with MoL is launched, if the local employer database by locality is accessible, and if a social marketing campaign is developed, there would be a better chance for YWJ to improve its critical youth employment target.

7) Build CBOs as local youth friendly hub.

CBOs should become models for the provision of youth-friendly services. CBOs should become youth service hubs for providing information, services, and resources to all. These hubs would perform key functions in serving youth such as: 1) managing and exchanging jobs information; 2) psycho-social counseling and training; 3) organizing youth union for youth benefit and interest; and; 4) monitoring local public and commercial service providers.

8) Encourage youth in community participation

We recommend that YWJ encourage and support youth to participate in local political and democratic activities, such as town hall meetings, public election campaigns, voting, civic duties, community activities, etc.

9) Engage youth in "green" volunteerism

Based on the overwhelming positive youth experience in Zarqa working on the "green mural" in a public park, we suggest that more "green volunteering" be encouraged, that specifically focuses on preserving the natural environment and conserving energy. YWJ may expand the scope of volunteer activities by working with "green companies" and encouraging youth to design green projects or waste management projects to solve real problems in local neighborhoods.

10) Continue the current project model but improve communication and flow of information

Based on our assessment, we think that the current project model is not a problem. CNGOs have a lot of potentials that can be further mobilized. The challenge is the flow of communication and information. With the project size, scope and coverage, it needs international experience, good national and regional coordination, and local CBOs' knowledge. We think that YWJ should continue to employ this model for the remainder of the project implementation. We strongly suggest that IYF make a significant effort to empower all partners (CNGOs and MoSD and even CBOs) by encouraging them in participatory planning and decision making, building needed technical or analytics capacity, sharing performance feedback information, and encouraging local flexibility and creativity in implementation.

11) Develop CBO report card

Since CBOs only "receive instructions" from the top and "submit data" to the top, which has resulted complaints, we recommend YWJ create an opportunity for CBOs to become contributors to the development of the "instructions" and receive data feedback from the top. The project may need to let

CBOs become core of project implementation and encourage their increased ownership of project interventions. For example, for every major project intervention, CBOs' thoughts and ideas could be solicited and considered. In terms of data feedback, CBOs could receive a single page report card every 6 months with all key indicators listed. For benchmarking, next to CBO's performance indicators, there should be a column of CNGO average results of those indicators, and next to that, overall YWJ project average results. So each CBO knows how it performs, against an average, under a CNGO and an average under the overall project. We believe that this, once provided, would significantly increase CBOs' understanding, capacity, and satisfaction, as well as motivation and productivity.

12) Reduce M&E Burden but strengthen M&E Analytics

There is wide-spread evidence that IYF's M&E system has been a burden for CNGOs and CBOs, and as they said, "too much data requested and too little time." We suggest the following areas for improvement: 1) IYF focus on smaller set of key results indicators (mainly those PMP indicators) and required data variables as routinely collected data, and make the rest set of data as ad hoc survey data; 2) both routine data collection and *ad hoc* data collection should be less frequent; 3) focus on data analysis and generate useful data reports and send data analysis results (in an aggregate meaningful form) back to CBOs and CNGOs in a timely manner; 4) remove the requirement of submitting three duplicate copies of each filled data form, and keep one original hard copy at CBO office only; and, 5) make electronic data entry at CBO level with CNGO to verify with an electronic signature (signing off). In addition, IYF and CNGOs should focus M&E efforts during the next phase of the implementation on data analysis and utilization. We think that with the existing data YWJ already has, IYF may: 1) analyze the existing data sets to tell system evidence-based stories, not just case by case success stories; 2) train CNGOs in data analysis to learn how to evaluate project performance and how to improve it, if less than expected results are found; 3) produce CBO report cards with data collected from CBOs; and, 4) conduct another local market needs research (maybe RCA) involving CBOs.

13) Sustainability

To maximize the likelihood of sustainability beyond the life of the project and empower local CBOs, we suggest that YWJ aim at achieving maximum flexibility and innovative adaptability to various social and cultural realities in Jordan. It is critical to utilize local CBOs' expertise and experience when YWJ implements project activities based on a rational approach. CBOs' inputs and experience should be highly respected and seriously considered. If CBOs' inputs are not considered, a good reason must be elaborated, and a full understanding must be reached. We suggest that: 1) IYF conduct an exercise with CNGOs and CBOs of soliciting local and practical initiatives of youth employment from national and local employers and community heads and parents; 2) IYF use the solicited ideas for the next round of project planning and explain to CBOs and local communities why some ideas are used or not used for the plan; 3) IYF arrange more frequent "interactions" with CBOs, parents and youth, not just conducting project supervision trips or providing "instructions," but for problem-solving or soliciting new ideas; and, 4) IYF provide "just-in-time" or "just-in-need" training on project management and implementation-related topics.

Summary

The YWJ project has established a set of commendable goals of training youth and getting them employed; developed a wide network of NGOs, CBOs, government agency, service providers and employers, delivered a strong clients' satisfaction (youth and parents); and reinforced a national policy priority and visibility about youth development in Jordan. However, YWJ faces several serious on-going challenges. It has missed project outcome targets, some by a large margin, encountered "cracked relationships" with its partners, and faced considerable criticism from CBOs and CNGOs and MoSD about its top-down and non-participatory management approach. This is the mid-term of the project implementation and YWJ has room for improvement. We suggest that IYF, which is leading the project, take the mid-term evaluation as an opportunity to assess its internal practices, re-concentrate its critical mission goals, restoring its strategic partners, establish a participatory decision-making process, streamlining its M&E requirements, and deliver all of its committed tasks and targets. We strongly believe that this is doable and YWJ will be more successful.

1. Introduction

The introduction section covers: 1) a worldwide context under which the Youth:Work Jordan (YWJ) project is implemented; and, 2) a brief background description of the YWJ project and its core mission.

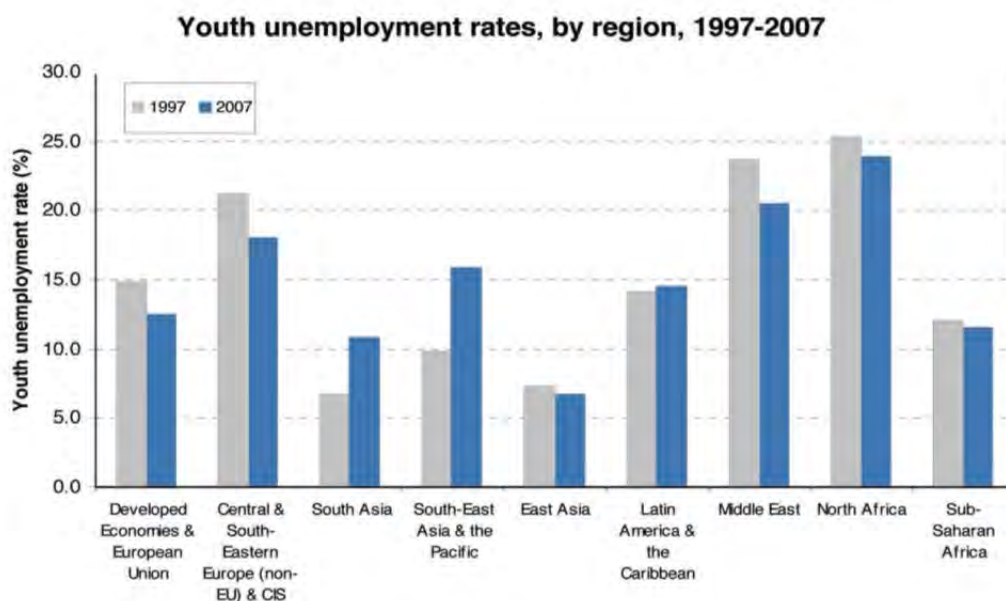
1.1 Context under which Youth:Work Jordan (YWJ) project is implemented

The mid-term evaluation of YWJ took place at a historical juncture. Not only did we see a major shift toward political reform in the Middle East region, but we also witnessed an immense increase in youth confidence and capacity to move social and political systems towards democratization in this part of the world. As a result, youth have attracted worldwide attention politically, and youth education and employment issues are seeing expanded international investment. Youth, by definition of the United Nations' Department of Economic and Social Affairs, is the population aged 15 to 24 years. The Middle East region is currently experiencing a "youth bulge," with up to 1/3 of its population falling within this age range. Most youth have few employment opportunities and many have deficiencies in their education resulting in a lack of relevant knowledge and skills in today's labor market. Jordan is facing even tougher challenges than many other Middle Eastern countries; according to the latest youth unemployment statistics by the International Labor Organization (ILO), the youth unemployment rate in Jordan is 28.1%, which is higher than the average unemployment rate in the Middle East (ILO Department of Statistics 2010).

Youth development is one of the most strategic developments a country may face today. It is a cornerstone to nation building and development for the 21st century. A nation's political, social and economic well-being depends on the youth population and its education and economic contribution to the society. How to approach youth development should undoubtedly be a national strategy. The World Bank (2007) has reported that the "Youth Bulge" in the Middle East could be regarded as a potential demographic gift, considering that if engaged, this large population could fuel regional economic growth and development.⁵ This may be achieved by having a large productive working-age (15-64) population and a low economic dependency ratio. With a large pool of young workers, the Middle East could enjoy a low dependency ratio if they are all employed, which can enable the region to bolster savings and investments. However, the Middle East has a narrow window of opportunity to capitalize on its large youth workforce before the population begins to age. By implementing sound economic and social policies, countries can take advantage of the youth bulge and translate it into a dividend that promises better economic and social outcomes. The age period from 15 to 24 represents the period in life when youth would make the transition from the dependence of childhood to the independence of adulthood with a number of social, economic, biological, and demographic events occurring that set the stage for adult life. With enthusiasm, dreams, and ambitions, youth get engaged in education, marriage, and entrance into the job market.

⁵ "Youth – An Undervalued Asset: Towards a New Agenda in the Middle East and North Africa, Progress, Challenges and Way Forward," Middle East and North Africa Region Human Development Department (MNSHD), The World Bank, 2007.

However, youth today are facing a worldwide unemployment crisis, despite a recent moderate decline in the global youth unemployment rate recorded by a recent ILO study (see figure below). Furthermore, in the Middle East, unemployment remains the highest in the world. In 2007 youth unemployment reached 23.8 per cent in North Africa and 20.4 per cent in the Middle East.



Source: ILO, Trends Econometric Models, April 2008

1.2 Brief description of YWJ project and its core mission

To respond to the youth unemployment crisis, Jordan, like several other countries in the Middle East, has planned its own youth development strategy, as well as investing resources for youth development across the country. USAID has played a significant role in supporting youth development in Jordan. With funding from USAID/Jordan, Youth:Work Jordan (YWJ) has become one of the largest youth development projects in the country. The YWJ project is a community-based, five-year project that seeks to improve the life and job prospects of Jordan's most disadvantaged youth (or youth at risk), ages 15-24. The project was awarded in March 2009 to the International Youth Foundation (IYF). The Ministry of Social Development (MOSD) in Jordan and three local Coordination NGOs (CNGO, and several dozen CBOs are the primary partners on the project. YWJ project seeks to achieve the following main objectives:

- Providing life, employability and entrepreneurship skills for the 21st century to youth;
- Providing youth-friendly services;
- Improving community infrastructure/environment;
- Improving policy development process and coordination on youth.

The intention of YWJ, is described by IYF at the beginning of its technical proposal: "through implementation, YWJ project aims to equip youth with the necessary skills to find employment, become active and positive agents of change within their communities, lead healthier lifestyles, and access

public services that are both youth-friendly and responsive to youth and their community needs. The project covers 12 communities in six disadvantaged localities across Jordan. Three Coordination NGOs (CNGOs), competitively selected locally, execute community action plans and build the capacity of local Community Based Organizations (CBOs), who in turn, implement activities and propose approaches that will best address youth needs in those target areas over a period of two years (2009-2011)."

As the mid-term falls in the summer of 2011 (June-August), this evaluation, requested by USAID/Jordan, has, therefore, been conducted in June 2011 and the evaluation report drafted in July 2011.

2. Objectives of the Evaluation

The project mid-term evaluation is considered to be a project performance evaluation (please see further detail in the methodology section). USAID/Jordan has determined a general set of evaluation objectives and inquiries, to which we responded with an approach and methodology that we are confident achieves the objectives and answers the inquiries.

The objectives of the mid-term evaluation as specified by USAID are as follows:

- To assess progress made and challenges encountered in achieving the expected outcomes of the project, identifying key strengths, weaknesses and gap areas of the project partners: Youth:Work Jordan Team, CNGOs, CBOs, and MOSD.
- To assess the satisfaction level of Youth:Work Jordan stakeholders – youth, parents, and private sector, CNGOs, CBOs and MOSD.
- To make clear, evidence-based recommendations regarding the design, implementation and reporting structure, content, sustainability, and implementation approach of the project.
- To make recommendations on how the project can move forward and prioritize those recommendations according to impact.

The evaluation Terms of Reference (ToR), ask nearly 30 specific questions which we will not list here (for details, please see Appendix 1: Terms of Reference, Midterm Evaluation for Youth:Work Jordan).

However, we want to assure our readers that all questions have been addressed and are presented in this report, organized into three major categories: 1) current achievement against the expected outcomes; 2) clients' satisfaction; and, 3) project management model and approach. Throughout the evaluation, particularly in our field interviews and observations in Jordan, we identified several major goal challenges in implementing the YWJ project in Jordan⁶: 1) to provide training to youth at risk (least educated, least motivated, most impoverished, and most ignored by society) in disadvantaged communities; 2) to "provide internships or hands-on work experience, and provide job placement" (YWJ technical proposal, p. 3); 3) to promote and encourage youth to participate in social, civic and voluntary

⁶ These six goal challenges are not as exactly stated as in the project plans and reports. However, they are the most critical ones for the mid-term evaluation.

activities and to provide youth-friendly services; 4) to engage policy makers on youth policy issues such as employment, health and social welfare, youth-friendly services, and legal issues; 5) to manage a healthy flow of information and communication throughout the project network system; and, 6) to overcome social and cultural perception of "service job shame." The first four challenges are considered as goal challenges of the project components, and the last two as project management challenges. These are the challenges faced at all levels of the project implementation (IYF, CNGOs, CBOs, MoSD, service providers, and employers). Some of these challenges are being addressed and will continue to be addressed in the near future. Some others may require new strategies and approaches or even a new envisioning of the process to understand a complete youth-employment-oriented goal achievement pathway for increasing the chance for success. Challenges and problems appear to be known to many in the project, however stakeholders at different levels of the project implementation may have quite different perceptions of the challenges, resulting in variable levels of resistance to a centralized or prescribed approach to the challenges/problems. As part of our objectives, we intend to analyze all key challenges grouped under the three categories, explain how they have been dealt with, and then propose recommendations based on data evidence accordingly. Throughout this reporting process, we intend to answer all original USAID raised questions as well as some additional questions we identified as equally important to address during the evaluation process.

3. Methodology

The methodology section covers: 1) overall design of the mid-term evaluation; 2) range of methods (focus groups, surveys, etc.) 3) databases established and data analysis; and, 4) limitations of the evaluation.

3.1 Overall design and approach

This mid-term evaluation is considered to be a "performance evaluation which focuses on descriptive and normative questions: what a particular project or program has achieved (either at an intermediate point in execution or at the conclusion of an implementation period); how it is being implemented; how it is perceived and valued; whether expected results are occurring; and other questions that are pertinent to project design, management and operational decision making." (USAID Evaluation Policy, 2011) In other words, the mid-term evaluation is not designed to measure the impact of the YWJ project, although we intend to address the potential challenges or relevant issues of conducting an impact evaluation at the end of the project implementation.

As a performance evaluation with an intention to answer at least three areas of inquiries: 1) current achievement against expected outcomes; 2) clients' satisfaction with the project experience; and, 3) appropriateness of the project management model and implementation approach, we decided to gather quantitative and qualitative data and information from four major sources through a range of methods, including:

- reviewing project documents of all kinds, but intentionally at different times;
- interviewing project staff including partners, employers, and service providers;

- conducting focus groups and surveys of youth clients and their parents (qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys); and,
- gathering data from outside of the project such as national statistics or international data on employment.

As part of our methodology, we tried in every possible way to triangulate the data gathered from different sources for the purpose of ensuring validity and reliability. Specifically, for each conclusive evaluation statement, we have at minimum two sources of data serving as supportive evidence to substantiate the statement. With a systemic data analysis, we synthesized a very large quantity of data analysis results, both quantitative and qualitative, from all the above-mentioned sources. Based on the analysis and synthesis, we proposed a set of evidence-supported recommendations for the next phase of the project implementation as well as strategic thinking beyond the life of the project.

3.2 Range of Methods

In order to conduct the mid-term evaluation within the specified time period (two months), we began by reviewing selected documents relevant to the project plans. With this knowledge, we travelled to Jordan in June 2011 and spent three weeks interviewing people and gathering data of all kinds. Final data analysis and synthesis were carried out after returning from Jordan.

3.2.1 Desk Review of Documents

For this evaluation, we divided the key documents into two categories for reviewing in two different stages: before and after our visit to Jordan. Before we visited Jordan, we reviewed the project proposal and planning documents, including three yearly plans, the Project Management Plan, and the initial Rapid Community Assessment (RCA) report. Following this review, we travelled to Jordan to interview major stakeholders, conduct focus group discussions, and administer two surveys. Only at the end of our field trip, did we request that IYF provide other important documents such as yearly and quarterly reports, CNGO performance reviews, capacity building plan, communication strategy and M&E development documents. We did not review these documents until after having interviewed all stakeholders and gathered all data from the field, in order to ensure as much objectivity as possible in the collection of field data and information and avoid the influence of possible pre-conceptions developed in reading project reports. We strongly believe that by being disciplined in this way, we, the evaluators, would be less prone to evaluation bias.

3.2.2 Focus Groups and Interviews

Over three weeks in Jordan, we conducted more than 20 focus groups and interviews, including 7 youth groups, 7 parents groups, 6 CBO staff groups (in Eastern Amman, Zarqa, Ma'an, Irbid, Jordan Valley and Russeifeh), a MoSD staff group, and interviews with heads of private companies, service providers and the MoSD. In each of the focus groups or meetings, we consistently raised a set of pre-prepared semi-open-ended questions, which primarily focused on their experiences with the YWJ project participation, challenges they face in various areas of the project implementation (components, approaches, management and administrative requirements, etc.), and their views for potential improvement.

3.2.3 Quick Surveys

To identify the satisfaction level of youth and their parents, we developed and administered two short, focused surveys, one for youth and one for parents. We randomly selected 265 youth from IYF's youth registration database, which contains more than 2,000 youth registered for YWJ project. We did not select parents but let CNGOs and CBOs call the parents of the selected youth to be interviewed or surveyed. Sample youth and parents are from all six communities. Due to short notice,⁷ we were only able to identify 150 youth and 51 parents through CNGOs in all 6 communities to participate in the surveys. Within the actual survey sample, only 47% were on our randomly selected list. The other 53% of the youth in our survey were invited by CBO staff. When we asked the CBOs in various communities how the youth were invited, answers often were: 1) "we just called couple of youth and whoever could come to make the number;" 2) "they happened to be in the training today so we simply asked them to join you;" or, 3) "we asked some youth to call their friends to come to make the number." Although some youth were not randomly selected, the selection process was not as "threatening" to the validity of our sample as it would have been, had they been selected "because they were the best youth."

Survey questions in the two instruments for youth and parents are identical and the survey questionnaires were filled out at the end of the focus group discussions. We, the evaluators, fully administered the process ourselves. Anonymity and appreciation were explained and expressed to all participants on site, as well as on the questionnaire. In a few cases due to illiteracy (some youth and parents could not read), assistance was provided to them to fill out the questionnaires. Both questionnaires were first developed in English and then translated into Arabic language. We must note that question 39 is mistranslated due to our own oversight.⁸ As a result, this data variable is not used.

3.3 Databases used for this evaluation

For the satisfaction survey, we created two separate excel files in which data on youths and parents were separately stored. Completed questionnaires were collected and coded while we were in Jordan, and data were entered electronically at the World Education, Inc. headquarters office in Boston.⁹

In addition, we obtained two other databases from IYF: a "youth registration database" and "youth exit database." Most of the information in the registration database is about youth characteristics, which is useful in generating a "profile" of the targeted youth for the project (shown later). In both registration and exit databases, there is a common set of data on youth attitudes and confidence. We used these databases for a comparison analysis of pre- and post-YWJ project in attitudes toward and confidence in various project intervention areas.

For data analysis, all quantitative data were separately exported to SPSS software. All data results related to satisfaction and comparison analysis of pre- and post-YWJ project were done in SPSS. With

⁷ We only had a few days (for Irbid, we had less than two days) to notify the sampled youth for focus group and survey questionnaire. Although CNGOs did their best to notify the selected youth and encourage them to participate. Unfortunately, many selected could not be present for us due to work schedules, military service, or other reasons.

⁸ Question 39 in English is "if you chose more than one answer on question above, please mark the most important one below." In Arabic, it is "if you chose more than one answer, please rank them in order of importance."

⁹ Original hardcopy of filled questionnaires are stored at World Education, Inc. office in Boston.

new survey data and youth registration and exit data, we focused on three areas of interest. First, we generated a youth profile from project-recruited youth. This allowed us to determine who the youth are in the YWJ project. Second, we analyzed the data to find out if there was a noticeable positive difference in attitudes and confidence in various project-promoted areas between pre- and post-YWJ project. Third, we produced a composite measure of clients' satisfaction with the YWJ project experience and a few other areas of interest. This demonstrated levels of satisfaction among youth and parents in the concerned areas. Although there is no comparison group or historical comparison reference for this measure, the data help us to determine if youth and parents had a positive or negative experience with the YWJ project, to what extent their experience was positive or negative, and why.

3.4 Limitation of the evaluation

The complete cycle of the mid-term evaluation study was carried out over a period of two months (June and July 2011), as was necessary under the required timeline and the specified scope of work. Although a typical time frame for a performance evaluation is within a few months, in general, a longer evaluation period could allow for more advance notice to youth selected for the FGD and questionnaire to ensure more youth are able to join the data collection sessions. This would result in better survey data, more comprehensive data analysis, and more thoughtful synthesis. In addition, a possible seasonal factor may have prevented us from obtaining more data or more reliable data from youth and parents. For example, preparation for the high-stakes exam, Tawjihi,¹⁰ is underway and some families are away from their regular residence as the summer starts. In addition, some of the youth have planned summer activities, working, training, or otherwise. They may participate in the YWJ training program as non-typical youths-at-risk. We have not been able to identify if this is the case with any of the youth in our sample.

The specially designed satisfaction survey is not intended for a comparison study, but rather for a "snapshot" of youth and parents satisfaction with their experience in the YWJ project. Due to time constraints, logistical challenges and other unknown factors, the final samples were smaller than we had initially intended, which may cause reasonable doubt in determining the validity of the surveys. However, with a careful triangulation from focus group discussions with youth and parents, CBOs, employers and MoSD participants in the YWJ project, we remain confident that the findings in satisfaction from surveys and interviews reflect the reality in Jordan.

4. Evaluation Findings

In this section, we report on our major findings which are divided into three major areas: 1) achievement against expected outcomes; 2) "clients" satisfaction; and, 3) project design and approach. Other subcategories, particularly specific goal challenges that we outlined earlier will be embedded within the major area and will be specifically discussed. All results will be presented with evidence, explanation, analysis, and our evaluation synthesis, all necessary for the purpose of the mid-term

¹⁰ An annual high-stakes exam, Tawjihi, is the 12th grade graduation exit exam. The results may also determine if graduates continue their tertiary education or not.

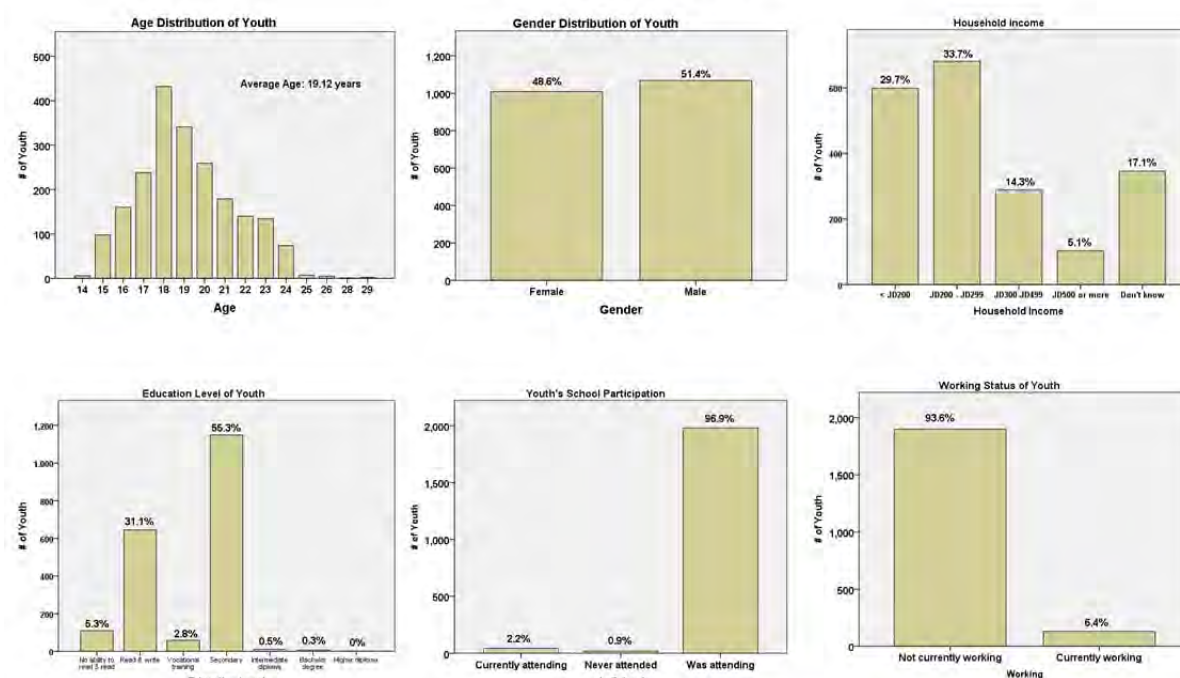
evaluation. Throughout the section, we will unambiguously provide our rationale for the evaluation results and answer all the questions requested by USAID in the scope of work for this evaluation.

4.1 Current Achievement against Expected Outcomes

In this section, we will focus our attention on the current project achievements against the expected outcomes and planned goals. Specifically, we will examine what have been reported as achieved against what have been “promised” in the plans. We will then describe the results and explain our analysis and implications which lead to our recommendations at the end. These expected outcome areas primarily include: 1) youth training programs; 2) youth internship and employment; 3) friendly services; 4) civic engagement and volunteerism; and, 5) policy on youth.

Before we report on the current project achievement, we would first like to present a profile of the youth with whom YWJ has been working. Based on IYF's youth registration database, we have compiled a youth profile shown below. The project youth profile shows who the youth in the project are and what their basic characteristics look like and if they fit the profile of “youth-at-risk” in Jordan.

Registration Profile



The total number of youth registered with YWJ in all project communities reached 2,076 in June 2011, with 51.4% male and 48.6% female. The average age of program participants is 19 years. A total of 24.2% youth are under 18 years old (aged 14-17) and 75.8% of the youth are 18 or older and, therefore, are officially eligible for employment. 29.7% of youth live in households with a monthly income below 200 JD, 33.7% in households earning between 200 JD and 299 JD, and 36.4% in households earning above 300 JD. Approximately 40% of youth had completed less than secondary education. We estimate

that up to 50% of youth may not have passed Tawjihi. A great majority (93.6%) of youth do not have jobs. Although we did not find a national profile of a defined youth-at-risk in Jordan, we believe YWJ has been successfully reaching its target demographic of vulnerable and most at risk youth.

Out of a total of 2,076 youth registered with YWJ, 537 (25.9%) have officially "exited" the project by June 2011, according to the latest data. We examined the profile of the "exit" youth and found no statistically significant difference from the profile of the registered youth. All descriptive indicators of youth characteristics among both registered and exit youth are identical. For this reason, a comparative analysis between the "pre-YWJ" and "post-YWJ" can be carried out. Our detailed analysis is presented in the findings section.

Youth face pressures from many different directions, including pressure to return to school or to find employment to support themselves and/or their families. Most of the YWJ youths are vulnerable or at risk and cannot afford being without employment or some source of income for long. As such, many youth desire to find steady jobs with an income that would enable them to become self-sufficient, and thus find the potential employment opportunities presented by YWJ very attractive. They are naturally curious about YWJ training programs, which claim to offer life, employability, and entrepreneurship skills for the 21st century.¹¹

4.1.1 Overall Project Progress

On an overall scale, based on key indicators, reviews, interviews, and observations throughout the evaluation, we conclude that YWJ project has not completely met the project planned goals or outcome targets by the mid-term. Using specific key outcome indicators in the revised PMP as an example, we find that YWJ project has missed several key targets by a large margin, including indicators: 1) number of young people enrolled in employability training programs; 2) number of program completers getting internships within 6 months after training; and 3) number of program completers employed within 6 months after training (for details, see *January-March 2011 Quarterly Report, Annex A*).

YWJ is currently monitoring and reporting 34 indicators. They are organized under project components, under Component 1, and there are 13 indicators and targets; under Component 2, there are 14 indicators and targets; under Component 3, three indicators and targets; and, under Component 4, four indicators and targets. We requested a tally report of the current indicators reported and were given a table (as shown in *Annex A* of the *January-March 2011 Quarterly Report* by IYF). Calculations made using these indicators will be described in further detail later; however, the primary conclusion from this analysis is that YWJ missed the set targets for the mid-term. By March 2011,¹² of particular note is the fact that according to our calculations YWJ project met only 18.5% and 11.3% of the targets for youth training and employment, respectively.¹³ If the expectation is to meet 50% of the project targets by the mid-term (or slightly less by March 2011), evidence clearly indicates that YWJ is underperforming on these targets.

¹¹ This is clearly stated in all major project documents as the goal of Component 1.

¹² By March 2011, the project is a few months short of the mid-term mark.

¹³ Denominators are the relevant end-term targets from the revised PMP.

The fact that YWJ is struggling to achieve the established targets may not come as a surprise to many familiar with the program's implementation. For the past year, quarterly and yearly reports submitted by IYF have demonstrated consistent underachievement of program targets. However, it is critical to understand why YWJ has missed targets and the circumstances that may have contributed to lower-than-projected program results. We believe that there are several important factors for this, the most critical being: 1) delays in project implementation, resulting in only a little more than one year of actual implementation; 2) difficulty in logistics because of a wide spread in geographic coverage, and diverse training types and subjects; 3) difficulty in identifying a wide variety of service providers for all the subjects; 4) an inefficient mechanism for approving contracts; 5) difficulty in recruiting youth; and/or, 6) the target was impractical or overestimated (we couldn't find rationale or statistical basis for target determination). These factors and others that are beyond "project control" such as "culture of shame," youth's attitude toward certain types of jobs, lack of family support and gender bias may have contributed to YWJ's failure to meet mid-term targets. We will explain further below.

4.1.2 YWJ Project Training Programs

Youth training is a fundamental component in YWJ. Youth training involves social interaction, knowledge learning, information sharing, and skills transfer. Good results are often demonstrated in a positive and observable change in knowledge, attitude and behavior. Youth training is no doubt a key to success in all components of the project.

Based on the *Quarterly Report (January-March 2011)*, two of the most critical training targets have not been met. As detailed in the YWJ PMP (updated April 2011), the program aims to enroll 9,600 youth in training programs (Indicator 1) and aims to have 6,440 youth complete the training programs (Indicator 2). By March 2011 (mid-term), the project was supposed to enroll 4,550 youth, and 3,530 of them would have completed. However, the project met 37.5% of the mid-term enrollment target and 32.9% of the completion target. In fact, none of the six regions met the mid-term target. Table 1 depicts numbers and percentages of targets met by various regions/communities in 2011.

Table 1: Indicative Achievement Against Expected Targets by Communities

	Indicator: # of youth enrolled in training			Indicator: # of youth completed training		
	target	achieved	%	target	achieved	%
East Amman	1,000	604	60.4%	800	512	64%
Irbid	500	50	10.0%	400	50	12.5%
Zarqa	900	351	39.0%	720	326	45.3%
Jordan Valley	450	264	58.7%	360	243	67.5%
Russeifeh	1,200	355	29.6%	900	27	3.0%
Ma'an	500	82	16.4%	350	4	1.1%

Total	4,550 ¹⁴	1,706	37.5%	3,530	1,162	32.9%
-------	---------------------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------

Data in the above table are reproduced based on data source: *IYF Quarterly Report (January-March 2011)* Annex A

Thus, it is evident that in the area of youth training, YWJ has met less than half of the set targets, both for 2011 and for the mid-term. None of the project regions/communities were able to meet the two training targets; however, East Amman and Jordan Valley came closest to achieving their targets numbers. Ma'an, Russeifeh, and Irbid missed the targets by large margins.

Many factors may help explain low performance on Indicators 1 and 2. These include: 1) delay in project implementation; 2) a broad geographic focus and wide range of training types and subjects; 3) types of service providers; and, 4) complex contractual arrangement. However, the YWJ Project has been able to "catch up" significantly, even dramatically, in recent months. For example, while only 302 youth were enrolled in training between January and September 2010, during the quarter of October-December 2010, 434 youth enrolled, and then in the following quarter, January-March 2011 (this year), 970 youth enrolled in training. The latest quarter shows a 123.5% growth in training participation over the previous quarter, a significant and promising sign of "catching up" and an implication of an earlier investment return in capacity preparation. A similar trend in data for youth employment can also be seen and will be detailed below.

The training programs range widely from English courses to social and life skills, from household electrical engineering to household plumbing, etc. The length of each training also varies widely, from a few hours to several weeks. Since the training started about a year ago, most of the youth participants have been quite positive about the most training programs, and they often expressed that there is "not enough training" or "we want more," particularly in IT and English language. However, relevance and practical usefulness, particularly whether or not these trainings would result in "respectful" youth employment in Jordan, remains a question.

It is well known now that the implementation of YWJ project was delayed in startup, as was the training program. Only from the second year on (2010), did the YWJ project begin to see its training programs offered to youth recruited by CNGOs and CBOs in the selected communities. And youth training only hit "high gear" at the end of 2010 and early 2011. Some of these delays can be attributed to an overly complex preparation process, which included gathering signatures for a large set of outsourced contracts with "service providers" at all levels (IYF, CNGOs and CBOs). Table 2 shows the various implementers in the mix of training responsibilities under the project. As one will observe, the youth training programs involve a wide range of content areas, offered by all levels of the project implementers and by many types of "service providers." This large mix would undoubtedly pose management and coordination challenges, as well as challenges in monitoring training quality and standardized measures including instructors, curriculum and material development, and facilitation, as well as for the contractual logistics and approval processes. Typically, once a training request was approved, the CBO, CNGO or even IYF would find a service contractor to deliver the training. In this

¹⁴ This is the target for 2011 (according to the *Quarterly Report, January-March 2011*)

project, IYF contracted the British Council to deliver basic business English courses to youth in all communities. CNGOs and many CBOs may have their own service providers for specific requested training.

Table 2: List of Service Providers Contracted by CNGOs and IYF

	GOHUD	JRF	JCEF
IT Training and TOT	TAG	Shabaqat	TAG
Basic Business English	British Council (Contract by IYF)		
Life Skills	JOHUD	JRF	JCEF
Open for Business/Entrepreneurship	JOHUD	JRF	Private sector; Shabab; All Jordan Youth Commission; Higher Council for Youth
Psycho-social skills		JRF	
YWJ Media Center Project/ film creation	JOHUD	JRF	JCEF
Youth Empowerment and Professions Clinic (handicrafts, candle making, film making, beauty, installing, and maintenance of security cameras and fire and smoke detectors)	CBOs	Vocational training center	Vocational training center
Cleaners, cook, tailors, car radiator, assembling electric devices, AC-leather products	CBOs	Vocational training center	CBO- JCEF- LG- Zain
CV writing, Graphic design	CBOs		
Vocational: aluminum, carpeting, alarms setting, furniture, painting, packaging, plumbing, welding, stones		CBOs in all communities	
Secretarial, sales reps, physiotherapy		Al-Hashimeyah University	

Restaurants, hospitality, services

CBO- Zad- Safeway

Although the youth training programs vary tremendously in this project, a results-based performance standard must be used to rationally and organically coordinate these diverse training programs. In other words, there must be a few indicative results known to all and expected by all. This is important to IYF, who has an overall authority in quality management. On the one hand, diversity, creativity, and flexibility should be and are already encouraged in the youth training programs and among the training providers. On the other hand, a results-based performance standard is the only way to prevent the diverse and creative training programs from falling into any undesired, misguided, and ineffective chaos. We don't mean to suggest that this is currently the case with YWJ, but we would like to voice our concern as a precaution, as we have witnessed the ill-effects of poorly coordinated, ineffectually monitored and standardized training programs in other contexts.

Based on our interviews with youth, we find the training programs they most desire are computer technology, English language, social and life skills, and other practical skills such as business entrepreneurship, electric engineering, automobile repairing, and plumbing. However, it is not clear to us how these training programs were determined. We did not find a systematic participatory process in determining the training needs. While we are fully aware of the RCA report, training program guidelines and manuals, and other relevant documents, after our field trip to Jordan, we continue to wonder how various local training programs were determined. The question we should pose is which of these training programs address the needs of youth or employers or both? With this in mind, we must point out two important concepts: 1) youth-expressed training needs do not perfectly represent the labor market needs or employers' needs due to many possible personal and family reasons; and, 2) youth may not perfectly be informed or knowledgeable of the market needs or employers' needs so they may not express their needs perfectly. Implications of these are: 1) we must first accurately know what market needs are, locally, nationally and internationally (RCA demonstrated an excellent attempt but only limited usefulness¹⁵); 2) widely share knowledge gained from the assessment of the market needs with youth, employers, and communities through education or training (we found that this was not done at all); and, 3) determine youth training needs based on better information, knowledge and options from youth, employers and communities (this could have been done in a more systematic and participatory process with a wider pull of stakeholders).

The quality of specific content areas of the training offered under YWJ project is not evaluated. IYF has collected a large database that contains all post-training evaluation but none of which has been evaluated or analyzed. For this mid-term evaluation, we did not analyze these data because it is beyond of the scope of this evaluation consultancy. However, we propose to IYF that they do a meta-analysis of

¹⁵ From an evaluation perspective, we think that the RCA report is short of addressing the following important areas: 1) it does not show how results would inform the program activities and decisions including training areas; 2) there is no tailored list of local employment needs or youth training needs in communities as a result of the RCA; 3) the report does not show regional or community level business development trends.

all post-training evaluation data in conjunction with an *ad hoc* survey of usefulness of the training for employers. In this way all stakeholders will be able to feel more confident in terms of the effectiveness and relevance of the training.

Although we did not specifically evaluate the quality of training, we did conduct a satisfaction survey. According to our youth survey, the results show a strong and high level of satisfaction with the training programs received, which is also confirmed by the results from our focus group discussions with youth and parents. From our survey results, we asked seven questions¹⁶ about youth participants' satisfaction with their training and skills learned from the training. A total of 76.5% rated the overall training programs and skills learned either satisfied at 4 or very satisfied at 5 (out of total 5-point scale). Only less than 1% expressed dissatisfaction with training and 23% fell in the category of "not sure." This indicates that an overwhelming majority of the youth participants who received the training (in various contents) are quite satisfied and pleased with the training programs, instructors, knowledge, and skills learned. Many parents we interviewed also expressed their overwhelmingly positive feedback. For example, one parent in Irbid said that *"My daughter said that she liked the training courses very much, particularly computer learning. She is very proud because she did not just learn how to play music and games on the computer, but she can actually search for information to answer questions. She now even teaches other friends to do it. She feels so proud."* Another parent in Irbid said, *"My son used to get into fights. It was really bad. Now he has changed since he started to come to the YWJ project. He now dresses better, looks smart, and is polite too. I think this is wonderful thanks to the YWJ project."* In fact, the positive feedback like the above was often heard in our focus group discussions with parents.

Youth in focus group discussions across the project communities expressed the same level of satisfaction with training programs as they indicated in their survey. They expressed very positive feedback about all the various kinds of training they received under the project. Very rarely did we hear any negative comments about the training. It is also clear that in almost all communities, youth want more training. Particularly they felt that there is *"not enough time for courses like English or IT or life skills."*

However, we must recognize that a high satisfaction level with the training does not necessarily mean that youth will find jobs afterwards (we will discuss this in detail later in the report). In fact, the actual reasons for the high levels of satisfaction with the training are unknown. While high satisfaction is, of course, desired and a confirmed result could be a proxy measure of the quality of training, it may also imply that youth enjoy the training for other reasons such as, it provided an opportunity for socializing with other youth, provided some food and drink, or *"I just want to get away from my father,"* as one youth explained in a focus group discussion. As evaluators, we must be responsibly cautious in stating any causal implications or even simply correlation (for example, concluding that a high satisfaction with training is a result of a high quality of training or that a high satisfaction is correlated with a high likelihood of employment), as long as we cannot eliminate or remove all other plausible causal explanations.

¹⁶ For specific questions, please review youth instrument q17-q23.

To advance the evaluation of the training programs under this project, particularly with a possible intention to answer questions such as whether training significantly boosts an individual's chance of employment, or whether taking a course in "business social skills" can significantly sustain youth employment, we recommend that a more formal and rigorous method be utilized. We do not have confidence that existing data, both project collected and from other sources, such as MoL, or MoSD or MoE, can be used to answer those typical "impact questions."

Before concluding this section, we want to share some concerns voiced by the interviewed youth and parents regarding the YWJ training programs. Most of the concerns are not necessarily relevant to the training itself but to larger issues concerning the mission of the project. We outline these concerns only to inform the project management team and supervisors.

- Several youth in different communities expressed a similar concern to the following expressed by a young person interviewed in Irbid: *"I like the training, particularly the English course and computer application, but I don't know where I can use my knowledge and skills. When would I get a job? Could you give me a job?"*
- Quite a few female youth from several communities mentioned that *"many jobs are not open for us, even though we are smarter and have better education, knowledge and skills than boys. How could you help us change the culture?"*
- A few parents from several different communities indicated that they didn't have any idea what their sons or daughters were studying at YWJ project. As one said *"My daughter was taken away by a transport and spent the major part of the day with strangers. What has she been doing or learning? No one tells me anything."*
- Quite a few parents said that they personally felt okay about their daughters participating in training together with boys. But they advised that JWJ project not do that because others won't accept it.

4.1.3 Internships and Employment

Youth employment is the core mission and interest of YWJ and internship is a useful means of bridging training (or education) and employment. To see as many youth as possible employed in either the public or private sectors in Jordan is the desired mission of the project. At the outset, we seek to harness a theory of economics in evaluating this mission of the project; that is, to place our theoretical focus on the "supply and demand" of youth employment. Factors such as youth (with relevant and high quality education and training) can be categorized on the supply side (employability), while factors like employers' labor and skill needs that are known to be influenced by market conditions, financial feasibility, and competitive environment fall on the demand side. Are there any indicators that inform us about both sides with respect to needs and readiness for a healthy "match"¹⁷ between the supply and demand? The perfect indicator has not yet been identified. We would however expect that any youth project related to training and employment tackle both supply and demand challenges.

¹⁷ "Match" here refers to employment or a perfect employment condition.

The total number of youth who have been employed because of the skills gained through YWJ is almost impossible to ascertain due to a lack of an impact design and a necessary counterfactual required to identify the causal impact of YWJ training programs on youth employment. However, it is possible to estimate the number of youth who participated in YWJ training and then became employed within 6 months. YWJ project has been tracking the related statistics in this regard. From the youth training statistics (shown earlier), we have already learned that 1,706 youth participated in the YWJ training programs. We also learned that 290 youth (17%) of those who participated in the YWJ training programs have been employed in local jobs (*YWJ Quarterly Report January-March 2011*). By this measure, at the current time, the YWJ project goal of youth employment is far behind the target set for youth employment. According to the revised PMP (April 2011), a total of 2,576 youth should be employed within 6 months of their training. By the first quarter of 2011 (half way through the project), YWJ has only reached 11.3% of the youth employment target. Table 3 is re-created based on the latest quarterly report (Annex A). Although the targets in the table are for the year of 2011, results are less than expected.

Table 3: Indicative Achievement Against Expected Targets by Communities

	Indicator			Indicator			Indicator		
	# of youth enrolled back to schools			# of youth Interns provided			# of jobs provided within 6 months		
	Target	achieved	%	target	achieved	%	target	Achieved	%
East Amman	40	98	245%	TBD	24		415	211	50.8%
Irbid	50	?	?	TBD	?		250	?	?
Zarqa	43	21	48.8%	TBD	20		525	48	9.1%
Jordan Valley	18	9	50.0%	TBD	17		135	26	19.3%
Russeifeh	49	19	39.6%	TBD	?		720	2	0.2%
Ma'an	20	1	5.0%	TBD	?		300	3	1.0%
Total	220 ¹⁸	148	67.3%	?	?		2,345 ¹⁹	290	12.4%

Data in the above table are reproduced based on the data source: *IYF Quarterly Report (January-March 2011)* Annex A. Please note that we inherited empty cells from the original table, which we have replaced here with question marks. These empty cells are not helpful in generating aggregate statistics. Empty cells should be either zero or coded as "no data provided."

¹⁸ This is only the target for 2011 (according to the *Quarterly Report, January-March 2011*).

¹⁹ In addition, we find that the target number of youth jobs (2,345 jobs) is too high for the 2010-2011 period, as it compares to the final project target of only 2,576 jobs. IYF may need to clarify this.

However, we again want to recognize the promising development of a recent acceleration in youth training and employment, which shows a dramatic "catching up" movement towards meeting the end targets. The data from the most recent quarter (January-March 2011 – see Table 4 below) shows that for the latest two quarters, the growth trends in the number of youth who became employed from quarter to quarter were 185.2% and 141.6% respectively. If such growth continues each quarter over the next two years (8 quarters), based on our calculations, YWJ project would, hypothetically, be able to meet the end-of-project targets by an impressive margin, which would be remarkable by any measure.

Table 4: Number and Percent of Youth Trained and Employed by Quarters

	Q1 Jan-Sept 2010	Q2 Oct-Dec 2010	% change Q1-Q2	Q3 Jan-Mar 2011	% change ²⁰ Q2-Q3	Total
# Youth trained	302	434	43.7%	970	123.5%	1,706
# Youth employed	27	77	185.2%	186	141.6%	290

This table contains re-calculated results based on YWJ *Annual Report (January-December 2010)*, *Quarterly Report (October-December 2010)* and *Quarterly Report (January-March 2011)*

A significant growth trend in youth training and employment, as we indicated earlier, is a sign of investment return on the earlier capacity preparation at the beginning of the project. In other words, once the actual implementation of the project started, these key indicators began to demonstrate results. However, one must ask: "Is this growth rate sustainable?" We, as evaluators, cannot make a projection at this point. However, we must point out that if YWJ must meet the end line target for youth employment (2,576 youth), it must grow by 31.4% every quarter (with a compounded growth rate) to meet the target over the course of the *next 8 quarters (290 youth employed now but with the end line target of 2,576 youth)*. This means that if the current quarter has 186 youth employed, the next quarter must see 244 youth employed, and the following quarter 320. However, if the growth trend in youth employment is not sustainable for the next 8 quarters and YWJ maintains current levels (186 youth employed every quarter for the next 8 quarters before the project ends), the project will reach only 69% of the end line target for youth employment. For the next two or three quarters, these indicators must be closely monitored for more confident projections and to inform project resource planning and allocation.

The statistics above indicate the number of youth employed but do not provide information about the quality or sustainability of employment. It is expected that youth in YWJ project not only find employment, but will get quality jobs where they will stay for longer than 6 months. To date, no data has been collected on the types of jobs youth obtained or their satisfaction with the employment (proxy for job quality). We do recognize that there will be tracking surveys that will be carried out to answer some inquiries about the quality and sustainability. So far, the only indicator that may tell us about the sustainability of employment shows poor results: by March 2011, only 1.4% of youth employed had

²⁰ The percent change is calculated based on the number from the previous quarter.

retained their jobs for 6 months (*Quarterly Report for January-March 2011*, Annex A). In addition, although IYF is reporting on this indicator, we must question the validity of the results due to the significant number of empty cells in the report spreadsheet for most of the project communities. This needs a robust quality check by IYF on its data management.

In addition to assessing current achievement against expected outcomes in youth employment, we would like to share a primary concern regarding the project's implementation in this regard. We have observed that the YWJ project does not directly provide internships or employment, and to imply that it does sends a "misleading" message to participants. This perception may, in fact, have misguided some youth participants, as we repeatedly heard from youth and parents in our focus group discussions questions such as *"Where is my son/daughter's employment?"* The expectation that YWJ would provide employment should be modified and better managed. In our estimation, the message should be clear and explicit that YWJ project works with public and private sectors to **find government and local employers who would provide internships and jobs** to the YWJ youth through some YWJ incentive programs. This is undoubtedly a big challenge, requiring a strategic and systematic approach. We believe that a misguided or misinterpreted expectation that YWJ project will guarantee that participants find jobs after training was unnecessarily created at the beginning of the project, resulting in a later disappointment and even distrust by some youth and parents. The YWJ project's credibility may have been negatively affected because of this misguided or misinterpreted expectation. We urge YWJ to address this issue and better manage participant expectations.

In addition, we strongly believe that YWJ should work with policy makers to address legal issues regarding youth education and employment. As we inquired about educational law and labor law in Jordan, we found that information is inconsistent, coming from many people from many different areas. Most told us that compulsory education is 9 or 10 years in length and that the minimum age for employment is 18 years old. Upon further examination of the laws and their amendments, we found that in Jordan, the Compulsory Education Law (CEA) requires all school-age children (mostly likely 6-15 years old) in Jordan to be enrolled in schooling institutions (10 grades of schooling²¹). Parents who do not obey the law could be prosecuted in court and could be subject to punishment.²² Jordan also has a Labor Law that states the following: *"Taking into consideration the provisions related to the vocational training, no juvenile not reaching sixteen might be employed under any circumstances."* (Labor Law, Article 73) and *"No juvenile not reaching 18 might be employed in the dangerous or exhausting*

²¹ The Education Law in Jordan was modified in 1988 (Provisional Education Act No. 27) expanding free compulsory education from 9 to 10 years. To read more: [Jordan - Constitutional Legal Foundations - Education, Schools, Educational, Law, Develop, and Objectives](#).

²² This punishment is rarely carried out in reality, although an administrator may elect to kick a child out of school for poor academic performance, leaving the parents little recourse with the law. We, in fact, interviewed a parent whose son (3rd grader who was with the parent at the interview) was expelled from school because of a poor academic performance. When we asked the parent why he did not take the school principal to court, he admitted that he could do that, but he would not get any positive result because the principal is well connected.

*occupations or those harmful to health. These occupations shall be specified by decisions issued by the Minister after consulting the competent official authorities"*²³ (Article 74).

Based on the Education Act and Labor Act in Jordan, we recognize that the two laws should work complementarily. If school-age children finish the compulsory education (10th grade) and do not plan to continue education at a higher level, they should be (or very soon be) legally ready for employment (at 16 years old) as long as they are not employed in dangerous or exhausting occupations or those jobs harmful to health. However, there could be misinterpretations of the laws (intentionally or not). For example, some children or parents could interpret 10 years of compulsory education as years of staying in school, including repetition. As a result, some children leave schools permanently after they have 10 years of schooling but repeated twice and only completed 8th grade. Also, given the legal minimum age for employment, many employers will not to hire youth-at-risk or youth from YWJ project younger than 18, stating that their work environment is too strenuous or hazardous to their health.

4.1.4 Youth-Friendly Services

Youth-friendly services provided to youth under YWJ are not as easy to measure as that for youth training and employment. YWJ project has worked on three areas: 1) improving local infrastructure so that youth may have space for healthy and friendly activities; 2) developing local standards for youth friendly services; and, 3) training local CNGO and CBO staff on youth-friendly services. There have been overall improvements in all three areas. According to the latest quarterly report by IYF, all three areas have met PMP targets (85.4% of 41 local spaces/infrastructure improved; 83.1% of 71 CBOs and other identities trained; and 142% of 146 staff or personnel trained). However in Ma'an and Russeifeh, has no training on youth-friendly services have yet been provided, according to the latest quarterly report. More critically, in terms of actual youth-friendly services provided to youth, IYF has no data to show the current status, as of yet.

In our survey, we asked how youth feel about youth-friendly services, including: 1) safety in the park; 2) availability of sport facilities in the local community; 3) availability of youth-friendly health services; and, 4) YWJ-provided youth-friendly services. Below are the results from young male and female in our survey. Although this is not exhaustive of all youth-friendly services offered or supported by YWJ project, they provide a useful proxy measure.

Table 5: Percentage of Youth's Rating on Availability of Youth-friendly services by Gender

	Least (rated 1-2)		Most (rated 4-5)	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Safety in local parks	33.3%	20.0%	47.1%	67.2%
Availability of sport facilities	65.9%	38.9%	14.3%	44.5%

²³ Article 74 was amended in 2004 raising the age limit from 17 to 18 years old. To read more, see "Labor Law and its Amendments No. 8 of the Year 1996" <http://www.mol.gov.jo/Default.aspx?tabid=231>.

Availability of youth-friendly health care services	42.4%	36.5%	28.3%	51.9%
YWJ provided youth-friendly services	31.3%	20.8%	45.8%	66.0%

Overall, we found that quite large number of youth do not feel that enough youth-friendly services have been available to them. Young female youth feel this more strongly than their male counterparts. In other words, a significantly higher percentage of females than males rated “poor services” on safety or availability of youth-friendly services. This implies that there could be more effort made or attention paid to youth-friendly services for females in the project.

Throughout our evaluation process, we found that the component of youth-friendly services has the least clarified tasks to perform and the most difficult measures to monitor. In our opinion, the ultimate goal is that youth-friendly services be provided by all public and private entities and permeated in every corner of the society. This requires a systemic and long-term public education and public awareness campaign. Providing youth-oriented infrastructure, such as sport facilities, public parks, and so forth in local communities and neighborhoods, as well as organizing youth events and sport games are effective ways to support youth and let them feel included in public and private life. In these areas, YWJ has made tremendous progress, and to a large extent, local CBOs were well trained. However, it is critically important that specific youth-friendly services are more *noticeably* provided or improved, which is a very difficult job. YWJ must work with some specific government agencies on specific policies or laws on youth issues, such as a youth’s right to health insurance or education. YWJ must also work with employers, both public and private, to improve their sense of responsibility for youth employment, specifically to work with NGOs, CBOs, and local schools to provide internships or mentoring programs, and youth social and employment events such as work fairs.

From our field visit, we found that CBO staff (those working on YWJ) are very friendly and supportive and very responsive to youth questions when they interact with them. Even in Irbid, when we witnessed an angry young man behave rudely and refuse to fill out a survey questionnaire, none of the CBO or CNGO staff responded coldly but were, instead, considerate and polite. In the end, there was no escalation of the anger by the young boy. On the other hand, can we say that all CBOs have become youth-friendly centers with strong capacity and resources? No, not yet, but we do think important steps have been made. With more support, local CBOs could become youth-centered hubs, where information and communication flows and intersect in terms of finding jobs, training sessions, volunteering activities, youth events, sports sponsorship, after school programs, and so on. YWJ should be commended for that fact that some CBOs are already recognized among youth as the places to gather and to find counseling, support and social activities. But with the definition of youth-friendly services given in the CRA study (see below), monitoring and further capacity building must be specific and concrete so that there is little confusion, especially as to the definition of what makes a service youth-friendly.

What Makes a Service Youth Friendly?

In their approach to young people, youth-friendly services:

- Promote holistic, positive development by helping young people prevent problems and grow in healthy ways
- Offer age-, gender-, and developmentally appropriate activities
- Involve youth in meaningful ways

In their connection to local family, culture, and community, such services:

- Involve parents, extended family, significant adults
- Ensure cultural relevance
- Involve the community in planning and implementation
- Work in close coordination and partnership with other youth service providers, whether sponsored by the government or CBOs

In their organizational commitments to programming excellence and sustainability, such services:

- Identify cost-effective ways to achieve program activities, outputs, and outcomes
- Undergo monitoring, evaluation, and feedback
- Provide for staff training and development
- Plan for self-sustainability
- Develop financial, technical, and managerial capacity

4.1.5 Civic Engagement and Volunteerism

According to the YWJ original technical proposal, engaging youth in local community decision-making is separately stated as one of the objectives (see technical proposal). However, throughout the evaluation process, we have not heard any mention of activities specifically related to this objective. In fact, in the latest quarterly report and PMP, indicators on civic engagement and volunteerism are grouped and reported under a single category. We are not sure if civic engagement in local decision making has been intentionally removed as a single stand-alone task area or merely sidelined in project implementation. From our field visits to communities, it is clear that no activities have been carried out in the area of civic engagement in local decision making. There are also no specific indicators on civic engagement in the PMP document (PMP version April 2011). Of course, volunteerism is considered as part of the civic engagement. But civic engagement is mainly defined as individual and collective actions to identify and address issues of public concern, which should ideally include participation in public decision-making and democratic process.

Volunteerism has been systematically promoted and implemented in YWJ project. Although implementation in this area, like training programs and other components, started late in the project, YWJ met 48% of its mid-term target, (significantly higher than other project targets). A total of 1,878

youth have participated volunteer activities since the activity has been implemented (mid-term target is 3,850 and end-term target is 9,200). Although it is still quite below target, volunteerism has received very positive results from youth and parents. Throughout our interviews, we find that awareness is high among participating youth and their parents and that most youth and parents think quite highly of volunteerism. As one parent characterized it *“Volunteerism is perfectly aligned with our faith of Islam, helping the poor and the vulnerable, and helping the neighbors and communities is always noble. I want to see all young people are doing it. I am very happy that YWJ project is asking youth to do this.”*

In our survey, we also asked youth to rate their experience in volunteerism. We found that 82.5% female and 92.0% male youth participated in volunteering activities under YWJ. This is quite high. Male youth have a higher participation ratio than female youth. In terms of their ratings on their own experience in volunteerism, we present the following results:

Table 6: Percentage of Youth's Rating on Volunteer Activities by Gender

	Least (rated 1-2)		Most (rated 4-5)	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Satisfaction with volunteer work	23.7%	14.5%	64.4%	69.1%
Joy in doing volunteer work	17.5%	22.2%	71.3%	77.8%
Learning new things in volunteer work	19.2%	21.2%	71.2%	75.0%
Spend enough time on volunteering	23.0%	28.0%	58.1%	58.0%
Share volunteer idea with others	20.3%	18.5%	69.7%	72.3%

A great majority of youth, both female and male, rated the volunteer work as a highly rewarding experience (4-5). In their rating, slightly but significantly more male youth rated volunteer as highly rewarding experience than female. So, not only did more males participate in volunteer work, but more of them also rated the experience as rewarding. We don't have a contextual benchmark for comparing the statistics, but hypothesize there may be cultural and gender behavior factors in Jordan that may explain these slight differences.

We also examined data from the parent survey, where we found that parents also rated the volunteer work very highly. On all five questions, an overwhelmingly high percentage of parents rated a 4 or 5 point scale. This confirms that both youth and parents regarded volunteer work as rewarding and enjoyable. Given such positive feedback from youth and parents, YWJ project must capitalize on this success and scale it up to make volunteerism part of a new youth culture in Jordan.

On the other hand, parents are "picky" in selecting places and activities in which they allow their youth participate to participate, particularly for girls. The culture of shame, as previously mentioned, affects daily decisions in households about where and what activities are appropriate for youth civic engagement and volunteering. For example, girls are only permitted to join volunteer work to clean schools or mosques near their neighborhood; they would not be permitted to go far to work in another

community area to clean public parks or streets. For boys in the same households, this is not a restriction.

4.1.6 Policy

The policy domain is an important area for YWJ to tackle. It appears to us that this area of intervention has not been consistently presented. We continue to wonder how YWJ policy intervention activities have been carried out. We have not observed or heard much about them. In the original technical proposal, IYF listed a policy intervention objective as "to engage in evidence-based policy advocacy efforts to youth employability issues." But in an "assessment report on the MoSD's capacity to support youth at risk", IYF listed policy intervention goal as "to generate knowledge and lessons learned around youth employment programming that can be used to improve policy development and promote systemic change, as well as scale up successful models that can be shared with the global community." Then, in the PMP, IYF listed a policy goal as "improved youth employability models, practices and policies." While we can fully recognize a possible change in the policy goal statement for this project during the project implementation, we hope this important goal gets unambiguously conceptualized through YWJ partners and its related activities are carried out.

IYF-PMU has been working with MoSD as the "primary government partner" in three areas: 1) supporting training unit at the central MoSD, which manages and delivers training and services through its network of trainings and service providers in all communities and neighborhoods; 2) providing training at field directorate level in the targeted communities; and, 3) working together with MoSD staff seconded to the YWJ project. In addition, IYF-PMU organized a YWJ project advisory committee, consisting of many policy makers from multiple ministries, including MoL, MoE, MoSD, and others. Although these are all useful ways to address policy issues, we think IYF may need to elevate its effort and resources to more strongly influence youth policy issues. Policy makers or policy development agencies such as MoSD provide an important pathway to access to policy issues and policy development process. In Jordan, current policy making is still handled centrally, and evidence-based policy making and planning capacity is key.

Our evaluation has indicated that YWJ has done important but insufficient policy work. Given the current global focus on youth development, the new hope brought about by the "Arab Spring," and the new roadmap for youth in Jordan, we believe YWJ has a unique opportunity to expand its policy work. We, therefore, recommend that YWJ engage additional policy makers as partners, specifically within the Ministry of Education (MoE) and Ministry of Labor (MoL), to conduct policy analysis on youth and employment issues. As mentioned above, YWJ must focus on policies addressing both supply-side and demand-side employment issues and assist the national government in rationalizing the compulsory education law and labor law for specific youth cohorts. Engaging the MoE and MoL, in addition to the MoSD as partners in policy analysis, is a useful strategy to encourage further participation in policy dialogue and potentially impact national policies on youth education and employment. Given IYF's superb international experience and its capacity in youth policy research and evaluation, YWJ could specifically work on a policy strategy, for example, for analyzing and addressing the challenging issue of youth between ages between 15 and 17 who have discontinued their schooling (beyond the control of

compulsory education law) and can't work yet because of they are under 18 (by the local labor law). This may also further collaboration between YWJ, MoE, MoL , and MoSD around data sharing and data integration on youth, education and employment.

4.1.7 Capacity Building

YWJ considers capacity building a centerpiece of the project. IYF is ultimately responsible for building capacities at all levels through the project, CBOs, CNGO and MoSD. Many areas of expertise need to be strengthened and enhanced, such as youth programming and management, technical areas, M&E and project management. For example, many workshops were delivered, including: 1) training in finance for non-financial managers; 2) M&E training; 3) training in USAID financial regulations; 4) training in organizational assessments; 5) training on management of human resources; 6) orientation to MIS; 7) training of trainers in volunteerism and civic engagement; and, 8) training of trainers in psycho-social support. However, the most critical activity is, no doubt, to build CBOs' capacity in youth program and development, project management including accounting, data collection and management, and data literacy. CBOs are in direct contact and interaction with youth and parents. Their capacity has the potential for the highest level impact on the effectiveness of project activities and service delivery. If they not strong enough to implement the expected activities, CBOs may not deliver.

It was well recognized and expected that CBOs would have limited capacity in managing USAID project activities, meeting requirements and playing a central role in supporting youth in the communities. Although general roles and responsibilities are clear on paper, practical challenges are often too difficult for CBOs, and consequently, they are not delivering the anticipated results. This is due first and foremost to a lack of resources and knowledge, as well as a need for intensive support and hand-holding capacity development. But we must also realize that there has been a widespread "M&E burden" for CBOs. Based on our field observation and assessment, this is not because CNGOs or CBOs are unwilling to provide data, nor because they don't have the capacity to collect data. This is because the current M&E system has been over-developed with a lopsided emphasis on data collection from CBOs and CNGOs. Requests and requirements for data collection at CBO level and data entry at CNGO level are beyond necessary, resulting in an excessive burden, particularly at CBO level. This, disproportionately, has taken much needed time and effort at CBO level away from other things. This could have been avoided.

One of the widely realized keys to post-project sustainability is to make a significant effort to empower local partners (in this case, CNGOs and CBOs) with the needed capacity to own the project products and processes. This largely depends on the extent to which the local partners and stakeholders are empowered to own or be part of the process of decision-making and planning. We think that this is an important aspect of the project that IYF can make an extra effort to provide and support.

4.2 YWJ Project Management Model and Implementation Approach

Behind any successful project there must be an effective and efficient project management model and information and communication strategy that facilitates a consensus-driven implementation of the project and maximizes a utilization of the human potential and chance to accomplish project goals. Specifically, the management model must also enable an effective team effort, efficient communication,

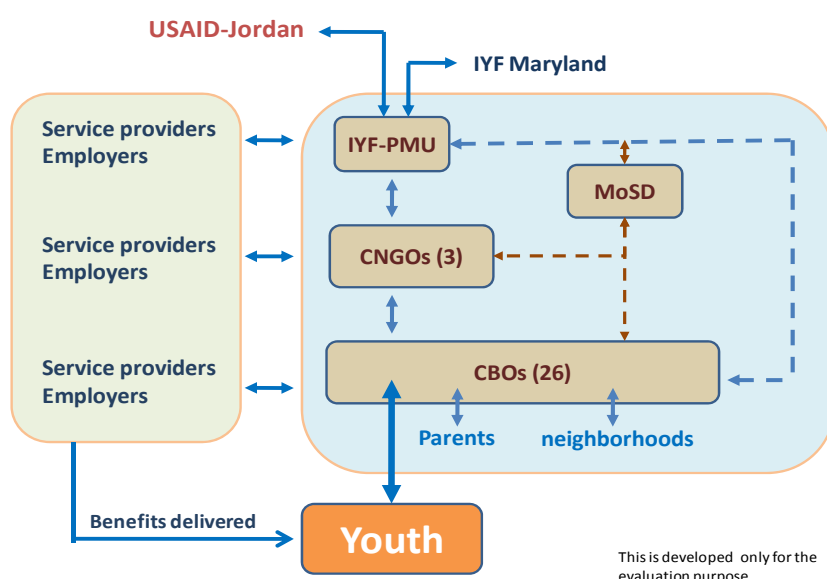
timely information sharing, and innovative results-based implementation approach. We have used these as the primary benchmarks for examining the YWJ management model and have taken the local context into consideration in the analysis of the YWJ management model against these benchmarks.

YWJ is a large project (\$30 million over five years) with a nationwide spread of project activities implemented by a multiple, but nested, structure of layers (IYF-PMU, CNGOs and CBOs) of partners. These nested structural layers of management and implementation are often necessary, even critical, if the plan is to have far-reaching, in depth results. However, these must be supported by healthy flow of information and well-established communication channels. The level of effectiveness of information and communication flows is often embedded and reflected in verbal and behavioral actions and reactions of the project staff toward project policies, plans, rules of engagement, M&E requirements, data specifications, accompanied supports and incentives, etc. Based on our field interviews and observations, we conclude that YWJ project currently faces a significant challenge in this regard that needs significant management attention.

4.2.1 YWJ Project Management Structure and Implementation Model

To visually support a good understanding of the YWJ project management and implementation model, we developed a diagram based on the information provided by all levels of the project workers, from the IYF management team to CBO staffers involved in YWJ project (see below, Project Management

Youth:Work Jordan Project Management Structure and Communication



Structure and Communication). The diagram, developed only for the purpose of this evaluation, reflects all key institutional stakeholders involved in the YWJ project and how they are connected in a management structure and implementation model. A solid line (with arrows) represents a line of direct and often frequent management contact or interaction that consists of all project relevant

communications and flows of information. A dotted line indicates a line of indirect and often infrequent contact. For example, IYF-PMU is always in direct contact with CNGOs (downward), USAID and IYF Maryland (upward), and some service providers or employers (to the left), and it is the decision body at the top with approvals from USAID and IYF Maryland; CBOs are always in direct contact with youth, parents, neighborhoods, CNGO, service providers and employers and are at the bottom of the project

management structure, with no direct interaction with IYF, MoSD or USAID. Typically, IYF, under USAID's guidance, would make project plans and M&E requirements, CNGOs would interpret the plans and M&E requirements and then pass them on to their own network of CBOs and also coordinate the provided resources among their CBOs. CBOs are the core grassroots implementers which would recruit youth, implement activities, work with service providers, provide training sites and logistics, explain project objectives to parents or the public. Structurally speaking, there is nothing unusual about this nested structure of project management for a big project. The primary challenges are: 1) How participatory are the planning, M&E developments, or other decision-making processes in the project (capacity building)? 2) What kind of communication channels can be developed that are transparent and widely known and that enables both policy decisions from the top and feedback from the bottom to travel efficiently? and 3) How is the project relevant performance information shared? If these are successfully managed, the structural model and implementation approach could be quite successful. If not, it fails. In other words, we think the current structure and layered approach is not and should not be a major problem. The project should focus on participatory plan development, flow of information and communication to achieve the project objectives. Other alternative models may be tried, but these challenges remain critical.

Currently, IYF is experimenting with a new approach to directly implement YWJ project activities without going through CNGOs. The main purpose of the new approach is to: 1) expand the project coverage so that more communities and youth can be served; 2) try new areas of programs such as career guidance and psycho-social support services; and, 3) "test next approaches" (Expansion Roadmap) to see if the direct involvement by IYF in community CBO capacity building and implementation would result in more effective results with a better efficiency. We reviewed the "expansion roadmap" document for the new approach and found the plan comprehensive. However, we believe that the new approach addresses the structure issue and not necessarily the communications. While we agree that the new approach is worth a trial, it does not necessarily provide what we think is a key solution to the problem.

4.2.2 SWOT Analysis

We conducted our own SWOT analysis based on observations, interviews, and review of documents. We identified strengths and weaknesses in the project (as a business organization) that would give YWJ advantages and disadvantages in achieving the project goals. We also identified opportunities and threats that YWJ may use as a reference for moving forward to the next phase of the project implementation. It is evident that the major strength lies in the mix of IYF's international experience and reputation and Jordanian CNGOs and CBOs' local knowledge and culture. The major weakness is an inability to empower local CBOs with participatory decision making, relevant information and capacity building. The best opportunity for the project is clearly the current global and domestic environment in which youth development is an international and national policy focus. The biggest threat may be a lack of local trust in YWJ project mission, which could be prevented.

Table 7: Summary Results of SWOT Analysis of YWJ Project

Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International experience and reputation • Network of local partners and resources • Local knowledge and skills • Intellectual resources and management and M&E instruments • Innovative holistic approach or interventions • Internal process/systems and software • Project planning, IT development • Strong commitment • Flexibility in change and new directions 	Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambitious goals but limited local capacity • Attention to M&E compliance and distracted away from local innovation or capacity building or quality by local standards • Delayed feedback and delayed decisions from the top • Not participatory planning or M&E process • Too many "instructions" but lack of effective communication/information sharing • CBOs feel not empowered and their local knowledge or experience is not used
Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustained high commitment and interest throughout all levels • New youth development environment in Jordan with the King's support • Both public and private sectors to be tapped using new aggressive campaign approach and methodology • Globalization and technology advancement • "Youth bulge" potential for social and economic development • CBOs' local knowledge and experience • Worldwide attention to and experience in youth development 	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulations and policies for labour, education and negative coverage • "Culture of shame" and social market campaign and change • Grassroots needs and quality aspiration and support to a bottom-up approach • Potential local distrust in YWJ project • Lack of government support (MoSD, MoL, MoE, MoH etc.) • Lack of local capacity

4.2.3 M&E system

An M&E system can be an effective tool only when it is transparent, simple to use, and widely shared and understood. If it is not, it may become a burden and liability and may be misused.

IYF developed a comprehensive and sophisticated M&E system. In theory and methodologically, the M&E system is sound, but in practice, it is "overdone" and it may have led to an unwanted result, as a burden and liability. In other words, the M&E process may have become an impediment to an effective implementation.

(1) M&E Development

It took more than 18 months for IYF to fully finalize and complete the M&E system.²⁴ While the M&E system was being developed during this long period of time, indicators and data collection tools and computer online forms became gradually operative. However, these indicators and tools, once used, were also frequently changed at a later stage. As a result, YWJ project staff at CBOs and CNGOs and even youth themselves, were confused and some developed a strong resistance. The final PMP has a total of 35 indicators. IYF manages 17 indicators, and CNGOs and CBOs manage 18 indicators, meaning they would have to meet the associated targets for the indicators. Although it is not clear why the responsibility for meeting the associated targets for the indicators must be divided between IYF and CNGOs and CBOs, we believe that the total of 35 indicators, which is completely manageable, would form a solid basis for developing a set of data collection tools, an integrated database system, an analytical strategy, and all evidence-based reporting requirements. The M&E system could then be very transparent, simple to use, and widely shared and understood. Other project-relevant or appropriate higher-order evaluation requirements (or analytics) may be conducted by separate surveys or focus groups. These *ad hoc* M&E activities should not be part of the routine data collection that requires all to be involved. It would be too costly, burdensome, and unreliable.

(2) Data Collection Forms

Too many routine data collection forms have been developed in YWJ and frequent data submission requirements are too burdensome and overwhelming to both NGOs and CBOs. There are more than 10 routine data collection forms, such as youth registration and exit forms, CBO and CNGO capacity assessment forms, CBO and CNGO quarterly report forms, activity recording forms, post participation tracking forms, etc. Some of these forms may be used daily, while others may need to be used weekly, monthly, or quarterly. While, in theory, for M&E purposes, the more data one collects, the more analysis one can conduct and more quantitative questions one can answer, in practice, the process creates a burden, distracts staff from doing other project activities, and all affects data results, as data may become less valid or reliable. If these forms were changed or modified, multiple times or even occasionally, one could imagine a major problem. One CNGO showed us how they were still re-entering data that had already been entered 8 months earlier because a newly developed electronic data form had recently come into effect.

(3) Data Organization and Utilization

As we mentioned earlier, YWJ collected much data. Due to the delay of M&E development, data have not all been entered electronically. Although the most important key indicators are already reported in the latest quarterly report, as indicated earlier, some indicator results remain difficult to understand due to the ambiguity of empty cells (missing data or zero value). This seems to be in number of excel files we obtained. This is not a trivial issue; it affects how valid and well data could be analyzed or reported. For example, in the latest quarterly report (Annex A), for many indicators, there are always a few communities that have empty cells on the spreadsheet database. We are not sure if they have not

²⁴ According to IYF, the M&E data system became fully operational at the end of 2010. The project PMP after rounds of changes was finalized only in April 2011.

achieved anything under those indicators or simply missed data submission. We see that YWJ overall statistics are being reported, but due to some of the problems listed above, data could be confusing and results might be distorted.

YWJ is currently reorganizing its databases. We hope this will solve some data analysis challenges. It is critical to standardize unique ID codes for regions, communities, neighborhoods, CNGOs, CBOs, service providers and companies. We were provided two data files, youth registration and youth exit files, and noticed significant challenges in integrating the databases.

In terms of data utilization, we limited our focus to only how data is used for relevant analysis or reporting. Data utilization for decision making, internally for project planning and decision-making or externally for influencing youth policies is beyond the scope of a mid-term evaluation. YWJ so far has used data for calculating aggregated indicators and reporting to USAID. We have not seen any significant data analysis plan or strategy in place yet. Under M&E framework, there is almost no mention of data analysis beyond simple aggregation and calculation of the project indicators or targets. A higher-order data analysis strategy or set of inquiries has not been seen in any of the documents we reviewed. For example, these may include: 1) Is there any significant and positive change in youths' awareness, attitude and behavior toward youth employability, culture of shame, and personal commitment to volunteerism? 2) Are those youth who are from low income families more likely to get jobs through the YWJ project? and, 3) What are the key factors that YWJ may "manipulate," which may boost youth participation in civic engagement and volunteerism? We believe that with the current data, experience and a bit more survey data, these kinds of higher-order inquiries can be answered. These have not been done yet.

(4) Other critical data

Youth age-specific cohort data by communities have not been collected. This is a problem for calculating one of the most important indicators: the employment rate for youth by district level. This is not a trivial issue and should be immediately resolved. We learned that the last Jordan National Population Census was conducted in 2004. Annual population statistics were projected at annual growth rate of 2.2. Yearly population statistics by governorates, districts, urban/rural, age cohorts (5 year intervals), or gender are available online at the Department of Statistics (DoS). (<http://www.dos.gov.jo>). However, the embedded statistics (for example, age and gender statistics by urban and rural) are not available but can be purchased from the Department of Statistics (2010 population statistics CD is available for US\$35.00).

4.2.4 Information and Communication

The results of our interviews with all key stakeholders show that there is an information/communication problem throughout project implementation. This may not necessarily be fully realized at the top management level of the chain, IYF office in Amman. That in itself demonstrates a result of a communication problem.

Reviewing the communications plan (by IYF, no date) we find that the plan is quite comprehensive covering most major areas related to communications (consistency, branding, products, protocols,

channels). In fact we agree that the plan sets a good communication channel and template on paper. It can be a real challenge to implement it. Through the hierarchically embedded project structure, the following issues may be at the core of the implementation: 1) diverse "contents" (such as "policy, problem, requirement, request, information, etc.) to be communicated; 2) regulated frequency vs. *ad hoc* (or any time) in communication; and, 3) flow of communication (two-ways, one way up, one way down, horizontal way, etc.).

To CBOs, regular communication seems to be limited to requests for data from the top. They seem to believe that IYF is only "interested in collecting as much data and information as they can without providing actual support or building local capacity.". We heard this comment quite often from CBOs. IYF seems to rely solely on data and information from the field to know the reality of implementation. However, too much of these types of "requests" will overload and overwhelm CBO staff who are already low in resources and capacity.

We also learned that the YWJ project is the first USAID project that many CBOs have worked on. They do not understand many of the financial and accounting regulations and reporting requirements. USAID project management is quite different from other projects and many CBOs do have a lot of experience. Most of those projects are provided with funding from MoSD and the associated financial and accounting regulations and reporting requirements are quite different. If they are not well trained in these areas and become proficient, there may be always a "communication problem."

4.3 Cultural Challenges

In the midst of the globalization movement and ICT-driven economic development, countries must have a vision and strategy to face the reality and compete in the new market. Jordan has already started the move for at least 10 years under the leadership of King Abdulla. Jordan has implemented for the past seven years the Education Reform for Knowledge Economy (ERfKE) program and has launched multiple programs for youth to obtain 21st century skills as a part of this program. However, the reality witnessed in Jordan today is still far from the outlined vision and plan.

Culturally, youth in rural Jordan face three major cultural challenges: 1) perception of service jobs as "shameful jobs"; 2) employers' expectations; and, 3) the perception that "mixing male and female" in a training room or work place as improper. These noteworthy challenges may become even more incompatible with the global economy. We mention these cultural challenges here because we believe that they have posed a significant difficulty for the success of the YWJ project. These may help explain: 1) why some youth "couldn't find employment"; 2) why some instructors/facilitators would have to repeat the same training for different genders or two instructors teach the exactly the same subject with a small enrollment; or, 3) why there has been a mistaken expectation of jobs provision from the project.

4.3.1 Culture of Shame

Many youth in Jordan are "picky" about jobs even though may have little or no education, live in poverty, and have nothing to do, and have expressed "desperateness" for jobs. Youth don't want to work in restaurants, grocery stores, gas stations, or any other daily service-oriented centers because

these are "shameful" jobs for Jordanians. Currently, these jobs were mostly given by Egyptians and other nationals. It would not look good if one runs into a friend or some he/she knows in such a place. As a young man explained to us: *"If my neighbor sees me working in a restaurant, he would ask 'who is your father and shame on your father sending you to work in this job'."*

4.3.2 Expectation Gap between Employers and Youth

Youth in Jordan expect to work in a respectful work environment with fair treatment and good income and benefits. Employers expect to hire well-educated and trained, well-disciplined and behaved, hardworking youth who are willing to learn and commit. This is evidently a gap in expectation. We think the job expectation gap in Jordan is bigger and wider than many other countries due to the current poor economic condition as well as the unique social and cultural inheritance. This expectation gap has not helped YWJ implementation and should be systemically confronted.

4.3.3 Gender Gap

In our interviews, we found that many young women could not get jobs because work places are "mixed," meaning that men and women work together in the same environment. In most neighborhoods we visited, we learned that to get youth to a training place and to send them back home, there must be separate transportation for boys and girls. Young girls face additional challenges due to and parents' stricter family rules for girls, such as staying overnight on a field trip, participating in volunteer work, curfew restrictions, social outings, and household chores. For example, in Ma'an one of mothers we interviewed claimed: *"I can't let my daughter go places where it takes her hours to reach even if there is transportation available. This will make her spend hours on her way back to reach home very late. I would never approve this even if I was informed where she was going, what she was doing and when she would be back. Even if I approved that, her father wouldn't permit her to do so. That's why we do not approve the trips that were planned first by the CBO for girls. I might have to join her on the trips and even for work if I feel there is a potential problem for her."*

There is also a challenge in the selection of the jobs available for girls. Because of the "culture of shame" and because of being female, she may find difficulty working in any job anywhere. There are social and cultural restrictions on the places to go, transportations to use, work to do and time to spend out of home every day. This is why it is the most convenient choice for most of girls to work in sewing, cooking, jewelry making and the beauty industry, and it is even better to work from home.

4.4 Satisfaction of Stakeholders: Youth, Parents, and CBOs

It is critical to measure "clients' satisfaction" with their experience in the project. Youth are the direct beneficiaries of the YWJ project and parents are the indirect beneficiaries, and CBOs are the grassroots implementers of the project, interacting with youth on a daily basis. Although we focused on the theme of satisfaction in our evaluation, the measures of satisfaction or dissatisfaction may have different meanings based on different roles and experiences with the project. Earlier in the subsection of the YWJ training program, we discussed satisfaction with the training program by youth and parents. Here we focus on the overall youth and parent experience in YWJ project including training, job prospect, civic and voluntary activities.

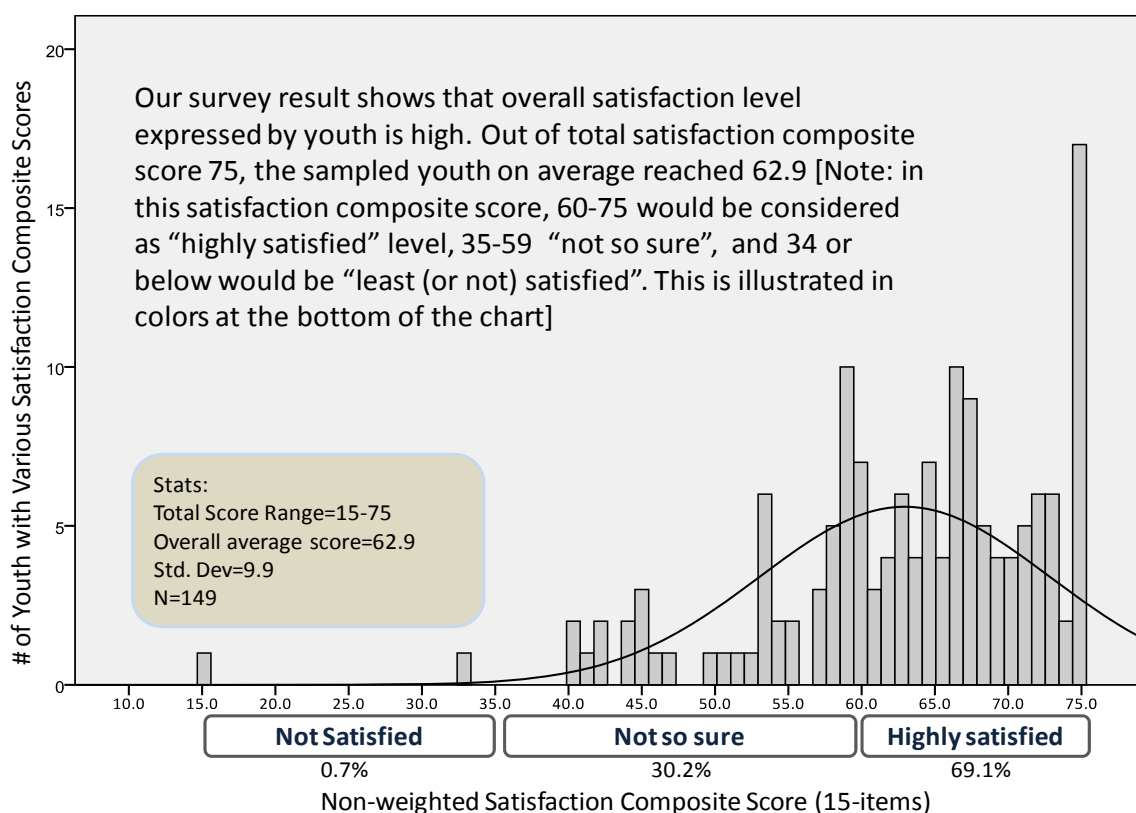
4.4.1 Youth and Parents Overall Satisfaction

In the youth survey, we asked 15 questions related to their general satisfaction with participating in the YWJ project. Each question is rated with 5-point scale from 1 (not at all satisfied) to 5 (most satisfied). The intention is to map out a general satisfaction level of the "client," youth and parents in terms of their general experience. The sample as we mentioned in the methodology section is somewhat small, but we are confident that the results would reflect a true youth reality in this regard.

To capture the youth's overall satisfaction with the YWJ project experience, we developed a satisfaction composite score by summing all 15 items based on the common dimension of the core measures of satisfaction²⁵ and examined how each youth scored satisfaction for all 149 youth in all six communities. The total composite score ranges from 15 to 75. Three categories of satisfaction level are determined based on the original rating. Scores that ranges from 15 to 34 on the composite would be considered as "not satisfied," 35-59 "not so sure," 60-75 "quite satisfied or very satisfied." The satisfaction findings show that youth in YWJ project are quite satisfied with the YWJ experience (see next chart). A total of 69.1% of all surveyed youth felt satisfied or very satisfied with the YWJ project experience. Only 0.7% (single youth in fact) expressed dissatisfaction. Additionally, 30.2% were not so sure (or somewhere between satisfied and not satisfied (please note the 3 color-coded categories at the bottom of the chart).

²⁵ For testing the reliability of the composite score, we used three statistical tests: 1) item to total composite correlation test, 2) split-half correlation test, and 3) item removal sensitivity test. The overall alpha of statistical reliability is very high at 0.91.

Overall Youth Satisfaction Level (measured by a 15-item composite score)



Examining the difference in satisfaction between male and female participants, we find a slight but statistically insignificant difference in overall composite score. Male score is 64.9 and female score 62.2.²⁶ In other words, male and female youth are equally satisfied with the YWJ experience, and no gender difference was found in their expressed satisfaction opinion.

We surveyed the parents²⁷ and asked the same 15 questions to ascertain their satisfaction level. We conducted the same analysis; the result shows that parents are even more satisfied than their children, 86.3% satisfied or very satisfied, 9.8% not sure, and 3.9% not satisfied.

In addition, when we spoke with youth and parents in our focus group discussions in all communities, their open responses strongly confirmed the statistical results shown above. Many were openly appreciative of the YWJ project staff, training instructors, CBO staff as well as efforts, resources and commitment they demonstrated. Many youth and parents also expressed their appreciation for encouraging youth to volunteer and for the project's efforts to change society's mind set about youth-friendly services. The only clear "complaint" message from parents is that they do not feel that they are well informed. Yes, according to reports, CBOs conducted orientation for the community and parents. However, we found that the project did not have a standard approach to reach communities and gain

²⁶ T-test stats are: $t=1.64$, $p=0.103$, $N(\text{male})=55$, $N(\text{female})=90$

²⁷ We only surveyed 51 parents and they are from all six communities.

the support of parents and local neighborhoods and provided no on-going information about its programs and planned activities.

4.4.2 CBOs' and MoSD's Satisfaction

We conducted extensive interviews with almost all CBO staff (more than 80 staff in all six different communities), and the MoSD- seconded staff (all 7 of them). One of the topics was on how they felt about the current project and whether they felt satisfied with the project implementation. For CBOs, most expressed a mix "feeling" about it. Many understand how important it is to work on youth development, to help solve problems youth face, and to help them find employment. Some expressed that it was very rewarding to see how some youth significantly changed their attitude and behavior positively and some others so happy to be employed. But in all communities we visited, CBO staff expressed two problems that seem to have affected the morale and productivity of the CBO staff: 1) M&E related requests and demands; and, 2) inconsistent "instructions" from the top. When they were asked to explain the problems in details, they elaborated that "we don't understand: 1) why 'top' management want so much data; 2) why 'they' request same data but in different formats, different aggregates, and on paper and electronic; and, 3) why 'they' want the data all the time." These complaints indicate: 1) lack of capacity in M&E in CBOs; 2) unreasonable demand to CBOs for data; and, 3) too much routine data requested.

Inconsistent "instructions" from the "top" seemed to have caused CBO staff to be dissatisfied with project implementation. According to many CBO staff, a variety of personnel from the top may come to CBO and give often conflicting "instructions" in terms of how to implement certain activities, varying answers to their questions, or different interpretations of project policies. CBOs end up feeling that they have implemented something that is not what IYF had planned. In the communications plan, consistency is highly featured and promoted. This deserves an internal audit.

When MoSD's seconded staff were interviewed, they could hardly wait to express their dissatisfaction to us. For almost two hours, we heard nothing but "complaints." The main points of complaint are: 1) poor partnership between CNGOs and CBOs, (CBOs just take orders and instructions, they would be threatened with no grants if they refuse to take orders); 2) a bad image (of YWJ project) because of "mixing boys and girls in the same training sessions" in local communities, which makes MoSD look bad too because "we are partners" and the government would be criticized for it; 3) training does not result in good and acceptable jobs because the skills they learned are not useful or not wanted by employers. (In other words, whether they are trained or not, they can get those jobs anyway. Many youth and parents are already disappointed because they were promised that youth get employment); 4) many youth are still illiterate and cannot be further trained in IT or English, and YWJ project is not comprehensive enough to deal with real youth at risk; 5) "things on paper are completely different from the things in reality. NGOs are not real partners with CBOs, they just pass orders and instructions from IYF people and relay so called feedback back up from CBOs to IYF. CBOs tell us that they are threatened not to receive grants if the CBO does not do as told"; 6) "MoSD and other projects on youth have conducted many evaluation studies, but the YWJ project refused to refer to them, and no one wants to listen to us"; 7) Some CNGO use personal relationships to get a few youth employed in a company but

only for a short term so that their statistics look good to IYF; and, 8) MoSD has many training programs and similar activities for youth implemented all over the country and have found more employment for youth through Vocational Training Centers (VTC), which indicates that YWJ project has no value-added; in fact, it has made empty promises for job employment. Based on these comments in their oral report, it is very evident that MoSD's seconded staffs are very dissatisfied with YWJ. However, there were no clear solutions or suggestions mentioned in the interview.

The above "dissatisfaction" is mainly about the YWJ project implementation, but youth and parental satisfaction is about the YWJ project experience, training, volunteerism or the project results.

4.5 Impact Evaluation

As we mentioned it earlier in the report, the current evaluation is not an impact evaluation. However, we have been able to assess the potential for an impact evaluation at the end of the YWJ project. We reviewed the PMP document, examined data instruments, and more importantly, assessed the key databases. Due to lack of impact relevant designs at the beginning of the project (randomized assignment, "control," valid outcome measures such as unemployment rate for youth 15-24 at local neighborhood level) we conclude that there will be no possibility to conduct a counterfactual-based impact study. In other words, it is almost impossible with the existing data and future collection of the same data to answer questions such as: 1) What change, if any, in local youth employment rate can be attributed to the YWJ project? (or a different way to ask, what would be the local employment rates in various communities if there were no YWJ project?); 2) Has YWJ training (and which training) significantly increased the chance for youth to get employment in Jordan?; or, 3) To what extent has the risk factor been reduced among the targeted youth-at-risk due to their participation in YWJ project? These questions are true impact related inquiries and will require specific designs and measures that unfortunately are not available.

However, the existing databases that YWJ has collected can still be quite valuable, particularly in analyzing the project progress, targeted youth perception and behavior, all project indicators, and some level of higher order inquiries. The current data would typically provide answers to such inquiries as: 1) What are the pre-YWJ and post-YWJ differences in youths' knowledge, attitudes and behavior (possible but difficult)? 2) How did youth think of their training experience or overall YWJ project experience? and 3) What proportions of youth find jobs or not after training within 6 months? or Are youth from lower household income more likely to get jobs than youth from higher household income (considered to be higher-order inquiry)? These inquiries can be answered with the existing data in the project but require a systemic analytics plan.

To test our assumption of the usefulness of existing data, we conducted a pre-YWJ and post-YWJ analysis by using data collected from youth when they register to be enrolled and when they exit the project. The youth profile we presented at the beginning of the report was generated from the registration database. These two data instruments share a common set of questions about youth attitudes and self-assessment. To analyze the same data from both time points would yield differences in common measures. In this particular data analysis, we were focusing on common data that were

collected in both registration and exit forms and the data we felt most confident in understanding. For example, for the first two tables, we could understand them as measures of "commitment to supporting my community" and "confidence in my own future," respectively. We did not understand the other two larger tables. Therefore, no analysis was done on these.

The following two sets of questions (among many others) in youth forms are asked when they register and when they exit a few months later. For each question, youth are to check one of the 5-point scale, from 1 (not true at all) to 5 (completely true). These are:

First set (no specific name for the 1st set)

- A. It is an important responsibility of all young people to try to change their community for the better.
- B. I feel like I have done something important to help my community.
- C. I feel that it is my responsibility to help solve problems in my own community.
- D. I believe that young people can encourage other youth to do things to improve our community.
- E. I believe that young people can encourage adults to do things to improve our community.
- F. I am excited about being active in community issues.
- G. I am aware of needs in my community that I can do something about.
- H. I know how to design and implement a community project.
- I. I feel that most adults are supportive of young people's efforts to work on community problems.

Second set (no specific name for the 2nd set)

- A. I think I have the capability to have a leadership position in any place where I work or will work.
- B. I will have good job opportunities available to me in the future.
- C. I will be able to develop the skills needed to get a good job in the future.
- D. I think that life will be better for me and my family in the future.
- E. I think I have the capability to have a leadership position in my community.

We first conducted an item reliability test of each set. We found in Set 1, except for items B and H, all the items are a good composite measure of "commitment to or responsibility for supporting local community" (we gave the composite its name) (Chronbach's alpha is 0.796). We did not include B or H in the composite but analyzed them separately. In Set 2, all the five items are a good composite measure of "confidence in my own future" (Chronbach's alpha is 0.818). After we created the composites, we ran comparative analyses for both between pre-YWJ and post-YWJ to see if significant differences exist in these composites. The results are disappointing.

Table 8: Averages in Composite Scores between Pre-YWJ and Post-YWJ by Gender

		Composite 1 Pre-YWJ	Composite 2 Pre-YWJ	Composite 1 Post-YWJ	Composite 2 Post-YWJ
Female	Mean	29.6	21.5	29.2	21.5
	(N)	(258)	(257)	(264)	(262)
	(S.D.)	(5.4)	(4.1)	(4.9)	(3.6)
Male	Mean	28.8	21.1	28.2	20.5
	(N)	(235)	(235)	(272)	(268)
	(S.D.)	(5.2)	(3.8)	(5.7)	(4.2)
Total	Mean	29.2	21.3	28.7	21.0
	(N)	(493)	(492)	(536)	(530)
	(S.D.)	(5.3)	(4.0)	(5.4)	(3.9)

Mean scores in both composites have not changed significantly. In fact, there is a small consistent drop in both composite scores between pre-YWJ and post-YWJ in both female and male youth. (Note for female on composite 2, both pre-YWJ and post-YWJ means are equal, 21.5). This strongly implies that there has been no change in youth attitude concerning responsibility for local community development or confidence in the future after their experience with YWJ project. Given a slight, but consistent, decline in the composite score, we decided to examine percentages of youth who have shown changes from pre- to post-YWJ project and then to examine the direction of change (positive or negative). Our findings are shown on Table 9 below.

Table 9: Percentage of Youth Who Changed between Pre-YWJ and Post-YWJ project

	Positive Change	No Change	Negative Change
Commitment to my community	42.2%	15.2%	42.6%
Confidence in my future	30.0%	23.4%	37.6%
B + H Responses (together)	53.4%	21.5%	25.1%

It is evident that the percentage of youth who reported positive change is almost equal to the percentage of youth who reported negative change in those questions about commitment to local community, 42.2% and 42.6% respectively. There has been no difference between pre-YWJ and post-YWJ project in terms of youth commitment to supporting local communities. On the individual confidence measure, more youth have become less confident after YWJ project experience. This is quite interesting to us, not because we are happy about the results (of course not), but because it has confirmed what we have consistently heard and observed during our field visit that youth become

"disappointed" that they still could not become employed after they were trained. The two B and H responses in Set 1 are unique ones. The results are significantly different from the others, in a positive direction, indicating that there has been a significant positive change between pre- and post-YWJ project.

5. Recommendations

Based on our evaluation results, we are proposing recommendations for the project management and key stakeholders to consider. The recommendations include a set of strategies and potential activities and ideas for improving the project's results, which touch on nearly all major aspects of the YWJ project, notably: project components, management and structure, monitoring and evaluation, future sustainability, and capacity building. Although we fully understand that each recommendation would require a significant level of effort and/or resources, these factors are not taken into account in our recommendations.

5.1 Project Components

We have divided our recommendations regarding project components into the following five general areas: 1) policy work; 2) project training; 3) internship and employment; 4) youth-friendly services; and, 5) civic engagement and volunteerism.

5.1.1 Expand Policy Work

1) Reaching out to additional policy making partners

Our evaluation has indicated that YWJ has done important but insufficient policy work. Given the current global focus on youth development, the new hope brought about by the "Arab Spring," and the new roadmap for youth in Jordan, we believe YWJ has a unique opportunity to expand its policy work. We, therefore, recommend that YWJ engage additional policy makers as partners, specifically within the Ministry of Education (MoE) and Ministry of Labor (MoL), to conduct policy analysis on youth and employment issues. As mentioned above, YWJ must focus on policies addressing both supply-side and demand-side employment issues and assist the national government in rationalizing the compulsory education law and labor law for specific youth cohorts. Engaging the MoE and MoL, in addition to the MoSD as partners, in policy analysis is a useful strategy to encourage further participation in policy dialogue and potentially impact national policies on youth education and employment. Given IYF's superb international experience and its capacity in youth policy research and evaluation, YWJ could specifically work on a policy strategy, for example, for analyzing and addressing the challenging issue of youth between ages between 15 and 17 who have discontinued their schooling (beyond the control of compulsory education law) and can't work yet because of they are under 18 (by the local labor law). This may also further collaboration between YWJ, MoE, MoL , and MoSD around data sharing and data integration on youth, education and employment.

2) Conducting youth policy relevant data analysis

Although YWJ has collected extensive data, utilization of the data has been limited or inadequate. We recommend that, as part of an expanded partnership between IYF and government stakeholders described above, IYF gather and utilize existing databases from MoE, MoL, and MoSD (we have confirmed that these are available²⁸) in addition to its own project database to write a highly visible, evidence-based, Jordan-specific policy paper on youth development in Jordan. This process should be collaborative and include selected analysts from all three ministries. MoL has a USAID supported project, the National Employment Project, which could create an "organic link" that may generate new policy synergies.

3) Revitalizing a partnership with MoSD

YWJ's relationship with MoSD's seconded staff is currently not productive. However, placing blame on either party is not constructive. This strategic partnership is YWJ's only link with a national-level policy maker, and is thus critical to project success in the policy arena. IYF must mend the "cracked or broken" relationship and revitalize the strategic partnership with MoSD. We recommend that IYF reinforce its participatory decision-making process, team up for tasking and share M&E responsibilities with MoSD staff. This issue is far too critical to go unresolved. YWJ must increase and expand its youth policy work on a national level and will have only limited impact without the meaningful involvement and support of MoSD as a policy analysis and decision-making partner.

4) Developing a social marketing plan

During our evaluation, we were surprised to find that YWJ had no social marketing plan or activities. Given the large scope of the project, its youth policy attention in Jordan and internationally, and the wide range of social, economic and cultural challenges, a social marketing strategy is necessary to effectively communicate project goals, activities, and successes with all major public stakeholders. As emphasized earlier in the report, YWJ works not only to deliver training and assist youth in obtaining employment, but also seeks to mobilize nationally and gain a broad base of support for youth development across all sectors of society. We therefore specifically recommend that YWJ prepare a social marketing plan and launch social marketing activities in 6 months. This will not only increase the project visibility, but should also include a public education campaign for youth training and employment. It may also highlight critical issues for a national dialogue and debate on the "culture of shame."

5.1.2 Project Training

1) Managing training expectations

Training is a particular area of strength for YWJ, although more youth could be recruited for training. The project is commended for the range of training subjects offered, diverse service providers recruited,

²⁸ MoE has multiple years of student enrollment data in by age and gender in the newly established General Directorate of Policy Planning and Evaluation at the MoE. MoL has labor statistics that are shared with ILO. It poses its five year strategic plan (2006-2010), it collects data and conducts evaluation of labor markets and employers' needs. <http://www.mol.gov.jo/Portals/1/strategic%20plan.pdf>

and high level of satisfaction with the training by youth and parents. However, there is a disconnect between youth and parent expectations of training outcomes and the services that YWJ actually provides following training. It seems that youth participants and their parents have led to understand that youth will obtain employment after participating in YWJ training. However, YWJ does not create jobs or provide employment. YWJ instead works with public and private sectors to help youth find employment. Given this, we think it is necessary to present appropriate "messages" and encourage realistic expectations of program outcomes. The expectation that YWJ would provide youth with internships or employment is incorrect. We recommend that YWJ correct this expectation and emphasize that YWJ project will work hard with public and private sectors in Jordan to help youth find internships and employment following their training. We do not mean to present a rationale for YWJ's poor performance in relation to the project employment targets, but rather believe the project would benefit from more accurate expectations among parents and youth. We would like to see YWJ "clients" able to recognize and appreciate project efforts at increasing youth employment, even if these efforts do not result in employment for all youth who participate in the training. We feel it is unwise to allow misguided expectations that YWJ will secure employment for youth following training, as this may result in "disappointment" and even "mistrust" among youth and parents. YWJ's credibility may have been negatively affected because of these misguided expectations, thus we hope the project works to better manage this.

2) Conducting workshops for parents

Based on our field observation and interviews with parents, we found that some parents were not well informed about training their children were getting. Some asked why English was necessary or how life skills would help youth get jobs. Although most parents trusted their local CBO and would allow their children to attend training, informing parents about content of training is necessary and should increase their involvement in and support for the program. We recommend that YWJ offer training workshops to parents or send parents training brochures detailing the different subjects offered or course contents. This added information and communication with parents may bring about the following benefits: 1) parents are better informed about the subjects their children are learning; 2) parents' expectations are more in line with project realities; and, 3) parents are more supportive of and engaged or involved in the YWJ project.

5.1.3 Internship and employment

1) Revamping the internship program

We recommend that YWJ revamp its program to focus on: 1) partnering with employers to offer internships for youth; and, 2) helping or persuading youth seek internships. Internships are a highly valued concept and experience by both employers and youth in many other countries and benefits surely outweigh drawbacks for both employers and youth. During our evaluation, we did not come across any particular rationale or local barriers which would explain the absence of a strong internship program in the YWJ project. We think that YWJ can work out specific and locally feasible incentive programs to boost interest in internships among both employers and youth. We have learned that

incentives currently provided by the National Employment Project (MoL and supported by USAID) include providing youth with several months of income during the initial intern or employment stage. We see no reason that this practice could not be replicated in YWJ's internship program. After that employers would pay. Different companies may negotiate different incentives based on the types of internship and interest.

2) Establishing a national youth employment model with Jordanian flagship companies

As we indicated in the report, YWJ spends much of its effort on preparing youth with relevant knowledge and skills, but it may need to expand its effort to create incentives with public and private sectors to create employment opportunities for youth. If the new partnership with MoL is launched, if local employer database by locality is accessible, and if social marketing campaign is out, there would be a better chance for YWJ to improve its critical youth employment target. We recommend that YWJ reach out more aggressively to both public and private sectors and to create incentives for employers to create employment opportunities for youth. We think, for example, it may be necessary to target large and well known flagship companies in Jordan to: 1) open youth training center(s); 2) set up a youth quota system for employment; and, 3) use a proportion of its annual sales for its social responsibility support. If MoE and MoL are partners, these ideas may be easier to implement. Flagship companies can be set up as national models for recruiting and supporting youth.

5.1.4 Youth-Friendly Services

1) Converting CBOs into local hub for youth-friendly services

YWJ, particularly the CNGOs, has made significant progress in creating local CBOs as youth-friendly centers; however, we think that there is a potential to further extend this work to make CBOs local youth friendly hubs of information, services, and resources. These hubs would perform key functions in serving youth such as: 1) managing and exchanging jobs information; 2) psycho-social counseling and training; 3) organizing youth union for youth benefit and interest; and, 4) monitoring local public and commercial service providers. If CBOs are empowered with these functions and supported by MoSD, there could be a significant public awareness as well as local coordination for youth-friendly services and this may yield a lasting impact. We believe that youth-friendly service is as much a public and social awareness challenge as a challenge of providing public spaces (park, sport field, etc.) for youth. CBOs can sustain the effort if they are charged with these new functions. The current 4-5 YWJ staff in each CBO may, for example, choose his or her "expertise area" aligned with the functions.

5.1.5 Civic Engagement and Volunteerism

1) Community Participation

Through this evaluation, we learned that most of the civic engagement activities have been in the form of volunteerism, and most volunteering has been work in cleaning public places, painting schools, and planting trees. While these are important activities which youth should be encouraged to undertake in their local communities, YWJ should also encourage and support youth to participate in local political

and democratic activities, such as town hall meetings, public election campaigns, voting, civic duties, community activities, etc.

2) "Green" Volunteerism

The volunteerism, although somewhat new in rural Jordan, has been well accepted by parents, youth and local communities. YWJ should continue to promote and sustain the idea of volunteerism. However, there could be a new "catch phrase" and awareness campaign to enhance volunteerism in the project. We suggest "green volunteering," which specifically focuses on preserving the natural environment and conserving energy. YWJ may expand the scope of volunteering activities by working with "green companies" and encouraging youth to design green projects or waste management projects to solve real problems in local neighborhoods.

5.2 YWJ Model and Approach

IYF's project structure is a complex but sophisticated design, with a hierarchically nested structure comprising three implementation layers. The design itself is a good "fit" for the size, scope, and spread of the project. However, this design requires a sophisticated communication and information system as well as a balance between reinforcing centrally proposed standardization and encouraging local needs-driven creativity.

5.2.1 Hierarchical nested structure

The hierarchically nested structure is a good fit, technically, for YWJ project. With the project size, scope and coverage, it needs an international experience, good national and regional coordination, and local CBOs' knowledge. We think that YWJ should continue to employ this model for the rest of the project for two reasons: 1) removing CNGOs from the current "go-between" coordination role would risk failure in sustaining what the project has achieved thus far, despite the many difficulties associated with CNGO implementation and the general poor performance on project targets to date; and 2) we do not have any confidence or evidence to support that a new model (without CNGOs) would guarantee better project outcomes or results. We believe that IYF's current expansion of YWJ in new communities without partner NGOs is an important trial. The previous lessons learned, its stronger technical capacity, and its newly expanded training area would play out more favorably for the new model. Therefore, we recommend that the current project model continue with CNGO involvement. Implementation improvement should focus on creating or strengthening a highly efficient and effective communication system, participatory decision-making processes, and local needs- or experience-based implementation. We strongly suggest that IYF make a significant effort to empower all partners (CNGOs and MoSD and even CBOs) by encouraging them in participatory planning and decision making, building needed technical or analytics capacity, sharing performance feedback information, and encouraging local flexibility and creativity in implementation.

5.2.2 Improving the communication and information process

1) Since CBOs only "receive instructions" from the top and "submit data" to the top, which has resulted complaints, we recommend YWJ create an opportunity for CBOs to become contributors to the

development of the "instructions" and receive data feedback from the top. The project may need to let CBOs become the core of project implementation and encourage their increased ownership of project interventions. For example, for every major project intervention, CBOs' thoughts and ideas could be solicited and considered. In terms of data feedback, CBOs could receive a single page report card every 6 months with all key indicators listed. For benchmarking, next to CBO's performance indicators, there is a column of CNGO average results of those indicators, and next to that, overall YWJ project average results. So each CBO knows how it performs against an average under a CNGO and an average under the overall project. We believe that this, once provided, would significantly increase CBOs understanding, capacity, and satisfaction as well as motivation and productivity.

5.2.3 Reducing M&E Burden but strengthen M&E Analytics

We found widespread evidence that IYF's M&E system has been a burden for CNGOs and CBOs. Based on our field observation and assessment, this is not because that CNGOs or CBOs are unwilling to provide data, nor because they do not have the capacity to collect data. Rather, it is because the current M&E system has been over-developed with a lopsided emphasis on data collection from CBOs and CNGOs. Requests and requirements for data collection at CBO level and data entry at CNGO level go beyond what is necessary, resulting in an excessive burden, particularly at CBO level, which prevents CBOs from focusing their time and effort on other aspects of project implementation. On the other hand, the large quantity of data has not been turned into more useful information yet. The data presented in the quarterly reports do not warrant the current level of M&E development or data requirements. To remedy this, we recommend that IYF reduce the overall M&E burden for CNGOs and CBOs in terms of data collection.

We suggest the following areas for improvement: 1) IYF focus on smaller set of key results indicators (mainly those PMP indicators) and required data variables as routinely collected data and make the rest set of data as ad hoc survey data; 2) both routine data collection and ad hoc data collection should be less frequent; 3) focus on data analysis and generate useful data reports and send data analysis results (in an aggregate meaningful form) back to CBOs and CNGOs timely; 4) remove a requirement of submitting 3 duplicate copies of each filled data form and keep one original hard copy at CBO office only; and, 5) making electronic data entry at CBO level with CNGO to verify with an electronic signature (signing off). In addition, IYF and CNGOs should focus M&E efforts during the next phase of the implementation on data analysis and utilization. We think that with the existing data YWJ already has, IYF may: 1) analyze the existing data sets to tell system evidence-based stories, not just case by case success stories; 2) train CNGOs in data analysis to learn how to evaluate project performance and how to improve it if less than expected results are known; 3) produce CBO report cards with data collected from CBOs; and, 4) conduct another local market needs research (maybe RCA) involving CBOs.

5.3 Sustainability:

One of the widely recognized keys to sustainability is to make an effort to empower local partners (in this case, CNGOs and CBOs) with the necessary capacity and skills to own the project products and processes. This largely depends on the extent to which the local partners and stakeholders are empowered to own or be part of the decision-making and planning processes. We think that this is an

important area that IYF can improve upon by increasing the support provided to CNGOs and CBOs. We suggest that: 1) IYF conduct an exercise with CNGOs and CBOs of soliciting local and practical initiatives of youth employment from national and local employers and community heads and parents; 2) IYF use the solicited ideas for the next round of project planning and explain to CBOs and local communities why or why not some ideas are used for the plan; 3) IYF arrange more frequent "interactions" with CBOs, parents and youth, not just conducting project supervision trips or providing "instructions," but for problem-solving or soliciting new ideas; and, 4) IYF provide just-in-time or just-in-need²⁹ training on project management or implementation relevant topics.

To maximize the likelihood of sustainability beyond the life of the project, we suggest that YWJ explore a maximum flexibility or innovative adaptability for various social and cultural realities in Jordan to empower local CBOs. It is critical to utilize local CBOs' expertise and experience when YWJ implements project activities developed based on a rational approach. CBOs' inputs and experience should be highly respected and seriously considered. If CBOs' inputs are not considered, a good reason must be elaborated and a full understanding must be reached.

6. Conclusion

The mid-term evaluation has focused on three major areas: 1) the current project achievement against the expected outcomes; 2) youth and parents' satisfaction with YWJ project; and, 3) assessment of the project design and implementation approach. For the evaluation, we reviewed a large volume of project documents; conducted more than 20 focus groups with youth, parents, and CBOs in all six regions in Jordan; interviewed partner CNGOs, selected service providers, employers, and MoSD staff; and carried out two satisfaction surveys (youth and parents) and analyzed pre-YWJ and post-YWJ data. This is quite an extensive approach to a mid-term evaluation, and we believe that the findings reported here, triangulated carefully, reflect the current reality of project implementation, achievement, and challenges.

YWJ project has established a set of commendable goals of training youth and helping them obtain employment; developed a wide network of NGOs, CBOs, government agency, service providers and employers; delivered a strong clients' satisfaction (youth and parents); and reinforced youth development as a national policy priority and highly visible subject in Jordan. However, YWJ faces a set of serious on-going challenges. It has missed project outcome targets, some by a large margin, encountered "cracked relationships" with its partners, and faced considerable amount of criticism from CBOs and CNGOs and MoSD about its top-down and non-participatory management approaches. At the project's mid-term, there is room for improvement in these critical areas. We suggest that IYF, which is leading the project, take the mid-term evaluation as an opportunity to assess its internal practices, re-concentrate on its critical mission goals, restore its strategic partners, establish a participatory decision-

²⁹ Just-in-time or just-in-need training is to meet an urgent work related need request. For example, when the CBO needs to know how to enter data to the new computer program, someone from IYF may spend a few hours coaching the CBO staff to do it. If CBO staff needs to know how to compute a financial summary for reporting, training could be immediately provided. This kind of support empowers CBO and motivates them to learn.

making process, streamline its M&E requirements, and deliver all of its committed tasks and targets. We strongly believe that these are feasible and that YWJ will be more successful with the implementation of these recommendations.

7. List of Documents Reviewed

List of Documents Reviewed

1. *Youth:Work Jordan Technical Proposal*, prepared by IYF, January 30th, 2009
2. *Monitoring and Evaluation Plan*, Prepared by IYF, Revised April 10th, 2011
3. *YWJ program, Year 1 Action Plan*, Prepared by IYF, for the period May 1- December 31, 2009
4. *YWJ program, Year 2 Action Plan*, Prepared by IYF, for the period January 1- December 31, 2010
5. *YWJ program, Year 3 Action Plan*, Prepared by IYF, for the period January 1- September 30, 2011
6. *Building on Hope: Findings from a Rapid Community Appraisal in Jordan*, IYF, February 2010
7. *YWJ Program, Communication Plan*, Prepared by IYF
8. *CNGO Performance Review Findings Report*, prepared by IYF for JRF, April 2011
9. *CNGO Performance Review Findings Report*, prepared by IYF for JOHUD, April 2011
10. *CNGO Performance Review Findings Report*, prepared by IYF for JCEF, April 2011
11. CNGO Assessment criteria for baseline and follow up results
12. *Sample CBO Action Plan Proposal for ElBalawneh Charitable Society in Jordan Vally- JRF*
13. *Sample CBO Action Plan Proposal for Working Women Association Implementation-JOHD*
14. *YWJ Program, Annual Report, January 1- December 31, 2010 and Quarterly report, October 1- December 31, 2010*, Prepared by IYF
15. *YWJ Program, Quarterly Report, January 1- March 31, 2011*, Prepared by IYF
16. *YWJ Program, CBOs Capacity Building and Civic engagement Plan for 2011*, prepared by JRF
17. *YWJ Program, CBOs Capacity Building Plan*, prepared by JCEF
18. *YWJ Program, CBOs Capacity Building Plan*, prepared by JOHUD
19. *YWJ Program, Master Activities for CNGOs*
20. *YWJ Program, An Assessment of the Jordanian Ministry of Social Development's Capacity to Support Youth at Risk*, prepared by IYF, August 2010
21. *YWJ program, Community Action Plan for Jordan Valley*, Prepared by JRF, January 2009
22. *Youth Employment in the MENA Region: A Situational Assessment*, by Nader Kabbani from the American University of Beirut and Ekta Kothari from the World Bank, September 2005
23. International Labor Organization of the United Nations (ILO), *Global Employment Trend for Youth 2004*, Geneva www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/inf/download/child/childday04.pdf
24. *Meeting Youth Unemployment Head On*, 2005, Pages 167- 202
25. *Jordan Country Profile 2008* www.naseej-cyd.org
26. *Unemployment in Jordan*, European Training Foundation (ETF) 2005
27. *Trends Econometric Models: A Review of the Methodology*, ILO Employment Trends Unit, January 2010
28. *Youth in the Middle East and North Africa: Demographic opportunity or Challenge?*, by Ragui Assaad and Farzaneh Roudi-Fahimi, Population Reference Bureau (PRB), 2007

Appendix 1: Term of Reference (USAID)

Terms of Reference

Midterm Evaluation for Youth:Work Jordan

I. Purpose:

USAID/Jordan's Social Sectors Office of Education seeks to conduct a midterm evaluation of the Youth: Work Jordan project implemented by the International Youth Foundation (IYF). The evaluation will assist USAID/Jordan to measure the extent to which the project is progressing towards achieving its outcomes. The evaluation will identify gaps in programming, and make evidence-based recommendations regarding the approach and sustainability of the project.

II. Background:

With funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID/Jordan), Youth: Work Jordan (YWJ) is a community-based, five-year project that seeks to improve the life and job prospects of Jordan's most disadvantaged youth, ages 15-24. The project was awarded in March 2009 to the International Youth Foundation (IYF). The Ministry of Social Development (MOSD) is the main government focal point for the project.

Youth: Work Jordan seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. Life, employability and entrepreneurship skills for the 21st century;
2. The provision of youth friendly services; and
3. Community infrastructure/environment improvements.

Through work in these areas, the project aims to equip youth between 15-24 with the necessary skills to find employment, become active and positive agents of change within their communities, lead healthier lifestyles, and access public services that are both youth-friendly and responsive to youth needs.

MOSD identified 12 communities in six disadvantaged localities across Jordan where program implementation is conducted by three Jordanian NGOs called "Coordination NGOs" (CNGOs) under the project - that were competitively selected. Those CNGOs execute community action plans and build the capacity of local Community Based Organizations (CBOs) who in turn implement activities and propose approaches that will best address youth needs in those target areas over a period of two years (2009-2011).

The CNGOs, in developing and executing upon Community Action Plans, work closely with the project and advisory and technical committees that help to guide overall program activities.

III. Scope of Work:

This mid-term evaluation is designed to:

- Assess progress made and challenges encountered in achieving the expected outcomes of the project, identifying key strengths, weaknesses and gap areas of the project partners: Youth:Work Jordan Team, CNGOs, CBOs, and MOSD.
- Assess the satisfaction level of Youth: Work Jordan stakeholders – youth, parents, and private sector, CNGOs, CBOs and MOSD.
- Make clear, evidence-based recommendations regarding the design, implementation and reporting structure, content, sustainability, and implementation approach of the project.
- Make recommendations on how the project can move forward and prioritize those recommendations according to impact.

IV. Evaluation Questions:

A team of 2 consultants (a Lead Consultant and an Arabic-speaking Consultant) will propose methodologies that enable them to gather, triangulate and analyze data to respond to the following illustrative questions. The Lead Consultant will be responsible for the presentation of key issues.

Note: The following illustrative questions attempt to provide answers to the key issues outlined above under the Scope; therefore the Lead Consultant may add/modify questions accordingly.

1. Achievements against Expected Outcomes

- What are the key results of Youth: Work Jordan to date? Is the project reaching the targeted youth at risk? Is the project transforming selected CBOs into youth friendly spaces and youth friendly service providers?
- In assessing results for youth, the consultant(s) should use the following guiding questions:
 - Have youth received proper orientation regarding the services that are offered to them? Do they have a clear map of what skills to choose from and what jobs to apply for?
 - What messages were provided to youth regarding this project? What expectations did youth have entering the project, and have those expectations changed?
 - How do youth differentiate this project from other youth targeted projects?
 - Which skills and attitudes, developed through the program, are youth using? How are they using these acquired skills and attitudes in the workplace, in their own business, and in their relations with family, friends, and colleagues?
- In assessing results for CBOs, the consultant(s) should use the following guiding questions:
 - Where do the CBOs see their role in the project?
 - To what extent have CNGOs been effective in helping to build the capacity of the CBOs to reach out to youth at risk?
 - How do the CBOs see their role in relation to the youth at risk? At the end of the project, what outcomes do the CBOs hope to achieve?

2. Stakeholder and Partner Satisfaction

a) Stakeholder Satisfaction – Youth and CBOs

- What motivated youth to join the Youth: Work Jordan Project? What messages by the project attracted youth? What motivated youth to stay or withdraw?
- Have parents been specifically targeted in the project? What did parents expect from their children participating in the project? What, in the parents' view, was the impact of the project on their sons/daughters (both positive and negative) in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and access to employment, or going back to school?
- What are CBOs' perceptions of the project targeting CBOs to become youth friendly places and youth friendly service providers?

b) Partner Satisfaction- CNGOs and MOSD

- For MOSD central and field staff - How effective has the project been (including Program Management Unit (PMU) – CNGOs – CBOs) in building youth employability skills and promoting youth civic engagement? What are the strengths, weaknesses, and gaps?
- For CNGOs – In what ways have MOSD staff been effective partners to work with on the ground and what challenges if any were faced?

3. Project Design and Structure

a) Project Approach and Organizational Structure

- How effectively does the PMU encompassing IYF and MOSD seconded staff function together?
- How well did the layered approach of having the PMU assign Coordination NGOs to oversee capacity building of CBOs lead to reaching the youth target group? What alternative approaches can be introduced?

b) Project Sustainability

- Assess the project's layered approach. Is the structure put in place currently PMU – CNGO – CBO building the capacity of CBOs and will it have lasting impact?
- Assess the project's approach towards building the skills of youth at risk. Is it impacting youth in any way in the long-term?

V. Team Composition:

The evaluation team will consist of two consultants:

1) 1 International Consultant (Lead Consultant):

1. At least 10 years of experience conducting evaluation studies (20 points)
2. Strong research design experience in a similar field (30 points)
3. Knowledge of youth sector. Knowledge of youth issues in Jordan is a plus, especially the cultural context around youth employment in urban and semi-urban areas (20 points)

4. Strong management, communication skills, strategic thinking, facilitation, and time management skills (30 points).

Note: The Lead Consultant is expected to recruit and manage the work of the Arabic-speaking Consultant.

2) 1 Arabic-speaking (local or international) Consultant):

1. At least 5 years' experience in conducting evaluations for similar projects (15 points)
2. Experience in facilitating consultations with stakeholders including ministry personnel and local Non-Governmental Organizations at all levels (30 points)
3. Strong communication skills in Arabic and strong writing skills in English (25 points)
4. Demonstrated experience in interviewing and facilitating focus group discussions with young people in both formal and informal settings (30 points)

VII. Schedule:

It is expected that the team start no later than May 29, 2011 and finish no later than July 10, 2011. The team will report to the USAID Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR). Tasks and Activities are listed as follows:

1. Review materials on the Youth: Work Jordan Project submitted by USAID Jordan prior to arrival in Jordan.
2. Hold preparatory meetings with COTR to refine objectives and deliverables expected from the midterm evaluation.
3. Conduct site visits, hold focus groups and interviews to gather the needed information.

VIII. Deliverables:

The Lead Consultant will write the final report. The Arabic-speaking Consultant will assist by compiling all evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations. Prior to submittal of the final report, the Lead Consultant is required to submit the following to the USAID COTR:

- Interim Report that includes draft work plan and data collection instruments.
- Draft evaluation report.
- Presentation and discussion session.
- Final report (3 hard copies and in electronic form).

The draft report is due 10 days prior to the Purchase Order end date. The final report shall be submitted by Lead Consultant only after receiving final comments and approval by the USAID COTR in writing. All reports must be submitted in English and in hard copy and electronic format (in Microsoft Word).

Appendix 2: Field Notes

(by Haiyan Hua and Nevein Dous)

Below are our field notes from the Jordan evaluation. We kept our notes on note pads while we visited communities, interviewed the project partners, and conducted focus groups discussions. These notes were then compiled and organized following the sequence of days and activities. Incomplete sentences, short hand spelling, and hand drawn sketches were converted to readable and grammatically correct phrases. Furthermore, most of the original conversations were in Arabic and were simultaneously translated. We both attended almost all the evaluation activities in the field, meetings, focus groups discussions, surveys, except for meetings with two CNGOs, JCEF and JOHUD, in which only Dr. Hua participated. Some of the field notes have been used as our field collected observation and qualitative evidence for this report. But we believe that readers of the notes may obtain new trace of insight and outlook. We would appreciate any comment and insight.

June 6, 2011 (Monday)

1. Visit to IYF.

We met the key staff at IYF Amman Office who are heading the YWJ project, Rana Al-Turk, Country Director; Linda Tubaishat, Senior Advisor; Nicola Musa, M&E Specialist; Natlaie Batshon, Grants Officer, and others. The IYF gave a general presentation to introduce the project (Slides are available if request).

Key points presented from IYF PowerPoint presentation:

- Project launch and Community Rapid Appraisal (CRA) results. The actual implementation started late.
- Project structure and management and coordination.
- Project coverage: six communities, East Amman, Irbid, Ma'an, Zarqa, Jordan Valley and Russeifeh which were selected based on population, socio-economic, urban/rural representations by MoSD.
- Essential components of the YWJ project: knowledge and skill training, employment, youth-friendly services and volunteerism, and policy influence.
- Challenges: figuring out a lot of issues as the project is being implemented: capacity building, communication, M&E development and partnerships among MoSD, CNGOs, CBOs and employers and service providers, etc. In addition, it is getting more and more difficult to "recruit youth" for the project.
- M&E development: Registration and exit and tracking forms and many other data collection instruments developed over two years. Many changes and updates in the process of M&E development. Latest version of PMP is approved in April, 2011 after two years of the project inception.

Our Remaining Questions

- Providers and beneficiaries of the youth-friendly services?

- What "quality" monitoring measures are practically implemented at NGO and CBO for youth development and activities?
- Why some key statistics are not in place (such as age cohort data (youth) at community level) or employability and drop out, literacy rate? Data on all potential employers in local communities?
- Why not officially engage MoL and MoE in potential policy intervention and planning?
- Why not have a Social Marketing Plan?

2. Meeting with USAID officer, Haya Shubailat.

Haya reiterated the general purpose and objectives of the mid-term evaluation and reconfirmed USAID's interest in the evaluation findings for potentially realigning and adjusting the project approach and improving the project results as well as implications for future youth development in the country. During this period, we made a debrief to Haya on an initial IYF meeting in the morning. Meeting with Haya reaffirm our field work plan and confidence.

June 7

Visit to Zarqa.

1. We visited the "Royal Village," a new park recently opened to the general public. Currently YWJ project uses the facilities for organizing youth activities including training sessions and meetings. According to JRF, one CNGO implementer, YWJ project also makes in-kind contribution to the management of the park, helping the management as well as part maintenance. During the visit, a recent visit by an Artist from the US, Scott McIntyre, had resulted in a large mural in the park featuring Jordan metropolitan life. He worked with 19 youth participants/artists selected by local CBOs. This particular event, highly appreciated by the local people, seemed to have significantly raised YWJ project profile as well as visibility.

2. Visit to a training class. We dropped in on a training session while we visited the park. It consisted of about 15 youth in the class actively involved in learning about sexual violence intervention, and boys and girls were both together. They looked like they were about 16 to 24 years of age. Some youth with small children participated in the training. It appears that youth were active and happy being trained. We were surprised by the topic of the training, as well as by the joint class of male and female youth together.

3. Attended CNGOs biweekly meeting in the Village. The meeting lasted for about 2 hours. Staff from all 3 CNGOS (JCEF, JOHUD and JRF) discussed their "communication" challenges and other project coordination related challenges. Discussion was lively and heated. No one seems to hesitate to raise problems or challenges. We realized that this was a great opportunity to hear real issues and challenges.

4. A final draft of youth satisfaction survey tool was developed and submitted to Haya Shubailat for an approval.

June 8**1. Meeting with Nic on M&E issues.**

We focused on data issues. Nic concentrated on data collection issues including instrument developed, collection mechanism, and computerization process. Overall, our impression was that M&E was a quite comprehensive system, particularly on collection of data, all kinds of data. Nic was working with a senior advisor at IYF in Maryland and a database consultant developed or adopted tools for YWJ project. The list of data instruments is long, ranging from youth registration to tracking youth forms. We requested that we get copies of the data instruments, as well as some flat files with specific variables disaggregated at CBO or individual youth level. Nic agreed to extract the data based on our specific variable requests. [Note: In the end, we received most of the data instruments or forms and electronic data (excel format) youth registered (about 2,000 youth) and exited (about 550 youth) from the YWJ project.]

2. Meeting with seconded personnel from the MoSD

We focused on their thoughts on strengths and weaknesses and improvement possibilities of the project. Seven staff were quite eager to "complain" about the project. The main points of complaints are: 1) not good partnership between CNGOs and CBOs, (taking orders and instructions and threatening CBOs with no grants), 2) a bad image (of YWJ project) because of "mixing boys and girls in the same training sessions" in local communities. This makes MoSD look bad too because we are "partners," 3) training does not result in good and acceptable jobs because the skills they learned are not useful or not wanted by employers. In other words, whether they are trained or not, they can get those jobs they are getting. Many youth and parents are already disappointed because they were promised that youth get employment; 4) Many youth are still illiterate, they can't be further trained in IT or English, and the YWJ project is not comprehensive enough to deal with real youth at risk; 5) "things on paper are completely different from the things in reality. NGOs are not real partners with CBO; they just pass orders and instructions from IYF people and relay so called feedback back up from CBOs to IYF. CBOs tell us that they are threatened not to receive grants if CBO does not do as told"; 6) "MoSD and other projects on youth have done so much evaluation studies but no one at YWJ project wanted to use them at all and no one wants to listen to us"; 7) Some CNGO uses personal relationship to get a few youth employed in a company but only for a short term so that their statistics look good to IYF; 8) MoSD has many training programs and similar activities for youth implemented all over the country and we got more youth to work through Vocational Training Centers (VTC). JYJ project has no value-added; in fact it just makes empty promises for job employment.

June 9th**1. Meeting with Zad Company**

We met with Mr. Ahmad Damra, HR Director at Zad Catering Services Company which serves food to Military in Jordan. The company established a new business deal (just 2 months earlier) with Jordan

River Foundation to hire up to 40 youth, men only, according to the plan. It has already selected 26 men in the past two months. The youth hired or to be hired must be 18 or older and must be male because of the nature of the business. No women are given an opportunity to work in the company's main service business. According to the HR Director, challenges are 1) youth must live in the company's living quarters away from home and are not allowed to go out; 2) young men must be kind and polite to serve soldiers who may be "difficult" or "rude" sometimes; 3) turn-over rate is high—more than 30% annually. On average, young men once hired would make about 220 JD plus benefits of free uniforms, accommodation, food, and limited health care and transportation. One suggestion was made by the Director that JRF may send someone to the company to experience the work and life of the youth company so he could learn better what the services are and how they are delivered. Then JRF would better inform potential youth and get them psychologically prepared before they come to work with us. That kind of pre-orientation would be helpful.

2. Visit to MoSD

We met with Mr. Moh'd Khasawneh, Secretary General at MoSD and M&E advisor, Rasha (rashaqudisat@gmail.com) of the MoSD. "MoSD is fully aware of the challenges facing youth in all of the country. MoSD has many years of experience, knows the local neighborhoods' diverse cultures and traditions, we have won trust in these communities because we provide many different social benefits and services to them. When they have social and benefit related problems, they would come to us. We have a large social development system in place that stretches to governorates, CBOS, local neighborhoods and communities, youth groups. MoSD also recognizes common challenges in dealing with human beings, diverse perspectives and demands, different expectations and opinions, etc. "But one thing we know we must do is, once we promise, we must deliver. If we lose public trust, we are in no position to serve them." In addition, according to the Secretary General: "The main problems with YWJ in my opinion are the following, 1) youth were promised jobs and rarely would they get them after the training. YWJ does not create jobs, so to some extent, it has lost credibility; 2) youth were asked to do voluntary work. It is a strange concept/culture in Jordan. It is a job but with no payment. No one knows what this means; 3) project seems to have created unnecessary multi-layered bureaucracy, IYF, PMU, CNGO, CBO, and youth themselves, planning process and reporting process are all affected and to a large extent, it is quite inefficient. Recent attempt is to let IYF directly touches CBOs in new expanded geographic areas. Of course, this is an experiment approach. We hope to see better results."

Other points:

- During the first year of the project, MOSD worked closely with them to select the target areas and identify the age group and sectors for target population of the project.
- They work with IYF on the follow up of implementation with CBOs. Current hierarchical structure is not efficient. That's why it was recommended by the PMU to go for direct implementation by IYF and CBOs to reach target population of youth in other communities selected in different areas to be able to compare the impact and cost-effectiveness of each approach.

- The challenges the project faced in the communities are the high rate of unemployment nationwide besides the culture of shame that prevents youth from joining some career path or girls to go out for training or working environment.
- MoSD is in theory fully supporting the project as they know that youth and communities are in a desperate need to have such initiative and they are waiting to see the impact of both approaches of the project for sustainability.
- MoSD is following up with the M&E of the project and they included its indicators to be integrated in the ministry M&E plan and system. They used to receive monthly reporting from the project on the technical, financial and M&E follow up. However, starting in January 2011, MoSD has not received any M&E reports from the project and could not understand why.
- The ministry welcomes the work with donors and considers it as a good opportunity to build the ministry staff capacities and to be engaged more in the projects and services for the best of their community and youth needs and expectations. Although the ministry has a long history working with different donors and international organizations, still they feel they need more support and capacity building and finds in each opportunity a new area to be build and concepts to be renewed.

3. USAID visit

We met with Mark Parkison Director of Social Sector at USAID, Susan Ayari and Haya Shubeilat, USAID education officers. After the courtesy meeting, Haya shared with us her inputs and comments on a draft youth survey instrument we developed. The comments are quite helpful.

4. Meeting with British Council

We met with two representatives from British Council (BC) in Jordan, Duncan Lambe, Teaching Center Manager, and other individuals. BC signed a contract in the past year with IYF for delivering English courses in various local communities where YWJ activities are. Typically, English course runs for 32-45 hours for very basic level. Each session usually last for 2.5 hours. Individual teacher from BC would stay in the local community for about 2-3 weeks to complete the course. A free apartment would be provided for the teacher by local CBO. Challenges have been 1) safety and security issues for teachers. There have been a few incidents that teachers would have to be escorted out of the classroom to a safe place. Some students became violent with no clear reasons, maybe life style of the teacher or clothes prompt incident, anyone's guess. Teachers sometimes are threatened. Knives are common weapon objects carried by students. It is accepted as local culture. 2) location or classroom is challenging, hardly any space and good seating places, etc.; 3) CBOs do not plan or schedule these sessions well or they don't inform youth or parents. For example, sometimes, we thought that course was scheduled. But teacher got there, students were not there because they were not informed. In general, BC develops or adopts English materials for the project, CBOs organize all the local logistics for making it happen. BC's contract with IYF is worth 135,000 JD. This mainly covers teacher salary, material development, and distance travel. Of course, there are many success stories, too many to mention here.

June 12

1. Visit to JCEF

Met with Jordan Career Education Foundation (JCEF), five staff members (on YWJ project) were present. Ms. Mayyada Abu-Jaber (CEO), Afnan Al-Hadidi (M&E Manager), Zein Quandour (Project Manager), Mohammed Al-Tamari (Training Manager), and Tamer Zumot (Operations Officer). JCEF's specialty is on youth development, both international and domestic experience. JCEF follows a principle of employers' demand driven approach to youth development and employability. Their proven record has been 85% of youth employed. *"The best model is to work with CBOs and they know real needs and local culture well and they need to be empowered. We have been coaching them throughout this project. To provide training is easy but to get youth employed is very difficult. IYF has been going through a learning curve. We know we must create a new expectation or 'vision' among youth and get rid of 'culture of shame'. At the same time, we must work with private sector in much more collaborative way. Employer demand should drive the process. They represent the market needs. It is not realized in this project. MoL must be involved to work with employers. That is how we work on youth development and employability in our other projects which are more successful in terms of getting youth jobs. But again it is not realized."* JCEF mentioned a big challenge with MoSD seconded staff. According to JCEF, a real cause of MoSD staff complaints is because of a lack of "incentives." Staff want money or per diems, but they can't get it because of USAID rules. So they say nothing good about YWJ project. MoSD branches at governorates put up so many barriers for approval process. They often don't approve anything for us any more or sit on things forever. Much delay in our implementation is because of the barriers put up by MoSD. We can work with IYF and other CNGOs. Some intervention must be done to get MoSD to support the project.

IYF's problem is M&E development. *"They keep changing things, all the time. They change forms we already started using, and they add new forms. They change submission methods, paper or electronic data. They ask us and CBOs to keep a folder for every youth. CBO has to make so many Xerox copies of papers. Everything must be in 3 or more copies. Everyone complains. For example, we are now still doing data entry of the data we collected a year ago because IYF just designed a new online data form so we are entering the old data into this new online form again. We understand some data required by USAID is fine but IY asks too many additional data. For example, every month we have to submit different sets of data two times. One is on the 1st of every month and the other time is on 25th of every month. It drives everyone crazy, because we have to pass on that pressure to CBOs."*

2. Visit to JOHUD

According to JOHUD, they are working in the most difficult regions, Ma'an and Russeifeh regions. Their challenges have been a high staff turnover, culturally conservative in local communities, extremely low CBO capacity, and even name of USAID is hardly accepted. It is said that *"At the beginning of our project implementation, the concept of civic engagement or voluntary work was never heard of. No one would care about this. Youth only want jobs, good ones that pay well and have good insurance. But this is very*

difficult. CBOs made a promise that youth will get jobs when they recruited youth. To deliver that does not depend on us because we don't provide jobs. This is the first time for all CBOs to work under USAID project. They found that financial or accounting regulations are unbearable. All they care is 'numbers on paper.' We know we have to do capacity building with CBOs. We let them shadow our work. We have resident officer in both Ma'an and Russeifeh, interacting with all CBOs on the daily basis, ensuring that they are delivering the planned activities and collecting the right data and providing the right form of reports."

June 13

1. Visit to Jordan River Foundation (JRF)

We met with the key YWJ project staff, Mohamed (Project Manager), Kholod (M&E), Sawsan (Senior coordinator), Nour (Senior coordinator). They are working on the target for recruitment of youth for training for employability. They conducted job fairs, interviews, open days, and field visits with employers, parents and CBOs to link youth with labor market and match their skills to the needs of the job opportunities.

They conducted mixed or separate training sessions according to the targeted communities. It took a while to convince IYF of the importance of involving parents in awareness sessions and recruitment process of youth.

MoSD was a close partner to work with on the project since the early beginning of the implementation. They provided feedback on the performance of CBOs. But they need to have a strategic role in planning process and to specify their roles and responsibilities in the field for better coordination with CBOs staff, as the staff in the field sometimes receives different messages from MoSD and JRF about the same issue and also receive duplicated reporting requirements to both entities. CBOs as their official affiliation to the ministry, they need to report directly to them. With a better coordination, they can be effective, otherwise a duplication of work.

The main challenges are:

- Youth of age groups 15-18 years old. They are out of schools and can't be employed yet. Youth themselves don't know what to do, we can't keep them forever, employers can't hire them yet and they don't have skills.
- Youth in this age cohort needs special program treatment such as a psychosocial module or behavior management by the project. They are real risk youth group.
- 10 days of the training for life skills or even the psychosocial module are not enough to make a difference in youth mind set and change their attitudes
- Some targeted areas like Jordan Valley, are not equipped with enough job opportunities. They usually have seasonal jobs in farms for example which are not interesting to youth and communities and they use for them the external labor force coming from other countries. Culture of shame is obvious.

- Qualified experienced CBOs are not available in some targeted areas. As results, we recruited CBOs from surrounding areas to serve youth in the targeted areas. CBOs need capacity enhancement and empowered before they can work on their own and achieve goals of this project. Some CBOs are specialized in certain social issues, but not well prepared to work on youth. No CBOs in some large area know how to work on youth development.
- Loss of some qualified CBOs because of the 30k JD ceiling of grant funding. These qualified CBOs want more money to operate. So CNGO have to search for replacement CBOs.
- Frequent requests from IYF/ PMU in terms of data collection and reporting from the field. It is totally mad to get the level of the details. We can't see how they will use the data and for what purpose.
- Multilayer nature of the project delays the implementation and day to day operation which affects the impact in the field. Sometimes, approvals come late and things had to be postponed and sometimes we lose partners and media attention or community support because of the delay at the different levels.
- CNGOs receive the evaluation report of our performance appraisal just 2 weeks ago without any notice or discussion. They even do not know the tool and items used to measure their performance.
- IYF conducts field visits for M&E purposes but never provided feedback about what is happening at the field level. On the other hand, they provide very negative feedback to the HQs of the JRF at their board monthly meeting. The board gets angry at us. We have no idea what they were told.
- The project gives much more attention to the training for employability rather than the volunteerism and civic engagement and the youth-friendly services. While it is better to work in parallel in the 3 directions to follow that holistic approach to equip the community and impact the parents and youth and changing their attitude before training youth for employability.

June 14-17 and 20-22

During these days, we visited YWJ project communities, East Amman, Zarqa, Irbid, Ma'an, Jordan Valley and Russeifeh. In each community, we conducted focus groups with youth, parents and CBOs separately and administered youth and parent surveys. Below are our field kept notes. We removed redundant notes.

YWJ Field Notes

We visited six regions YWJ project covers. These are East Amman, Irbid, Ma'an, Zarqa, Jordan Valley and Russeifeh. In each place, we conducted three focus groups separately for youth, parents and CBO staff. Only in Ma'an did we conduct focus groups gender separately, for youth and parents. All other places, male and female were together in discussion. In addition, we administered a survey, having youth and parents fill out questionnaires. In general, we find that youth's perceptions of the project experience was quite mixed. Their thoughts were not in the all in one way or the other. Sometimes, their opinions were contradictory or totally opposite from each other in one single focus group. But they were lively and had heated discussions in most cases. Youth or parents generally had no hesitation to share their

thoughts. They seemed to be quite honest about how they thought of the project, training, services they had received and voluntary work participated, and even their behavior changes after participating in the YWJ project. Most parents were positive, it seems. They all thought how wonderful this project had been. However, we noticed that most of these parents were not the parents of the selected youth. They were invited by local CBOs so we can't claim that their opinions are representative of all parents. Almost all CBOs were passionate about their involvement in YWJ project. They were also quite open minded about their differences and challenges.

Total numbers of youth, parents and CBO staffers we interviewed in six regions are listed in the table below.

CNGO	Region	Youth			Parents			CBOs	
		Boys	Girls	Total	Fathers	Mothers	Total	Staff ³⁰	#
JCEF	ElNozha and Kharebet Elsouq	16	13	29	6	4	10	17	4
JCEF	Turkman and Elhay Elshamaly ³¹	3	12	15	1	4	5	8	2
JOHUD	Ma'an ³²	12	6	18	3	6	9	10	4
JRF	AlZarkaa	23	12	35	2	14	16	11	4
JRF	Jordan Valley	10	25	35	2	5	7	12	4
JOHUD	Alrosayfa ³³	10	17	27	1	10	11	14	4

East Amman

Youth Voices (29 boys and girls together)

- "I feel proud and confident after I receive the training. I now can do data-entry on a spreadsheet program."
- "I was given a brochure about YWJ project and came to this CBO to register for the training. I had no idea what voluntary work was, now I know. I was resistance to the concept of working for nothing, now I learned and did some voluntary work."
- "After my training on life skills, I feel that I can control my temper and control my loud voices or angry tones."
- "I like my English teacher. He is so funny and kind. But the course is too short. I want more of it. I also like IT, but I can't get training on that. CBO does not provide enough IT."

³⁰ CBOs members are representing the PM, Accountant, M&E and Field, activity and training coordinator.

³¹ JCEF NGO: In Turkman and Elhay Elshamaly just started work with JCEF 2 months ago

³² JOHUD NGO: In Ma'an, Youth were in separate groups for girls (12) and boys (6), and also for Parents 9 mothers 6 fathers.

³³ In Alrosayfa, there are 2 CBOs who work with boys and girls separately. Al Sayedat Alamelat (working Ladies) works only with girls since it was established in the 50s and this is its reputation in the community. That's why they managed to recruit 70 girls. And Abnaa Rosayfa COB works only with 70 boys as its target population.

- "I can't find a job. I don't think anyone here has found a job yet. Can you give a job or promise me a job? My father does not want me to work for a private company or become a secretary for someone."
- "Training is interrupted often. Sometimes CBO staff asked us to do other things, even pull us out of the training sessions, such as helping a wedding preparation, moving things around, running an errand, etc. That was not fair."
- "I like to come to the CBO to join in YWJ project activity or training because I just want to get away from father. I also tell others to leave their house to come to the project."
- "I can't continue to come to the training because I have to get up at 7am to be on the transport to here. It is too early. I need to sleep in the morning. I hope the training schedule changes."
- "Yes, in the past few months, I think I did, maybe, 3 hours of voluntary work. Most of us just did one or two times. We cleaned a local park and helped a school wash the wall."

Parents Voice (4 mothers and 6 fathers):

- "My 17 year old son is bad in attitude and behavior. I can hardly talk to him. But a few months ago, he has joined YWJ project and took training in IT, English and Life Skills. Now he is a new person, quite polite and respectful. His behavior is changed. I want to thank the YWJ project for this."
- "I think this is a great project. My child and other youth have nothing to do at home or in the community. Their day is empty. This project gets them to learn and to do things. It is perfect. But our culture does not respect youth. They have no work experience and mischievous. No one wants to talk to them or give them jobs."
- "Many youth, they failed in schools, still need some confidence and encouragement. They need special support and nurture. You can't treat them like you treat smart and educated kids."
- "Transportation must be provided separately for boys and girls when they come to training every day. You can't mix them regardless. So far, I trust CBO totally. They have done things right [separation between boys and girls]. But there are rumors what the project wants to do. I am concerned."
- "Many jobs are not appropriate for youth. Government jobs are good because they are in a safe environment."
- "I don't like my daughter to go out to the training without telling me exactly how long it is and how she goes and comes. I am not well informed by CBO. I don't just want my daughter to tell me. I need to have CBO official calendar which I never have."
- "Today we are in the different world. It is never as good as those old days when I grew up. Now in each house, husband and wife always have different opinions. We give pressure to our children. Today, too much of it would make children explode."

CBO Staff (17 staff from 4 CBOs):

- "We are so proud to see that youth mindset changes when they come to our project training. Voluntary work was totally new concept at the beginning, but now they all understand what it is. Parents and communities all support the idea. We of course need to do more. Our CBO is so well trusted because we know what the local needs are and how to work with parents and community."
- "We need more training on project management, ICM and ToT."
- "Youth have much higher expectation than what project can offer. We have to do a good job in telling them reality. They are picky with jobs, but they are not facing the realistic world. The "culture of shame" really kills them. Also, they are emotionally unstable, and we should help them think with a psychosocial training."
- "Our hands are tied. We thought we could work with dropout youth and get them back to schools, but now YWJ project says we only work with youth to get them jobs. But they can't work yet because under age. People above us always tell us not to do certain things or spend money on those things we thought are very good for the communities and youth."
- "Some youth were promised jobs after the training. Yes, they did get jobs but company environment is so bad, much worse than anyone expected. Boss is mean and job is terrible. Many quite in less than two weeks. Words get circulated and that really hurts the reputation of the project. For example, some youth started working for Zad, but they left less than 3 months. Now Zad does not want to hire YWJ project youth."
- "We have few youth-friendly services. They are not as clear to youth or parents. Maybe we just do one friendly service and scale up in a big way."
- "Our real headache of the project is about M&E papers. There are too many forms, too many changes, too many approval requirements and too difficult to fill out. We don't know why these many forms. They all say it is USAID requirement. Also every form must be signed, even youth registration form or exit form. They don't like to sign anything. It makes them nervous."
- "For youth, they must finish 25 hours of voluntary work in order to "graduate", but they don't do 25 hours and we can force them since it is voluntary. They all want to graduate, so now?"
- "I find CBO, CNGO, IYF, MoSD and employer all understand the mission differently. No agreement, but we all have to follow the upper management. I doubt upper management know how we (CBO) work with youth. But unfortunately, they make decisions. IYF seems to be only interested in collecting as much data and information as they can without actual support or building local capacity. I don't know why they need so much information.""

Irbid

Youth Voices (12 girls and 3 boys):

- "I like the training very much, particularly topics of social communication for work places, and work place success. I need to know that before I can go to work."
- "I, and my friends here, am happy to see people who go to park after we clean and change the look of the park. It is quite rewarding feeling."

- "Everyone has computer in the house and internet connection. We have any information we want. We play computer games. My parents now restrict me, but they don't know about computer."
- "Girls have many problems, but boys don't. We can't go out and many work places are not for girls. Work time or place is not suitable and likely boss is bad too."
- "No one has got a job yet. Yes, we were promised to get an employment. Now we hear it will be at Safeway. I can't work there. My parents won't let me. I want to work in IT because I am good with computers. I can do data entry."
- "I like English very much. I know it is not useful now for me, but maybe in the future. I can read labels and signs in English. I hope to read instructional manual in English. Teacher is wonderful too."
- "My best experience is to take the course of entrepreneurship. I really want to do my own business. I don't like to work for others. They are not very kind."
- "Some jobs are shameful and they are not for us, Jordanians. Many jobs at the nearby factory opened by foreigner. They hired foreigners too. We will never work there. My parents would never let me work there. Other jobs like in restaurants or shops are not good for us."
- "We have no place to go or play. University campus does allow us, no health club, or sport place. The only place that is welcoming us is place for Shisha."

Parents Voices (4 mothers and 1 father):

- "I don't know anything about what my son is learning. I know he has 42 hours of training. Could you tell me what he has been studying? What this training will benefit him? He is learning some words in English, but how he would get job with it?"
- "My son used to fight others. It was really bad. Now he changed after he came to YWJ project. He now dresses better, looks smart, and is polite too. I think this is wonderful thanks to the YWJ project."
- "My current family situation is extremely difficult, financially. My daughter must find a job, and quickly. She has come here to learn skills, but no one gives her a job yet. Can you give her a job? We really need her to work."
- "My daughter said that she liked the training courses, particularly computer learning. She is very proud because she not just know how to play music and game on the computer, but she actually can search information to answer questions. She now even teaches other friends to do it. She feels proud."
- "I am all for voluntary work. This is very useful for youth. But it is almost impossible for girls to do this. Boys have no problems, out there doing voluntary work. For girls, no way."
- "My daughter does not want to get married now, because she wants more opportunity to go to work. Today, society is different. It is like the old days that girls married early and stay home. I am all for it. Today's youth has changed so much. Females works with males in a workplace. This is fine with me. Hope others would think the same way."

- "I don't like the idea that female and male mix in a workplace. Look at this factory nearby, they are all together. It is really terrible for our culture. I actually worked in this 'Hussane factory for almost two years. I know what they did. I would never let my daughter work there."
- "My son didn't get his Tawjihi exam. He wants to go to work. No one wants to hire him. What to do? How is he going to marry a woman?"

CBO Staff (8 staff from 2 CBOs)

- "When we started YWJ project, many youth came because they were promised to get employment. Now we can hardly get them jobs. This is our biggest challenge. Of course, this is only two month into the project because we started late in Irbid. Hope things will change."
- "Youth expectation and employer's expectation are very different. For youth, they want best jobs, high pay, less hours, computer work, for government, with good insurance, etc. For employer, they pay youth the lowest salary, want youth to work longest hours, want them to do manual or hard work, with least insurance because they are least educated, experienced and respectful. Even youth get jobs, different expectations will lead to 'breakup'."
- "The key is to work with employers. They are the ones who provide jobs. YWJ project does not provide jobs and we should not promise. We need to work with employers, and we can conduct training together with them and figure out the best way for employers to nurture youth in a work environment."
- "Irbid is car repair center. But we are not addressing real labor needs here. Why can't we train some good auto mechanics, particularly in electronic cars. We desperately need people who know about this. Many people from Amman send their cars here. We can't fix the newer models. This is the need but we are not addressing it. It is like we are not communicating well between YWJ project and local market need."
- "MoSD is a problem. For example, one time, one week after we signed a contract with one CBO, MoSD stopped us to work on the project. We had no idea why MoSD stopped us. They have a lot of power. They have to approve or sign our financial bank account. If MoSD does not sign it, we can't work."
- "M&E is a big problem for us. Instructions are too many to read. Forms are too complex. So much paper waste because of M&E data requirement. Look at the registration form, it is unbelievably difficult. Just the registration form would drive away youth from us."
- "MoSD has a lot of problems, but grants management has more problems. Spending approval is complex and too difficult. Every penny plan has to be approved. Meal plan, transportation plan, service plan, training plan... we felt we should just give up."
- "We have visits from IYF or JCEF. Each visit we get some specialist in one particularly area. Sometimes it is about M&E data collection, sometimes it is about grants management, sometimes it is about training issues, sometimes it is about youth-friendly services or volunteerism. They somehow gave us different instructions and conflicting messages. We were totally lost after their visit. As a result, we often have to change things accordingly."

- "Yes, I agree. We also often send our requests or questions to JCEF. JCEF then pass them to IYF. Then they stop there. IYF rarely responds. Anyway, we never heard answers or results. Sometimes, we did hear them, but so delayed that we forgot what requests were. We also find that communication, plan approval/rejection process, M&E process are very confusing. We admit we can't understand them."
- "We recruit youth by using YWJ brochure, outreach program, youth-to-youth, and personal relationships. But youth is not fully committed to training, voluntary activities, etc. For example, we had 30 youth at the beginning of the project launch. Two months later, we only have 7 who show up regularly. We are not explaining the project well in our neighborhood."
- "Rapid Community Appraisal (RCA) is totally a rubbish. MoSD and IYF did this without us (CBOs) as if we knew nothing about our communities. In the result, information is totally wrong, even the borders of our communities are incorrect and youth data is not right."
- "I think it is wrong not to include non-Jordanians or refugees in our project. They represent huge numbers of our population. Many are youth. If not well educated or treated, they could be real problem for us or Jordan. We all think we should reach out to them."
- "We never received any training on accounting procedures, grants management or IT. We would like to get the training."

Ma'an

In Ma'an, our focus groups with youth and parents are separately conducted for males and females.

Male Youth Voices (6)

- "I really need a job. I have been doing things here and there. I get paid a bit money. But I need a real job. Where is my job?"
- "I participated in training on electric engineering, solar power, plumbing, and basic English. I love English. I want more. I want to get away from this place. Maybe in the US. Please take me with you to wherever you are."
- "I like a field trip to Amman. Please let them give us more field trips. We only did it once. It was wonderful, eye-opening. I participated in these trainings, but they can't give me any certificate. Why? I need certificates to get a job. I don't have Tawjihi certificate. So I need the training certificates."
- "I am working a full time now. I got a job as electrician, going around in new construction sites, wiring and fixing things. I am happy. But I need a training in higher level. What they taught me was too simple and too basic. I need a master level as electrician."

Male Parents Voices (3 parents)

- "My son studied Solar and Plumbing here with CBO here. He now has a new hope for employment. He is doing a few things, but not yet real job. Even so, he is away from streets or drug problems."

- "My son is also more hopeful now and we are hopeful too because we are told that my son will get a job soon. We hope this happens soon. Training is wonderful. CBO provided transportation and provided training. Now, we should let them work."
- "Ma'an has many youth with difficulty, and some with special needs. We have no social or special programs for them. We leave them on the streets and they have nothing to do but taking drugs and harm public. Education system here is really bad. Everyone knows. Parents don't even think of sending their children to schools. In some cases, they become worse from schools."
- "My 9 year old boy (the boy was there with him) is pushed out of the school by the principal because of his learning difficulty. He is not patient enough to sit long. No teacher wants to help or teach him. Teachers always yell at him. So it is okay not to go to school. [question, is that against compulsory education law?] Yes, I can't take the case to a local court. But it won't help. No one will hear me. All teachers will support the principal. I will lose the case. Even if I won and my son stays in that school, he will be miserable. His brother is illiterate. Now he will be illiterate too."
- "Ma'an has lots of small companies of mobile shops and repairs, auto shops, and electronics. We should provide training in these areas because we have market needs. For example, many local cars, particularly new ones with electronic system in the cars, when they break, we have to send them to Amman. Locally, no one has electronic instruments for testing. Why can't we teach our youth to learn and get them the instruments?"

Youth voices

Challenges:

- 1- Frequent change of instructors for the same course did not give us enough time to understand their strategy and get smooth learning process
- 2- We think that better labs and equipped classes with computers and internet connection for IT and English classes will give us the opportunity to learn better
- 3- We feel that we spend long times in transportation to reach the assembly points for girls. This prevents some of our colleague girls from continuing their training with the project. If the project can provide door-to-door transportation that would be a great support for girls to join and complete their planned training.
- 4- We did not receive our certificates in time after finishing the training. We waited too long to receive them and have graduation. It is our opportunity to show how we are different and we can learn to do better.
- 5- We did not like the camping opportunity for boys as it is like the military service. We are not allowed to go out or wake up in different times as we like to do. it is not fun and we do not enjoy such entertainment opportunity offered by the CBOs. We prefer to be on our own to socialize in the CBO premises.
- 6- We do not see any Girls-friendly places in our community that can provide services for girls to join social activities or even to get together to spend some time.

- 7- Because of the culture of shame, girls are not allowed to work in some places that have immoral reputation, and even for boys to work in the same places where other nationalities work like Asian or African like Egyptian or Syrian for example. What my neighbor or relative would say if they saw me working there.
- 8- Sometimes we can't complete the training if for example, girls get married or pregnant, and boys have to join the military services.
- 9- We know that around 10-20% of youth in our age group are smokers and drug users. May be with some variations from region to other. But in general, girls are not allowed to smoke outdoors.
- 10- Some of us who get employed, came with feedback that they received harsh treatment of business owners which pushed them to leave work after few days and try to find something else. That's besides the underpayment for those who work for longer hours of work.

Expectations for improvements:

- 1- We liked the training opportunities so much and would like to expand the training topics and periods to have more skills and practice for improvements of our performance either in IT or English Language classes
- 2- We also would like to have the training for even those who completed the high school (Tawjihi) certificates so we are better equipped for the labor market
- 3- we like to spend more time in the CBO and with our colleagues may be in some trips or outings.
- 4- We do not see lots of services in our communities for youth. We sometimes do not have places to play sports or to get together except in the CBO or schools in summer time. Even some schools do not allow us to use their library or labs. We need to have work in the surrounding neighborhood . What if the program build a factory to train us and then we can work in this place. We can do a bazaar or open day to present our products to parents, business sector and community members as a marketing plan for our skills and products too.
- 5- We feel frustrated from the longer periods of training and then waiting for longer periods after so for the proper job opportunity. Sometimes we do not feel the program is following up what we do with CBO. We are not sure if the CBO delivers our feedback and expectations to the program or not. We do not see them a lot and expect that they do visit our places to see our training and meet us to hear our feedback and recommendations for the other trainings and activities. We can arrange for an open day to show our talents and hobbies that can be fun for us and in the same time we can exchange training in some of these talents to train others who might be interested. Some of us have a very good hand writing in Arabic or painting. We can help others to improve their talents if we have such activities .
- 6- I think if we did orientation of the business sector about the requirements or standards of better working environment and providing competitive package for us will encourage us to stay in the labor market and do better in the jobs we might have

Parents FGD

In Ma'an we had separate sessions for fathers and mothers.

Achievements:

- We think that our youth are receiving a very good opportunity in the training offered by the program
- I can tell about the difference in my daughter's look and attitude. She shows better skills and behavior and is more confident now

I like the voluntary activities that my daughter participates in. She now feels more responsive and loyal to his community. **Challenges:**

- 1- I think the project need to expand the age group they serve to have expanded target group of youth. Our youth is in need for such opportunities to improve their skills and have a better chance to find jobs.
- 2- I appreciate if the boys receive transportation allowances because girls find this advantage while boys are not.
- 3- I do not; like my daughter to go in trips even for one day. If the program allows me to join her, maybe I can consider the idea and her father too.

Girls are trained in sewing using cheap raw materials. Their real test of the skills they learn if they use the actual materials and cloth for final products. I do not like my daughter going to streets and public spaces for cleaning. Maybe if in mosques or schools, we can even help them but not in anywhere or faraway places. In Ramadan, I can't allow my daughter to stay for long time while fasting with the training and spending time in transportation. The program needs to reschedule the training and make sure our daughters are not exhausted. We do not have places for youth to get together and do some sports and activities. It costs a lot to do so and not available all the times for youth and especially for our girls. For example , the schools in the community are working during the day hours in the school time only and not available in summer time.

Expectations for improvements:

- 1- I think giving daily per diem/ allowances for youth will be much better that the break and transportation. we need to expand the project services and training to age group beyond the 15-24 years old
- 2- I like to see the program support the back to schools approach for youth willing and able to do so. My daughter stopped school 2 years ago and I think it will be much better for her to go back and complete her higher education. But maybe if she can find a job , she will be able to pay for the school fees
- 3- Why not to include the high school graduate to improve their skills in English and IT so they are better equipped for the labor market or the university education. All our youth are in need to have more training all the time

- 4- The program did not conduct awareness sessions to parents and community early enough in the project. We heard about the program from youth and our neighbors. Why not to provide grants to youth to start their own small business
- 5- We do not see a lot of jobs available for girls. It is still very limited choices. We expect new ideas from the program
- 6- What if the program have a sort of industrial kitchen/ business/ model factories to help youth practice what they already trained on and then find work opportunity in a familiar work environment.
- 7- We need to hear feedback from CBOs and training providers about our youth performance and the things we can do to help and support better performance
- 8- Our daughters are in need to have religious meetings/ discussion/ awareness as part of the social gathering they have with youth
- 9- I saw some trainers treating girls in a very bad way. The program should provide training for CBO staff and training providers to better work with youth and manage their problems (psychosocial or communication or other needs)
- 10- We do not see any tailored training modules for youth of special needs and sign language. Girls who learn it
- 11- can have a chance to work with kids of special needs in centers, nurseries or schools) , fashion design (not only limited to the sewing training), and others according to the youth interests and community needs

CBOs FGD

I noticed in Jordan Valley, there is no M&E staff. M&E duties are done by the training/event coordinator.

Achievements:

- We conducted first some orientation in the community to gain trust and support from parents.
- We started the training and the voluntary activities after we received the capacity building with the CNGO
- We relayed on our networking and personal relationships and communications at the community to recruit youth and gain the support of the community.
-
- We mainly were trained with CNGO and IYF on the M&E system and tools, grants and financial procedures to fulfill the reporting and other task requirements.
- For our CBO, it was our first time to work with youth, so the project was a way to change the community perception about our CBOs and enhance our role to provide different development/ reform efforts at their community and expand the coverage of services to reach youth group of population. Having such reputation/ accountability and perception and trust from the community to work with CBOs facilitated the role of CBOs to recruit youth for the project activities.

Challenges:

- 1- We see some duplication of the work at the CBO and NGO levels to fulfill the M&E reporting and data collection requirements. We do the work in our premises and send the hard copies of documents and the soft copy too to the CNGO where they do almost the same. We had to send 3 copies of everything we do. It is a lot of work and money to deal with.
- 2- It took more time to reach achievements and meet deadlines because of the challenges in the field to recruit youth in this specific age group and with the selected criteria, and the culture of shame in some places.
- 3- We suffer from the load of work with the limited number of employees and salaries at the CBO level
- 4- I think the main challenge we have is the youth commitment to jobs and shame to work in some categories of jobs
- 5- It is really hard to produce and proceed in work with the last minute changes in the contracts and grants we had which pushed us to delete some activities before being implemented because of the limited fund.
- 6- Because of the overlap in coverage geographical areas, we compete with each other as CBOs in the field to recruit youth and implement activities. And sometime we plan for the same activities and youth-friendly services in the same areas which mean loss of communication and duplication and loss of resources in the same communities.
- 7- I heard it several times from youth and I know it from the community, that youth are receiving harsh treatment from the business sector which did not encourage youth to continue in the labor market. This indicated sometimes to search again and re-link youth to other job opportunities.
- 8- We have too many forms to fill and copies to send to partners with continuous changes in the forms and frequency of reporting which require effort, time and extra cost which was not considered in our original budget when submitted our proposals.
- 9- We find it really difficult to have all different approvals to be taken at different levels of the project management layers (IYF HQs in USA, USAID, MOSD, IYF Jordan, CNGO) according to different organizational regulations for financial and media requests for example
- 10- Youth usually are not committed to the 25 hours of voluntarism, so they are not eligible for certificates and filling the exit forms. So we are losing youth who don't complete their training courses.
- 11- We do not have any plans for training and employability for youth in the age group of 15-18 years old so they do not have many activities to do with CBOs unless the voluntary opportunities.
- 12- Sometimes youth were not able to assess/ know their own skills and consequently can't determine where to be trained so he/she goes with the flow and join their peers. Then he/she discovers he/she is not interested to work in the job opportunities. So they might decide to join several vocational training to have some choices for the future.

- 13- We as CBOs were not involved in the Community Rapid Appraisal and community surveys and we did not receive any detailed statistics or information about the communities we serve. So we had to do some FGD on our own for the targeted communities to be able to tailor the action plan to the needs and expectations of youth.
- 14- In some communities, we have around 10% of population from other nationalities who are not covered by the scope of work of this project. we do not want to exclude youth from training opportunities because of their nationality.
- 15- Some employers are not committed to their agreement with us to hire youth and have some excuses like the youth attitude, their look, haircut and body built.
- 16- Youth sometimes cannot provide evidence to support their exit forms like the marriage certificate or army ID, so NGOs and IYF consider the files of youth are not completed yet

Expectations for Improvements:

- 1- We should have a role in the planning and design process before the implementation because of our involvement in the field and awareness of the community requirements and expectations and the capacities in the field.
- 2- The project and CNGO should be flexible enough in the fund allocation with consideration of the limited schedule for implementation after approvals at different levels.
- 3- The project needs to have partnership with Ministry of labor to provide supervisory role over the business sector to improve the work environment and empower policies that support job opportunities for youth.
- 4- What if the project have a model factory/ business where youth can receive training and practice in the same time (on-the-job training) or even permanent job opportunities for outstanding youth to be full-time employees or trainers, for sustainability purposes at the community level. In Ma'an for example, we already have the place and building and what we need is to have some financial support for the region to have the machines to produce towels and tissue, which will support the whole region and not only one CBO in specific neighborhood.
- 5- WE do not have enough support for a sports compound to allow places for youth to have different activities and services at community level.
- 6- We are confused sometimes about our roles and responsibilities to show results and impact of the program. We also suffer from the overlap of the geographical areas to reach youth. The response from IYF about our requests and questions of the M&E requests and reporting requirements usually comes late or irrelevant to our needs. We received the M&E forms after we received the training. So the training was theoretical and when we had the forms in hands, we had many questions to answer to be able to implement what we learned and use the forms properly. we see the community and parents are confused about the scope of the project and what it should be doing. We do not have proper communication and advocacy to tell about our activities to youth and what they can expect from joining the program

- 7- We did not hear about any evaluation or appraisal of our performance until we see the periodic assessment. We never receive any feedback from the CNGO or IYF despite that fact that they attend some events and conduct field visits every now and then. We need to hear their feedback on the spot to improve performance and achieve results and not to oversee and supervise what we do only. We usually hear from different people in CNGO and IYF about instructions and requests for information. Sometimes it is duplicated and repeated and sometimes they already have it. We need to identify focal person to contact the CBOs who can compile requests and data requirements and submit reports when indicated. This also will facilitate things for the CBOs to know to whom they can reach for support and enquiries.
- 8- We receive very late notice from CNGO and IYF about the training courses and different events. And we need to be ready in the last minute. We appreciate in Advance coordination with CBOs for the IT and English courses to have enough time to recruit youth for the training sessions. It is also recommended to have the English course before the IT one so youth can understand the terminology and be able to use their English for navigation.
- 9- we need more capacity building and support from IYF and CNGOs in English, IT and project management
- 10- We noticed some inequality in salaries among CBOs staff members at different regions.
- 11- I wonder if the program can provide school fees for youth in the age-group 15-18 years old to re-enter schools if they are willing and capable to do so.
- 12- why the program does not plan for some educational/ historic places trips or visits for some factories which would be interesting for youth and provide incentives to complete the training and sometimes it prepares them for the working environment. we in our CBO conducted those trips on our own(from our own budget) to recruit youth. This also might be considered as a kind of indirect rewarding system for youth voluntary activities.
- 13- On-time installment of grants. Sometimes we wait for 3-4 weeks to receive grants from NGOs. During this period, we have to manage activities from our own budget
- 14- We are considering the establishment of indoor activity/ sports center for girls as a youth-friendly service. What if the program contribute in it
- 15- what if the program considered the establishment of multipurpose hall or center that can serve several CBOs in the region instead of renting outside halls or meeting rooms to conduct training courses or having meeting with community members. This will have long lasting sustainable impact on youth services in the community
- 16- The project should conduct reading and writing test/ course before they start with their regular training scheme as we target dropped out of school youth as early as in their grade 3 or 4 and they cannot read and write and consequently cannot participate in trainings for English or IT.
- 17- We do not feel the ownership of the project as we are not allowed to have any media messages before getting approvals from different levels of the project. we usually feel freely talking about all of other initiatives and work we do in the communities but when it comes to the YWJ, we feel tied to provide any information or advocate for it by any mean. So we do not feel it is part of our work or we are really responsible to make it works.

18- We do not feel really appreciated as main implementer in the field and in daily contact with youth.

Other Documents and Data Available Upon Request

- 1) Youth Survey and Parents Survey Instruments
- 2) Focus Group Questions
- 3) Youth Registration Form (by IYF)
- 4) Youth Exit Form (by IYF)
- 5) Databases: a) Youth Survey file, b) Parents Survey File, c) Youth Registration file, and d) Youth Exit file.