

# **Internal Strengthening for Change Program**

## **Summative Evaluation: Capturing ISO & CBO Results**



**Submitted by INTEGRATED**

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# ACRONYMS

CBO	Community Based Organization
CDC	Community Development Center
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CIS	Civic Initiatives Support Program
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DRG	USAID Democracy, Human Rights and Governance Office
EBR	Evidence-based Research
EU	European Union
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GEFE	Gender Equality and Female Empowerment
GKII	Group Key Informant Interviews
HRBA	Human Rights-based Approach
ICA	Institutional Capacity Assessment
ICAT	Institutional Capacity Assessment Tool
IIP	Institutional Improvement Plan
IR	Intermediate Result
ISO	Intermediary Support Organization
JNCW	Jordanian National Commission for Women
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOSD	Ministry of Social Development
NCFA	National Council for Family Affairs
UN	United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## EVALUATION PURPOSE AND EVALUATION QUESTIONS

This report is the fourth deliverable under the Internal Strengthening for Change (ISC) Summative Evaluation: Capturing ISO and CBO Results. The main purpose of the overall ISC evaluation is to independently assess the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of the results of ISC. The evaluation covers the ISC I and II period of performance from its start date in April 2014 through March 2018.

The evaluation's main questions and sub-questions were organized under the main themes of relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability:

## PROJECT BACKGROUND

Internal Strengthening for Change (ISC) was one of USAID CIS's flagship interventions within the field of capacity building, with a core aim of targeting nascent CBOs formed from January 2010 onwards. ISC was implemented in two stages over the course of April 2014 through May 2018 through collaboration between USAID CIS and three Intermediary Support Organizations (ISOs) - the Noor Al-Hussein Foundation (NHF), the Jordan River Foundation (JRF), and the Al-Thoraya Studies Center (Al-Thoraya) - who were selected through an open competition for a subcontract to provide capacity building services on behalf of USAID CIS. The first stage (ISC I) focused on supporting CBOs to understand and apply principles of effective CBO management and good governance through assessing organizational status, undertaking strategic planning, and developing strategic and organizational improvement plans. A total of 917 CBOs from across all 12 governorates participated in an introductory course to the Societies Start-Up Toolkit from which 124 conducted Institutional Development Assessments after which 64 CBOs "graduated" from the program with the development of strategic plans. Under the second stage (ISC II), USAID CIS, NHF, and JRF provided follow-on assistance and mentoring support to 25 CBOs that "graduated" from ISC I, along with a competitive grant competition resulting in 18 subawards to support implementation of ISC I strategic plans.

## EVALUATION METHODS AND LIMITATIONS

The evaluation used a mixed method approach including desk review, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, group interviews and a survey.

The evaluation team faced two main limitations during the evaluation. First, the results of the IDAs, as well as those of a Spectrum of Change measurement tool<sup>1</sup>, were self-reported by the CBOs, carrying the potential for respondent bias. To mitigate the impact of this limitation, the team combined more than one method of data collection to address research questions, including observational fieldwork. Second, while the evaluation team was largely able to verify the availability of tools, the design of the evaluation did not allow its members to determine the extent to which if, or how, CBOs were implementing the policies and procedures they reported on or utilizing the tools as reported.

Another limitation was that oftentimes CSOs were not able to recall details about training courses and deliverables under the ISC program, this issue was mitigated by using program documentation as a secondary data source to confirm availability and development of tools and plans.

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<sup>1</sup> The Spectrum of Change tool measured the extent to which CBOs adopted selected learning from the ISC program: Awareness; Development and Acquisition of Tools; Application of Learning/Use of Tools; Continued Use and Sustainability.

## **FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **RELEVANCE**

The ISC Program was implemented through three well-established Jordanian non-profit organizations whose specialization includes delivering training and mentoring services to other CSOs, herein referred to as Intermediary Support Organizations (ISOs). ISC was built on FHI 360's previous experience and ongoing communication with CBOs through its previous program: the USAID/Jordan Civil Society Program, implemented 2008-13. ISO understanding of the Jordanian context and CBO capacities and needs were helpful to ISC during the CBO selection process and the development of project activities and trainings. ISO and CBO planning and assessment activities utilized a participatory approach. CBOs who recalled the Toolkit training found it relevant to their needs. IDAs and IIPs were useful tools that helped the ISOs understand the situation of the individual CBOs and identify means of support and improvement. The Strategic Planning and Mentoring were important and highly relevant components of ISC. The Program understood the potential for a lack of commitment on the part of organizations and therefore made commitment one of the criteria for moving from one phase of the program to the next. Additionally, while the Program was responsive to CBO needs, certain training components, as well as the IDA, were not squarely aligned with their capacities.

ISC was launched as an open competition to subcontract Jordanian ISOs to deliver capacity development services on behalf of USAID CIS. Although the ISC was not designed to build upon the strategic direction of the ISOs, the program provided each an opportunity to further strengthen their capacities in delivering such programs with ISOs contributing to the design of ISC training content, recruiting CBOs for participation and subawards. Each ISO reported differently how, if at all, the ISC linked to their strategic plans and how they institutionalized learning in their future work: two of the three ISOs reported how they have adopted some elements of the ISC for other donor-funded programs. Overall, the Program was aligned to the ISOs' mandates to build the capacity of civil society, however, the program was not shaped by ISO goals.

### **EFFECTIVENESS**

The evaluation team utilized a Spectrum of Change tool to guide discussions as to which development stage CBOs in KIs and FGDs self-identified to be in regarding Strategic Planning, Procurement Processes, Good Governance and M&E. While 91% and 88% of CBOs reported "Consistently Using" and "Utilizing" strategic planning and procurement policy tools – which all data sources clearly show to be the main areas of improvement - only 56% reported the same for Good Governance and M&E. While CBOs had received training on Good Governance, developed some of the necessary tools and took measures to implement them, they did not believe that the tools were yet fully operational or sustainable. As for M&E, CBOs mentioning that there was no real reason to develop M&E plans as they would change according to the requirements of the specific donor. They appeared to believe that Codes of Conduct and Procurement Manuals were important for transparency and accountability, but did not tie in M&E or allocate it the same level of importance.

All CBOs in KIs and some in FGDs claimed to have achieved at least some improvements in organizational capacity, financial viability, service provision and public image. Internal and external factors shaped the ability of organizations to achieve and sustain improvements, including the eagerness and willingness of CBOs to learn; the previous work or volunteer experience of the CBO management; the number of programs being implemented by the CBO and the level of commitment of the leadership. External factors included the trust and involvement of the community. Some CBOs were becoming more mission-driven, moving away from "charity" work and focusing more on development work.

All three ISO saw improvements in their training skills, and NHF an improved ability to manage grants. The relationships of the ISO with the CBOs also improved, though the absence of JRF from the grant management component may have compromised the strength of their relationship with the CBOs they had trained and mentored.

Although the ISOs were rated very highly as far as their roles in the trainings and mentorship, many CBOs stated that they remained committed to the training only in order to receive grants.

There does appear to have been room for improvement to the Program's overall approach with USAID CIS and ISOs making changes in response to lessons learned during implementation. However, the ISOs faced some challenges during the implementation of training, including insufficient time to address the varying capacity among training participants, and an overlap between training and grant timelines. The quality of the ISO training reports and absence of some documentation may reflect the rushed nature of the trainings. However, CBOs found ISOs were flexible and supportive and spent an adequate amount of time and effort on both the training and mentorship.

## **SUSTAINABILITY**

In addition to the achievements made by CBOs, there were internal factors that may support sustainability. These include having paid employees; owning the CBO space; having income-generation projects; being well-established in communities and having supportive Boards of Directors. Factors that may hinder sustainability include a lack of sustainable funding in many of the CBOs; the fact that most CBOs are volunteer-based; and that there is an increase in the number of CBOs vying for the same pools of funding.

Recommended capacity building priorities for CSOs include Strategic Planning, M&E, the Role of Civil Society and Good Governance, as well as engaging CBOs in developing manuals for volunteerism, training and/or community-based initiatives. While donors and large organizations believe that advocacy training is important, CBOs do not necessarily see this as their role. The Grant Management Assessment outlined further capacity building opportunities for NHF

Sustainability of improvements varies among ISOs and is dependent on different factors, such as the level of engagement of the respective ISO's senior leadership; the ISO's commitment to investing in their staff and/or adopting learning within programmatic and operational structures; as well as their ability and/or interest to integrate ISC opportunities for strategic or sustainability planning. USAID CIS staff reported ISO improvements at four levels: new approaches, new resources (IDA and curricula), improved trainers' capacities (in several technical areas such as good governance and strategic planning), and for NHF in grant management. However, all four actors (each ISO and USAID CIS) acknowledged improvements and/or sustainability in different ways and at different levels.

# EVALUATION PURPOSE & EVALUATION QUESTIONS

## EVALUATION PURPOSE

This report is the fourth deliverable under the Internal Strengthening for Change (ISC) Summative Evaluation: Capturing ISO and CBO Results. The main purpose of the overall ISC evaluation is to independently assess the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of the results of ISC. The evaluation covers the ISC I and II period of performance from its start date in April 2014 through March 2018, two months before the Program ended. The evaluation will generate strategic insight and learning to enrich current and future programming undertaken by USAID CIS and other organizations seeking to develop the capacity of civil society in Jordan and contribute essential information about USAID CIS's legacy for inclusion in the final program report. Specifically, the evaluation will:

- a. Assess the relevance of ISC in Jordan's civil society and CBO context;
- b. Examine the effectiveness of the ISO strengthening and service delivery model;
- c. Examine the extent of improvement in ISO and CBO capacity and performance;
- d. Identify factors that facilitated or hindered ISO and CBO improvements, including USAID CIS management and capacity development assistance;
- e. Explore the sustainability of results after program end;
- f. Recommend improvements to the model; and
- g. Identify ISO and CBO capacity development needs and priorities going forward.

The ISC evaluation consisted of three overlapping stages, as depicted in the table below. This report is the fourth and final deliverable, *ISC Evaluation Report: Internal Strengthening for Change Summative Evaluation: Capturing ISO and CBO Results*, under Stage III, *Analyzing and Reporting*.

Table 1: Stages of the Evaluation

Stage	Description	Primary Deliverables
Stage I: Assessing CBO Capacity and Performance	1. Analyze IDA data	1. IDA Analytical Brief: "Capturing Organizational Improvements through the Lens of the Institutional Development Assessment."
	2. Conduct desk review and analyze ISO training delivery through CBO pre and post training evaluations	2. Training Delivery Analytical Brief: "ISO Training Delivery Brief"
	3. Refine evaluation approach in the inception report and collect and analyze data on CBOs' perspectives of ISC	3. CBO Analytical Report: "Internal Strengthening for Change: Capturing CBO Results"
Stage II: Assessing ISC Design / Management and ISO Capacity and Performance	Refine evaluation approach and assess ISC design and management and ISO capacity and performance	
Stage III: Analyzing and Reporting	Analysis and synthesis of all data; development of overall evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations and production of final evaluation report	4. ISC Evaluation Report: "Internal Strengthening for Change Summative Evaluation: Capturing ISO and CBO Results"

## **EVALUATION QUESTIONS**

The evaluation's main questions and sub-questions are set out below and are organized under the main themes of relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability.

### **RELEVANCE**

#### **1. To what extent was ISC relevant to the civil society context?**

- 1.1 To what extent was ISC designed to address the specific needs of the program's target group (small, primarily volunteer-run CBOs)?
- 1.2 To what extent were ISC core activities relevant to CBO needs and priorities, including the Societies Start-up Toolkit, improvement planning, strategic planning and mentoring topics?
- 1.3 How was ISC adapted to respond to findings that emerged from IDAs and to any changes that were observed in CBO capacity during the program?
- 1.4 To what extent were ISC core activities relevant to ISO needs and priorities, including but not limited to USAID CIS support in training/coaching, capacity building/mentoring on CBO thematic priorities and grant management?
- 1.5 How was ISC adapted to respond to findings from the Grant Management Assessment?

### **EFFECTIVENESS**

#### **2. To what extent did organizations improve capacity and performance?**

- 2.1 To what extent did CBOs improve capacity in self-identified priority areas?
- 2.2 With regard to improvements, what similarities and differences are evident among CBOs with limited assistance and involvement compared to CBOs with extended assistance and involvement?
- 2.3 What observations can be made about organizational performance related to improved capacity, including but not limited to achievements associated with implementation of grants?
- 2.4 What were considered most significant individual improvements that resulted from participation in ISC?
- 2.5 To what extent did NHF improve its grant management capacity?
- 2.6 For ISOs, what significant individual and organizational improvements resulted from participation in ISC?

#### **3. What factors affected improvements of capacity and performance?**

- 3.1 How satisfied were organizations with the quality of ISO-delivered short courses and mentoring?
- 3.2 What internal and external factors affected organizational ability to achieve improvements?

### **SUSTAINABILITY**

#### **4. What evidence suggests that benefits will be (or already are being) sustained after the end of organizations' involvement in ISC?**

- 4.1 What internal and external factors may affect CBO ability to sustain improvements?
- 4.2 What progress has been made in implementing improvement plans, independent of ISOs and/or USAID CIS?
- 4.3 What activities do organizations say they will continue regardless of ISO and/or USAID CIS support?
- 4.4 What do CBOs highlight as future capacity development priorities?
- 4.5 What internal and external factors may affect ISO ability to sustain improvements?
- 4.6 What do ISOs and Grant Management Assessment highlight as future capacity development priorities?

#### **5. To what extent did organizations strengthen their standing and respect among donors, peers and other stakeholders?**

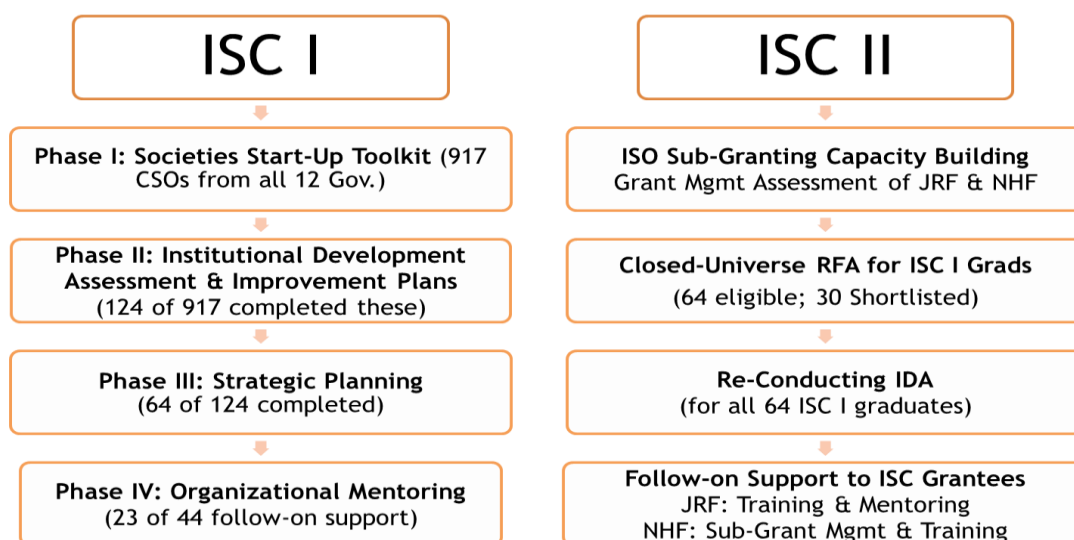
- 5.1. How have improvements affected CBO and ISO recognition, credibility and trust among other organizations and the local community?
- 5.2. How have improvements influenced CBO-donor interactions?
- 5.3. How have improvements influenced CBO leadership standing with local government/decision-makers?



# PROJECT BACKGROUND

Internal Strengthening for Change (ISC) was one of USAID CIS's flagship interventions within the field of capacity building, with a core aim of targeting nascent CBOs formed from January 2010 onwards. ISC was implemented in two stages over the course of April 2014 through May 2018 through collaboration between USAID CIS staff and three Intermediary Support Organizations (ISOs): the Noor Al-Hussein Foundation (NHF), the Jordan River Foundation (JRF), and the Al-Thoraya Studies Center (Al-Thoraya) who were selected through an open competition for a subcontract to provide capacity building services on behalf of USAID CIS. The first stage (ISC I) focused on supporting CBOs to understand and apply principles of effective CBO management and good governance through assessing organizational status, undertaking strategic planning, and developing strategic and organizational improvement plans. A total of 917 CBOs from across all 12 governorates participated in an introductory course to the Societies Start-Up Toolkit from which 124 conducted Institutional Development Assessments after which 64 CBOs "graduated" from the program with the development of strategic plans. Under the second stage (ISC II), USAID CIS, NHF, and JRF provided follow-on assistance and mentoring support to CBOs that "graduated" from ISC I, along with a competitive grant competition resulting in 18 subawards to support implementation of ISC I strategic plans.

Figure 1: ISC Stages



Phase	CIS Inputs	ISO deliverable	ISO
<b>ISC I</b>			
Pre-Launch	TOT for ISOs / Development of Toolkit	Co-design toolkit	NHF/JRF/ Al Thoria
Phase I: Societies Toolkit	Orientation /Societies Startup Training	Conducted Societies toolkit orientation and training	NHF/JRF/ Al Thoria
Phase II: Improvement Planning	IDA – IIP Training	Conducted IDAs	NHF/JRF
Phase III: Strategic Planning	Strategic Planning Training	Conducted Strategic planning training / Mentoring	NHF/JRF
Phase IV: Organizational Development Mentoring	Mentoring preparation sessions on topics	Completed mentoring on M&E/ Financial Systems/ HR/ Strategic Communication and Media Relations/Organizational management/Project management	NHF/JRF

Phase	CIS Inputs	ISO deliverable	ISO
<b>ISC II</b>			
Grants	Grant management pre-post assessment, training, mentoring and monitoring	Grant award for 18 CBOs + Grant Profiles	NHF
Training & Mentoring	TOTs 1- M&E 2- Procurement 3- Role of Civil Society in Advancing Change 4- Advocacy (JRF only) 5- Good Governance 6- Human Resource Management (NHF only)	Training and mentoring for CBOs	NHF/JRF

## EVALUATION METHODS & LIMITATIONS

*Table 2 Stakeholder Groups*

Stakeholder Group	Evaluation Instrument			
	Key Informant Interview	Group Interview	Focus Group Discussion	Survey
<b>CBOs who received grants</b>	18			
<b>CBOs who participated in 2 IDAs</b>			6	
<b>CBOs who participated in 1 IDA</b>				38
<b>ISO Staff</b>		4		
<b>CIS Staff</b>	1	1		
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>38</b>

**Sources of information** – This report builds on the document review for the three previous reports generated for this evaluation which included IDA packages, including IDAs and IIPs, ISC I and II RFA, ISC II RFA, ISC I assessments, ISC II SOW, the SOWs for each ISO whether for ISC phase I or II, grant management assessment for ISOs, capacity building curricula, and pre-and post- training evaluations, among others.

The document review also facilitated the design and development of the evaluation inception report, evaluation matrices and data collection tools. It constituted one of the main data sources during the evaluation analysis phase triangulating primary data collection findings with the project plans while taking into consideration the overall purpose of the evaluation.

In preparation for KIs and FGDs, the evaluation team requested that CBOs make ready copies of their Strategic Plans, Codes of Conduct, M&E Plans and Procurement Policies to show the team. This was done to verify that the tools existed and to guide discussions around the Spectrum of Change.

**Key Informant Interviews (KIs)** - KIs were conducted with heads and staff members of 18 of the 25 CBOs which received grants and one with a USAID CIS staff member.

Key informant interviews provided qualitative data to enable an in-depth understanding of the issues under consideration from the different stakeholders' perspectives. The in-depth interviews were guided by semi-structured discussion guides covering the evaluation topics as related to each stakeholder group. The KII guides were designed to preserve the potential for a relatively free-flowing conversation, while creating a standardized format to facilitate a reliable, comparative analysis of data pertaining to the evaluation questions for triangulation of information from multiple stakeholder perspectives. The KII sample was distributed as much as possible across the Program's geographic reach and across the ISOs assigned to each CBO. KIIs were chosen for this group in order to generate rich data on the CBOs that benefited from the full range of ISC programming.

*Table 3 KII Type and Number of Participants*

Type of key informant affiliation	Number		
	Total	Male	Female
<b>CBOs who received grants</b>	30	15	15
<b>CIS Staff</b>	1	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>

**3. Group Interviews** – Group interviews were implemented with USAID CIS staff and ISO staff. Data collected through group interviews was triangulated during the evaluation analysis phase to compare, analyze and explain project results, challenges and context limitations.

*Table 4 Group Interview Type and Number of Participants*

Type of group key informant	Number		
	Total	Male	Female
<b>ISO Staff</b>	12	5	7
<b>CIS Staff</b>	2	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>

**4. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)** – 6 FGDs were conducted with CBOS who completed 2 IDAs to explore in-depth qualitative issues. Two respondents were invited from 19 CBOs to participate in the FGDs. The evaluation team targeted the head of the CBO or a member of the board. FGDs were held in groups of 8-10 participants, allowing all participants the chance to have their opinions heard. The FGD sample was distributed across the Program's geographic reach and across the ISOs assigned to each CBO. Focus group discussions explored in-depth qualitative issues and captured the input of individuals from different organizations and technical backgrounds.

*Table 5 FGDs and Number of Participants*

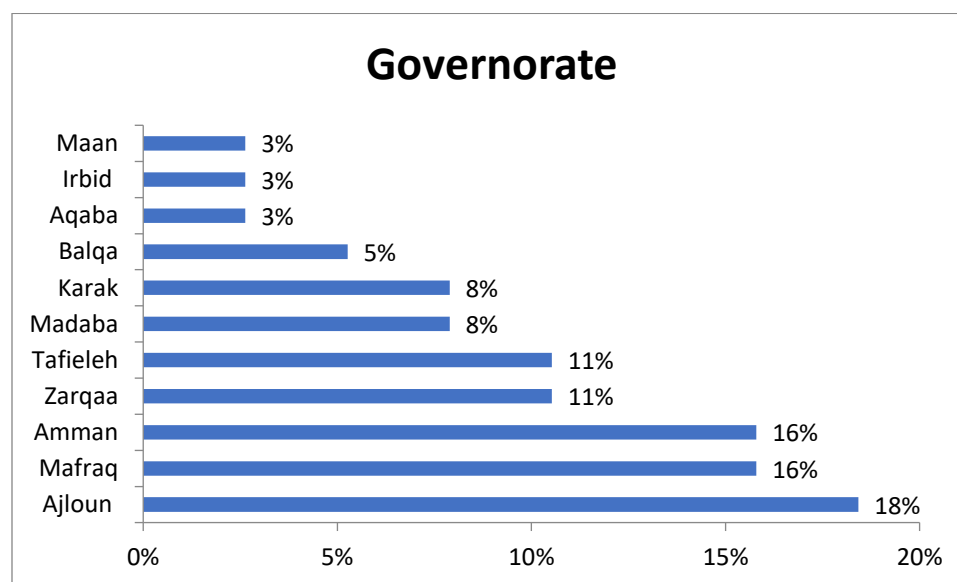
Type of FGD Participant	Number of FGDs	Number		
		Total	Male	Female
<b>CBOs who participated in 2 IDAs</b>	6	23	13	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>

**5. Survey** - A survey was conducted to explore the lowest-level results of the ISC program connected to Phase II of ISC I. 38 CBOs participated in the survey. Figure 2 below shows the geographical breakdown of the participating CBOs. 18% of respondents were from Ajloun, 16% were from each of Mafraq and Amman, 11% from each of Zarqa and Tafleeh, 8% from each of Karak and Madaba, 5% from Balqa and 3% from each of Ma'an, Irbid and Aqaba.

Table 6 Survey and Number of Participants

Type of FGD participant	Number of Surveys	Number		
		Total	Male	Female
CBOs who participated in I IDA	38	38	24	14
Total	38	38	24	14

Figure 2: Geographical Breakdown of Survey Respondents



## LIMITATIONS

Following are some of the limitations faced by the evaluation team:

- **Respondent Bias:** The results of the IDAs, as well as those of the Spectrum of Change, were self-reported by the CBOs, carrying the potential for respondent bias. To mitigate the impact of this limitation, the team combined more than one method of data collection to address research questions, including observational fieldwork.
- **Use of Deliverables:** While the evaluation team was largely able to verify the *availability* of tools, the design of the evaluation did not allow its members to determine the extent to which if, or how, CBOs were *implementing* the policies and procedures they reported on or *utilizing* the tools as reported. The evaluation team had brought this matter to the attention of the Technical Monitor in the early stages of the evaluation and inquired about the feasibility of going beyond qualitative data collection and carrying out a technical audit that would have seen the team engage with the CBOs over a longer period of time to assess tools and their usage and evaluate overall learning. Given the time limitations and the technical scope of this evaluation, CIS agreed that project documentation will be used as a secondary data source to validate findings as means for triangulation not as a technical audit.
- **Ability to Articulate Learning:** In many cases, CBOs faced a challenge in describing how their participation in the ISC Program impacted their institutional development and growth. This could be due to the time lapse between the evaluation and their participation in the program or the extent of their involvement in the various phases. Overall, many were not able to clearly respond to the evaluation team's probing around learning and evidence of change. Similarly, ISO staff did

not always consider their responses with the larger analytic framework of CSO strengthening and evaluation scope. In some cases, ISO staff recognized themselves as implementers of the ISC Program only and not also as recipients of CIS capacity building support, whereas USAID CIS staff referenced ISO performance and development for both.

## **FINDINGS**

### **RELEVANCE**

#### **I. To what extent was ISC relevant to the civil society context?**

##### **I.1 To what extent was ISC designed to address the specific needs of the program's target group (small, primarily volunteer-run CBOs)?**

#### **USAID CIS Understanding of CBO Needs**

Based on an open competition in late 2013, the ISC Program was implemented through three well-established Jordanian non-profit organizations whose specialization includes delivering training and mentoring services to other CSOs. The project was initially planned to last for a 24-month period (March 2014-February 2016) during which subcontractors reached out to local CSOs and implemented the following three phases under each of the three rounds of recruitment:

- Societies Start-up Toolkit Orientation Training
- IDA and IIP
- Strategic Planning

An in-house assessment conducted by USAID CIS confirmed the need for more direct support to CSOs following their completion of Phase III. As a result, the program designed a mentorship component for a select number of “committed” CSOs to focus on organizational development areas. In an attempt to continue the support for these organizations, ISC II was designed to provide an opportunity for the 64 organizations that successfully completed the Strategic Planning phase of the program to compete for grants in the range of 10k to implement elements of their strategic plan developed under ISC I.

According to the USAID CIS team, ISC was built on USAID FHI 360's previous experience and ongoing communication with CBOs through the USAID/Jordan Civil Society Program (CSP) and CBO Technical Assistance Program (CBO TAP) implemented 2008-13. The Societies Startup Toolkit was a product of these programs. The literature review also confirmed that USAID CIS identified and prioritized areas of focus for capacity development programming through extensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, including CSOs from across Jordan and USAID implementers, other relevant programs, and other resources that highlighted needs, gaps and opportunities. These resources included results from two surveys taken at the start of USAID CIS in 2013 - one of CSO stakeholders and another of USAID implementing partners to capture perspectives on capacity gaps and needs - as well as key insights from the Jordan Civil Society Program, USAID/Jordan's “first generation” civil society support programming that led to USAID CIS.<sup>2</sup>

#### **ISO Understanding of CBO Needs**

According to NHF, JRF and AI Thoraya, their understanding of the Jordanian context and CBO capacities and needs were helpful to ISC during the CBO selection process and the development of project activities

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<sup>2</sup> USAID CIS CD and Context Snapshot, p. 7.

and trainings. The three organizations are well-established and are relatively larger CSOs that have a long history of working with and supporting the local civil society scene in Jordan.

CBOs that participated in FGDs and KIs consistently stated that the ISOs understood the reality of their contexts and the challenges that faced them. The ISOs were reported to be flexible, responding to CBO requests to hold meetings in the evenings or on weekends for example, and giving them ample notice for trainings and meetings. CBOs also found ISOs to be patient and cooperative while providing feedback and suggesting amendments to documents. Some CBOs found the level of detail the ISOs demanded or the lengths they went to in order to perfect the CBOs' policies and/or audit the technical and financial aspects of grants exhausting, but most (particularly those who received grants) agreed that in the end, these measures enriched the learning experience.

In addition, JRF and NHF contributions were key to the design of the ISC II Request for Applications which ensured that the RFA was grounded in the context in which CBOs were operating; that the goals of the RFA should be simple and easily understood; that CBOs would be required to consult with their membership on the design of the proposal prior to submitting; and that the application form be in line with CBO capacities.

### **ISC Approach**

JRF reported that the ISC approach was relevant and responsive to CBO needs and that it was unique because, instead of simply handing the CBOs a grant, overseeing its implementation and moving on as most donors do, ISC was building capacity and prioritizing the documentation and institutionalization of learning.

Through the evaluation team's discussions with USAID CIS, ISOs and CBOs, it became clear that their expectations of CBO commitment were framed by their understanding of the nascent nature of the organizations the Program was meant to target, and the context in which the target group operated. USAID CIS and the three intermediary organizations understood the limitations that civil society in Jordan suffers from which had been confirmed by various studies and assessments. While the Program was demand-driven, the implementers, including the ISOs, exhibited clear understanding of the challenges that newly established CBOs face which in turn were expected to affect the small organizations' commitment to the Program. The appreciation of the CBOs internal and external limitations also managed to temper the implementers' own expectations from the Program. For example, according to JRF, it was "a great achievement" that CBO leaderships would take a day off to attend trainings or "put up" with JRF's regular mentorship visits. They reported some "resistance" from CBOs to the participation in the IDA and that CBOs needed to be "incentivized" to attend trainings. Al Thoraya reported that the first half hour of any of the Toolkit trainings, which were delivered to the larger group of the 900 CBOs, was spent persuading the CBOs to stay for the duration of the training without being reimbursed for transportation costs, a precedent which had been set by other development programs. This was not the case for those organizations which continued through the duration of the follow-on phases (IDAs, strategic planning, mentoring, etc.).

The Program understood the potential for a lack of commitment on the part of organizations due to their internal weaknesses and the need to secure funding, and therefore made commitment one of the criteria for moving from one phase to the next.

According to respondents including representatives of ISOs, CBOs and USAID CIS, there does appear to have been room for improvement to the Program's overall approach. CBOs expressed their opinion that while the Program was responsive to their needs, certain components of the toolkit training, IDA and trainings were not squarely aligned with their needs and capacity. Also, and while USAID CIS and ISOs reported that they co-developed the training content, the ISOs believed that simplifying some of the tools or training materials would have rendered the support better suited to the realities of CBOs. In addition,

ISOs recommended reimbursing the CBOs for costs incurred (transportation or time away from work) especially for the smaller ones with limited resources that the Program targeted. (See Question 3.1 for further information)

### **Participatory Approach**

According to USAID CIS and the ISOs, the Strategic Planning and Good Governance training and mentorship engaged a variety of stakeholders, including Board members and, in the case of Strategic Planning, local communities. CBOs reported that the IDA and IIP processes also utilized a participatory approach, requiring the participation of CBO members, Boards of Directors, leaderships and staff.

*"Unfortunately, General Assemblies believe that when you receive a 10,000 JD grant, all the money goes into your treasury for you to use as you like."*  
Chairperson, Al Shobak Society

According to JRF, including parties beyond the Boards of Directors allowed for greater transparency and ownership, as Boards - Chairpersons in particular - were usually the only ones involved in decision-making in any CBO.

*"The manner in which we identified the problem which our projects have solved was a first for the majority of the associations. We conducted consultation sessions with the local community members, board members, general assembly members as well as the potential beneficiaries of the projects."* Mustafa Shdeifat, Manshyet Beni Hassan Charitable Association

### **Age of the targeted CBO**

As mentioned earlier, ISC's main target group was nascent organizations across Jordan. Some of these CBOs reported that the Program was relevant because it began as they were just starting up, and other older, more established CBOs found that it helped them better organize and institutionalize their work (see Question 2.3 below).

## **1.2 To what extent were ISC core activities relevant to CBO needs and priorities, including the Societies Start-up Toolkit, improvement planning, strategic planning and mentoring topics?**

### **Societies Start-Up Toolkit**

USAID CIS explained that the toolkit was developed to support start-up CBOs as few resources exist. In addition, the mandate of the Ministry of Social Development to provide is limited by resources and capacities; CBOs agree with this sentiment. The Toolkit was meant to be a resource that CBOs could have on hand and refer to whenever necessary. CBOs received a two-day training on the Toolkit, including a classroom tutorial on how to navigate the CD-ROM using a computer, and it was up to them whether they wanted to adopt some, all or none of it. The Toolkit was aimed at newly-established CBOs, who usually lack the basic experience required to put in place management, financial and programmatic processes and procedures.

*"There was one CBO that received the Toolkit when USAID CIS was passing it out at an orientation about the project. They hadn't even received training on it, but they took it and began implementing."* – Fatima Abu Kaff, USAID CIS

According to Al Thoraya and some of the CBOs, the Toolkit could have been simpler and more relevant to the reality of small CBOs whose Boards of Directors have varying, and usually very basic, capacities. Despite the online tutorial provided during the second day of the toolkit training, some CBOs found the accompanying CD difficult to use as they had limited computer skills; a finding confirmed by USAID CIS's own assessment of the Program. USAID CIS reports that it is updating the content of the toolkit based on lessons learned under the ISC.

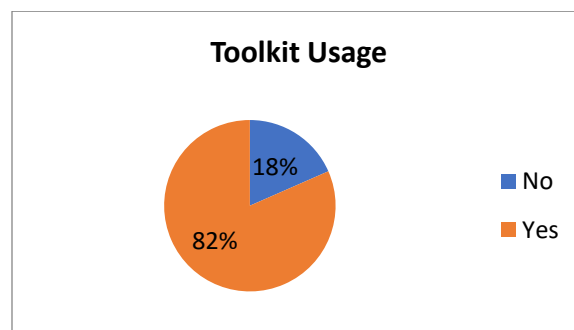
In KIs with CBOs who completed ISC II, respondents found it difficult to recall the details of specific trainings or sessions that they had participated in, whether under Phase I or otherwise. This, to some

extent, is understandable considering that some trainings took place over two years ago and the participants may have not been the same as those interviewed. Respondents sometimes referred to project activities by the venues they were held in or the length of time it took to travel to them (See *Effectiveness* for more information.). This group did not really recall the Toolkit or the ways in which they might have benefited from it. As explained in upcoming sections of this document, in discussions with them, the ISC II group was mostly focused on project deliverables and grant management.

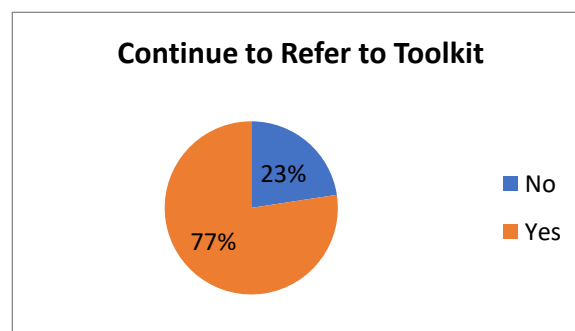
Some participants in FGDs, however, did remember the Toolkit. Those who found it useful agreed with USAID CIS that it was really up to the CBO itself whether it chose to benefit from it or not.

The group who best recalled the Toolkit consisted of the 38 CBOs who participated in Phase II (conducting Institutional Development Assessments) of ISC I. This group completed fewer phases and received much less capacity building than the other two. Therefore, to them, ISC was mostly centred around the Toolkit. Of the 82% of survey respondents who had ever used it, 77% reported that they still continued to use or refer to it (see Figure 4, below) and that it was relevant to their work. Of those, 33% found it useful for planning, 17% for financial purposes and 12.5% for training.

**Figure 3: Toolkit Usage among Survey Respondents**



**Figure 4: Continue to Refer to Toolkit among Survey Respondents**



### **Improvement Planning**

According to JRF and NHF, the IDAs and IIPs were useful tools that helped the ISOs understand the situation of the individual CBOs and identify means of support and improvement. At the same time, the ISO respondents emphasized the self-assessment nature of the IDA and the absence of third party verification. By definition, the IDA is an organization development tool that allows organizations to reflect on their own capacity. "It is not an evaluation tool," one respondent said. Also, IIPs do not include action plans. According to an ISO respondent, there is no way for verifying if the CBOs have implemented improvements contained in the IIPs.



The ISO teams also believe that the IDA could have been made shorter, and simplified, as the questions were sometimes difficult for the CBOs to understand and therefore required additional time for the facilitator to explain.

*“With subsequent IDAs, CBOs understood the questions, and themselves, better.”*  
Mohammed Zoubi, NHF

Additionally, the ISO staff explained that, as IDA facilitators, they did not always have the answers to the questions that the CBOs asked, because not all the areas covered by the IDA were within their areas of expertise. They found the Checklist useful in this regard, as it helped them understand what was needed to fulfil the requirements of Good Governance. They also reported “resistance” from the CBOs towards filling in the IDA, explaining that one of them once took up 8 hours of their time. This resistance decreased by the third IDA, which indicates that CBOs became used to filling them in and may have begun to realize the benefits of the Tool for their CBO.

In the KIIs and FGDs, some CBOs, particularly those in the FGDs, recalled the IDA and IIP processes, but most CBOs could not recount the specifics. Rather, even for CBOs that underwent 3 IDAs, the assessment and planning processes were grouped together with other types of training and support. This does not mean that CBOs were unable to benefit from or endorse the learning imparted by the Program, but sheds light on difficulties CBOs had in articulating the various phases of the Program or their components.

In the KIIs, only two CBOs mentioned the IDA and the IIP and linked them to project outputs and outcomes without being prompted to do so. The CBO that seemed the most impressed with the tool had been newly established when it joined ISC. The Chairperson of that CBO reported that she had been searching for something to guide her and that she found the IDA to be comprehensive and hoped that if it were updated or further developed in the future, she could have access to a copy.

All 38 survey respondents participated in at least one round of IDA. Of those, only 9% found the IDA not to be useful. Of those who found it useful, only 11% disagreed or strongly disagreed that the tool provided an accurate measure of their capacity.

One of the main drawbacks of the IDA tool as reported by the ISOs was that, while some IDA questions probed *existence* of capacity and others probed *utilization* of capacity, the IDA, as a self-assessment tool, does not verify quality of policies, procedures, etc. However, subsequent ISO mentoring addressed gaps and supported CBOs in improving their systems. Respondents from one of the three ISOs said there are questions in the tool that are irrelevant to the context in which Jordanian CBOs operate and are therefore not useful to consider or work on. Another drawback was that the tool depended on the self-reporting of the CBOs and most often supporting evidence was not requested. As reported by the evaluation team in the IDA Analytical Brief (see *ANNEX I: IDA Analytical Brief: Capturing Organizational Improvements through the Lens of the Institutional Development Assessment*), the scores of the IDAs were consistently high, whether due to the facilitation process or because CBOs either did not understand the complexity of the indicators or because they wanted to appease the trainers. From discussions with the CBOs, ISOs and USAID CIS, it was most likely the case that the CBOs did not understand the level or complexity of the indicators and had therefore allocated themselves higher scores than they should have (see also *Effectiveness* below).

### **Strategic Planning**

Of the 25 CBOs who participated in three rounds of IDA, only 32% reported having a comprehensive strategic plan in the initial IDA. By the third IDA, all 25 CBOs reported having a strategic plan that contained all the necessary elements.

Of all the training and capacity building provided to CBOs by USAID CIS and ISOs throughout ISC, one of the main areas where CBOs in both KIIs and FGDs agreed that the support was fundamental was the

Strategic Planning training and mentoring. Another area which received high praise from this group was the Procurement Fundamentals training, followed by HR.

USAID CIS agreed that the Strategic Planning was a vital area of support. Their view was that CBOs often write down word-for-word the objectives suggested to them by MoSD when they establish themselves, and that the “objectives” often resemble activities rather than strategic objectives. JRF concurred, reporting that many times, CBOs were unsure why they were established in the first place. They also found the strategic planning to be the most useful component of the Program. In KIIs, both JRF and NHF used almost the exact same wording to describe how this type of support was the first of its kind in the Kingdom.

### **Mentoring**

According to the USAID CIS team, the ISC I Final Report and the ISC II RFP, Phase III of ISC I included training and mentoring on strategic planning, and Phase IV aimed at organizational development mentoring. Phase IV of ISC I was an add-on to the project based on internal assessment and meetings with CBOs who requested follow-on support which was provided to them in the form of CBO-specific mentorship. According to the ISC I Final Report, CBOs produced HR & financial manuals, project proposals, M&E plans, detailed annual plans and detailed project action plans in this phase.

*“The strategic plan has put us on the right track. Our vision, mission, goals and programs were specifically identified.”*  
Chairperson, Chechen Charitable Society for Women

In ISC II, three days of mentorship followed one day of training on each of the five topics covered during the phase; Procurement Fundamentals, Budgeting for Proposals, Monitoring and Evaluation Basics, Good Governance, The Role of Civil Society in Advancing Change and Introduction to Advocacy.

The mentoring was rated highly by the CBOs in KIIs and FDGs. They viewed “mentoring” and “training” as the two types of capacity building they received and often compared them during interviews. Most found the mentoring format of delivering support to be more helpful than training sessions because it allowed for targeted, individualized attention. Some CBOs, however, found that attending training sessions with other CBOs was more useful, as it allowed them to exchange ideas and share experiences.

*“The Mentorship allowed us to build a stronger relationship with the trainer; it was more relaxing and the trainer was not under stress.”*  
Coordinator, Be’r al Sabe’ Goodwill Society

JRF reported that the mentoring was an important and effective part of ISC, as it allowed the CBOs to put into practice what they had learned in the training and to benefit from regular follow up by the ISOs. It also enabled the ISOs to take into account the individual needs of the different CBOs, which was especially important as the technical capacity of the leaderships varied greatly from one CBO to another, an issue which both ISOs and CBOs felt affected the relative ability of CBOs to benefit from the trainings as well as the quality of trainings.

### **I.3 How was ISC adapted to respond to findings that emerged from IDAs and to any changes that were observed in CBO capacity during the program?**

#### **Responding to Institutional Development Assessment**

As mentioned previously, Phase IV of ISC I was developed based on CBO feedback after the first round of IDA.

According to USAID CIS, the trainings that CBOs received were based on the gaps identified in the IDAs. A few CBOs were able to give specific examples of how the identification of gaps in the IDA led to ISO suggestions for specific trainings such as Procurement Fundamentals and Human Resources, for example.

CBOs feedback on the trainings offered was overwhelmingly positive. However, one CBO found that the trainings did not entirely respond to the priorities identified in the IDA. This CBO believed that the trainings were pre-planned and did not take into account the context of the CBO or the geographical area that it was operating in. Another CBO reported that a list of training topics was given to its team and that they were asked to choose which of them they wanted. This could mean that the trainings were rather generic and did not differentiate instruction or assessment of CBO capacities, an assumption that seems appropriate based on feedback from ISOs and CBOs as to the different levels of knowledge among the participants in a single training (see Question 3.1). However, USAID CIS was aware of this limitation and in turn added the mentoring component to ISC I and additional training opportunities in ISC II. This follow up support provided by the Mentorship component helped address this shortcoming by individualizing and personalizing the capacity building given by the ISOs to the CBOs.

### **Responding to Changes in CBO Capacity**

According to USAID CIS and the ISC II RFP, ISC II was built on the success of ISC I and the improvements in CBO capacity as observed by the ISOs and USAID CIS. For example, the grants were based on the strategic plans that were developed by the CBOs in ISC I. The goal was to provide an opportunity to support them to build on the objectives, missions and plans that they had set.

### **1.4 To what extent were ISC core activities relevant to ISO needs and priorities, including but not limited to USAID CIS support in training/coaching, capacity building/mentoring on CBO thematic priorities and grant management?**

Both NHF and JRF reported that ISC was relevant to their mandates in building the capacity of CBOs and that the program could help the ISOs to become more effective. Although the ISC was primarily a subcontracting mechanism for service delivery, it provided opportunities for the ISOs to further enhance their staff capacities in training delivery, in curricula development, and in grant management, however it did not include a component to link this work to the strategic planning of the ISOs.

Respondents from the three ISOs saw the Program more geared to support CBOs than to support their own needs as training service providers. NHF representatives were clear that they saw themselves more as implementers rather than on the receiving end of assistance. Yet, the Program according to them met some of their needs especially with regards to building the organizations' grant management capacity

USAID CIS reported the extent to which it provided capacity building support to the ISOs, including joint development of the Toolkit curriculum and strategic planning curriculum, as well as training of trainers and refresher sessions on mentoring, M&E, advocacy, and strategic planning. USAID CIS believes that given the demonstrated need among CBOs for this type of Program, then it would naturally mean that the 3 ISOs were also in need of it, as they were the entities that were going to work directly with the CBOs. The USAID CIS team reported that, while the Program did build somewhat on ISO expertise, the ISC approach of assessment, improvement planning, reassessment, training and mentorship was entirely new to the ISOs and very relevant to their needs.

However, the respondents from the three ISOs were not able to articulate how the program supported their organizations to become more targeted or strategic in their support to CSOs and in fact they exhibited clear resignation as to their dependency on donors to determine development agendas and provide funding opportunities. The level of engagement of senior leadership at NHF and JRF differed: King Hussein Foundation's executive director embraced the program as an opportunity for further

strengthening NHF's position as an ISO, delegating to NHF staff to implement with autonomy; whereas JRF underwent a change in leadership and organizational restructuring during the ISC implementation which impacted the extent to which JRF's ISC staff were able to institutionalize learning.

Although senior ISO leadership did not participate in the evaluation, subsequent public statements during the ISC II Graduation and the USAID MEL Conference provided insights into how both JRF and NHF benefited from the program.

### **1.5 How was ISC adapted to respond to findings from the Grant Management Assessment?**

JRF and NHF underwent a Grants Management Assessment to determine their readiness and capacity to administer ISC grants. In the Baseline, out of a possible 144 score, JRF received a score of 69 but ultimately did not receive an award for the grant management component of ISC II. NHF received a 93 in the baseline and 134 in the endline. The NHF endline report mentioned that the ISO had responded positively to almost all suggestions for improvement in staff capacity, grant program design, M&E, grant solicitation and selection and award administration and systems. The ISO had developed tools and processes to fill gaps highlighted in the assessment. NHF respondents said that their organization benefited greatly from the Grant Management Assessment process. They said it helped them identify areas of weaknesses related to the management of grants and initiated the learning process that saw them through various activities to address these weaknesses.

## **EFFECTIVENESS**

### **CBO Understanding of the Program**

All CBOs understood the capacity-building goal of the Program, though some CBOs who did not receive grants stated that they had understood that they would receive funding at the end of the Program, and that was why they had committed for as long as they did (please see Question 3.1 for more information).

As stated above, most CBOs did not differentiate between the stages of the Program. For most of those who received grants, their general understanding was that the Program was implemented in two distinct phases, the training and the grant. However, there were a handful of CBOs in this group who were able to articulate the broader program framework, explaining the process and the need to demonstrate commitment in order to move from one stage to the next. This group also felt that any learning or development they achieved depended entirely on their own willingness and eagerness to learn, a viewpoint that was corroborated by USAID CIS.

## **2. To what extent did organizations improve capacity and performance?**

### **2.1 To what extent did CBOs improve capacity in self-identified priority areas?**

CBOs and ISOs reported that, before ISC, the leaderships of some CBOs had *heard* of Strategic Planning, Good Governance and Financial Management as ideas or concepts, but hadn't understood what they meant, why they were important for CBOs and/or how they could be operationalized. All CBOs reported improvement after participation in ISC, particularly where regarding strategic planning and procurement processes. Improvement was also reported in human resources policies and, to a lesser extent, good governance. The area where CBOs reported the least improvement was M&E.

Following is an explanation of the evaluation team's findings:

### **1 Round IDA**

Seventy-four percent of survey respondents reported that they had implemented the priorities they identified in their IIPs. Of those, 25% reported that they had made changes in planning, 11% in financial processes and 7% each in community-based projects, volunteer networks and the CBO's mission and vision.

## **2 and 3 Rounds IDA**

- **Spectrum of Change**

In the FGDs and KIs, the evaluation team utilized a Spectrum of Change tool to guide discussions as to which development stage each of the 34 CBOs that participated in the exercise self-identified to be in regarding strategic planning, procurement processes, good governance and M&E. The spectrum sees CBOs progress along various stages of increased capacity and responsibility, moving along a continuum of development that starts with awareness and matures in sustainability and ownership/agency (see Figure 5 below). Details on each focus area are found in the sections below:

**Figure 5: Number of CBOs Self Reporting on Focus Areas within Spectrum of Change**

Area/ Spectrum of Change	Awareness	Development and Acquisition of Tools	Application of Learning/Use of Tools	Continued Use and Sustainability	Total
Strategic Planning	5	10	3	16	34
Good Governance	2	2	16	14	34
M&E	3	12	6	13	34
Financial Management/ Procurement	1	2	10	21	34

- **Institutional Development Assessment**

The Program utilized the Institutional Development Assessment (IDA), a CBO self-assessment process that assisted CBOs to identify priorities and plan capacity development activities under four functional areas: Management Systems, Financial Resources, External Relations and Programs/Services Delivery. USAID CIS instructed the evaluation team to analyse results according to 4 focus areas of the Program: Strategic Planning, Financial Management, Good Governance and M&E. The evaluation team analysed the results of the rounds of IDAs completed by 25 CBOs (see *ANNEX 1: IDA Analytical Brief: Capturing Organizational Improvements through the Lens of the Institutional Development Assessment*) and used that information to validate the findings of the Spectrum of Change.

As mentioned in the *Limitations* section above, the IDA and the Spectrum of Change are both self-reported by the CBOs. Beyond requesting evidence that the CBO was in possession of the tool, the evaluation team did not have sufficient time to verify whether or not CBOs had in effect achieved the *learning* or *change* they reported.

## **Training and Mentoring Processes and Expected Results**

According to USAID CIS and project documents, during ISC II, CBOs received one day of training, followed by three days of mentoring on each of five capacity building topics: Procurement Fundamentals, M&E Basics, Good Governance, The Role of Civil Society in Advancing Change, Human Resources Management (NHF only) and Introduction to Advocacy (JRF only). The mentoring was expected to result in a set of deliverables. Following the second mentoring visit, the ISO facilitators were to share the deliverable from each CBO with USAID CIS for review and approval. Once USAID CIS approval was secured, the ISOs were to proceed with the third and final visit to the CBO to incorporate the deliverables within the CBO mandate and ensure that they were shared amongst all members of the CBO. At the end of the third visit, the CBOs would sign a certificate of completion as proof that the mentoring was complete and that the deliverable had reached the CBO.

## Strategic Planning

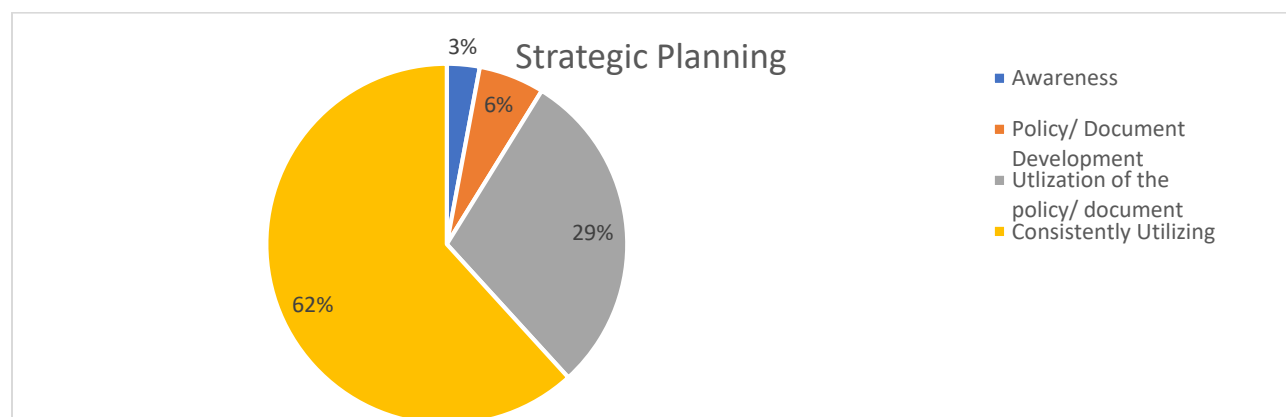
The required deliverable for the mentoring phase of the Strategic Planning was an updated Strategic Plan including the CBO's main goals, as well as the work that had been completed during the ISC II program. As mentioned previously, strategic plans were developed through consultation meetings with relevant stakeholders.

USAID CIS, the ISOs and CBOs who participated in FGDs and KIIs reported that CBOs did not initially have strategic plans or clear strategic objectives. This information is validated to a large extent by the first round of IDAs, which revealed that 68% of the 25 CBOs did not have a comprehensive strategic plan. Interestingly, though USAID CIS, ISOs and CBOs agreed that CBOs did not have missions and visions to begin with, the results of the first IDA revealed that 96% of the CBOs indicated that they had a clear mission and vision that were known to all CBO members and/or staff. This can be explained by the fact that in KIIs and FGDs, many CBOs reported not knowing what missions and/or visions were before ISC, the differences between them or how they influenced the strategic planning of an organization, which means they would have had difficulty understanding the complexity of the IDA indicator and therefore reporting on it.

According to the USAID CIS team and the ISC I Report, under ISC I, 64 CBOs produced strategic plans including a mission, vision, values, main programs, objectives for each program, and a work plan. In ISC II, 25 out of 64 updated their strategic plans with ISO and USAID CIS support. In order to assess levels of improvement and the use of the strategic plans, CIS developed an assessment tool that was used by ISOs twice for each of the 25 CBOs, in the early stages of the CBO implementation and after the CBOs completed all Program interventions. The assessment tool gave an indication of the degree to which the CBOs had achieved the activities mentioned in their plans.

In the Spectrum of Change exercise, 62% of the 34 CBOs who participated in KIIs and FGDs self-identified as being in the *Continued Use and Sustainability* phase, 29% reported being in the *Application of Learning/Use of Tools* phase, 6% were in the *Development and Acquisition of Tools* phase and 3% in the *Awareness* phase. CBOs reported that their strategic plans had been adopted by their Boards and General Assemblies and that they referred to them on a regular basis. Five CBOs reported that the three-year plans they had developed with ISC had ended, and that they had developed and adopted new ones. Both the CBOs and USAID CIS reported that having strategic plans has supported CBOs to become more mission-driven and to build better relationships with local governments and communities (see Question 2.43 for further information).

*"We are proud that we all have strategic plans which include our visions, missions, objectives, and programs, together with an action plan that [is] our road map for the future." Ain Al Basha Charitable Association*





## Financial Management / Procurement

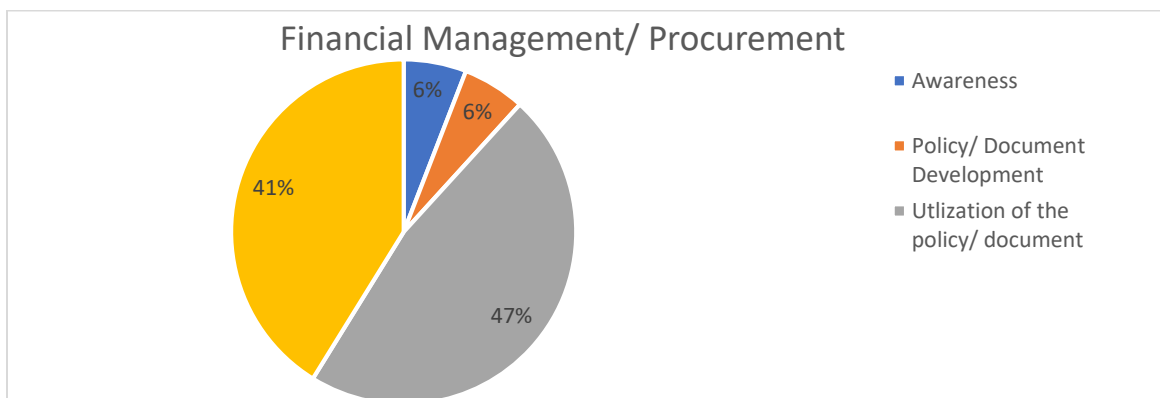
The required deliverable for Procurement Training was the Policies and Procedures document. It was meant to be a simple, adaptable, applicable policy tailored for each CBO based on their internal policies and procurement needs. Twenty-five CBOs signed the certificate of completion, indicating that they had a Procurement Policies and Procedures document. Nine of the 25 CBOs (36%) who signed certificates of completion sent proof to CIS that they were utilizing their policies. A few other CBOs had received approval on their policies by their Boards of Directors, but still required the approval of their General Assemblies in order to officially use them.

USAID CIS reported that there had not been much capacity building support on Financial Management given to CBOs under ISC and that they didn't expect much improvement in that regard. However, the CBOs found the development of Procurement Policies and Procedures to be extremely helpful. Many reported documenting procurement procedures, developing authority matrixes, preparing purchase orders, dividing up roles and responsibilities to avoid conflicts of interest, forming procurement committees and requesting three offers for goods and services when they hadn't before.

*"[The] Procurement Policies became our reference in purchasing any tools or materials for the association"* Abd Al Hameed Abu Hattab, Chairperson of Ain Al Basha Charitable Association

In KIs and FDGs, 41% of the 34 CBOs self-identified as being in the *Continued Use and Sustainability* phase, 47% reported being in the *Application of Learning/Use of Tools* phase, and 6% in each of the *Development* and *Acquisition of Tools* and *Awareness* phases.

The slightly higher result of those CBOs that self-reported as being in the *Continued Use* phase - most of whom could articulate to the evaluation team *why* they were in that phase - vs those who sent proof of utilization to USAID CIS could mean that the CBOs who were awaiting the approval of their General Assemblies had received it by the time they met with the evaluation team or that more CBOs had begun using their policies.



## Good Governance

ISOs and CBOs reported that there was a real need for capacity building on Good Governance, with many mentioning that there were a number of CBOs that were shut down every year due to corruption.

In the first round of IDA, 68% of CBOs indicated that they had a clear and transparent organizational structure and 52% of CBOs reported that the Board and staff had written policies requiring integrity, ethical behaviour and transparency of the CBO's board members. By the third round of IDA, the number of CBOs that had a written policy requiring integrity, ethical behaviour and transparency of their staff and board members had increased by 92% and the number of organizations who had worked towards having a clear and transparent organizational structure had increased by 47%.

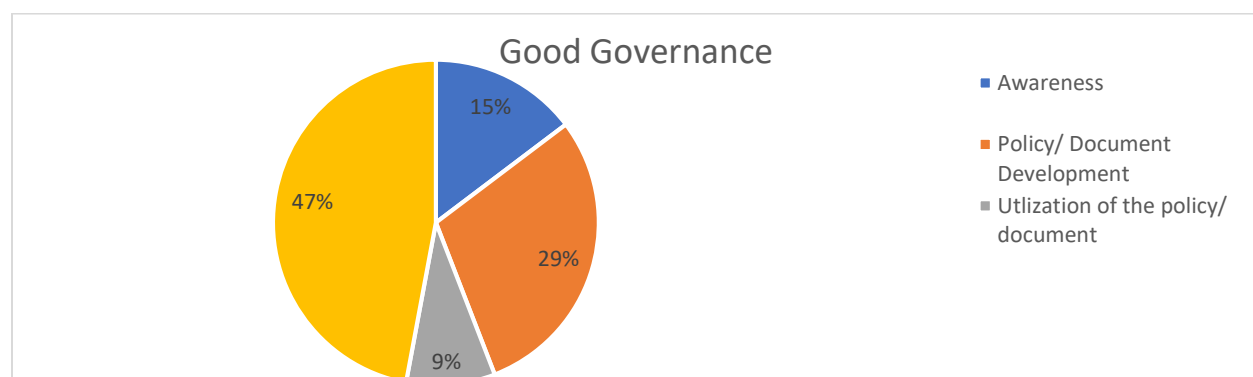
The deliverables for this component included pre- and post- governance checklists, governance plans signed by CBO board members and three or four achievable activities that CBOs would implement and base their final reports on. 25 CBOs conducted pre- and post- governance checklists, 6 months apart, to measure how well they incorporated good governance practices according to Good Governance Plans they had set. All 25 CBOs completed the mentoring and signed the certificate of completion.

CBOs in FGDs and KIIs reported that they had done some or all of the following: developed Codes of Conduct and organizational charts; begun to understand and implement conflict of interest policies; set clear criteria for beneficiary support; developed meeting agendas and minutes of Board meetings; divided roles and responsibilities among Board members and formed Board committees for different functions. One CBO reported that they also had their volunteers read and sign their Code of Conduct.

*"As an association, we managed to hold a Board of Directors' meeting, announce the inclusion of good governance practices into the association, add this change to its Bylaws and inform the Ministry of Social Development about this change in a formal letter."*  
Mahmoud Elwan, Chairperson of Al Beira Charitable Association.

According to USAID CIS, one of the Good Governance mentors had reported a difference between ISC I and ISC II in that by ISC II, the CBOs had taken the lead role in the development and documentation of materials related to Good Governance. However, USAID CIS believed that the level of *implementation* of Good Governance concepts and approaches would take time, as they had proven difficult even for larger, older, civil society organizations to fully adhere to.

The results of the Spectrum of Change seemed to concur with USAID CIS's point of view. Forty-seven percent of the 34 CBOs who participated in KIIs and FGDs self-identified as being in the *Continued Use and Sustainability* phase and only 9% were in the *Application of Learning/Use of Tools* phase. Twenty-nine percent were in the *Development and Acquisition of Tools* phase and 15% still in the *Awareness* phase (the highest percentage reported in *Awareness* among the four focus areas), indicating that while CBOs had received training on Good Governance, developed some of the necessary tools and took measures to implement them, slightly over half of them (53%) did not believe that they were yet fully operational or sustainable.



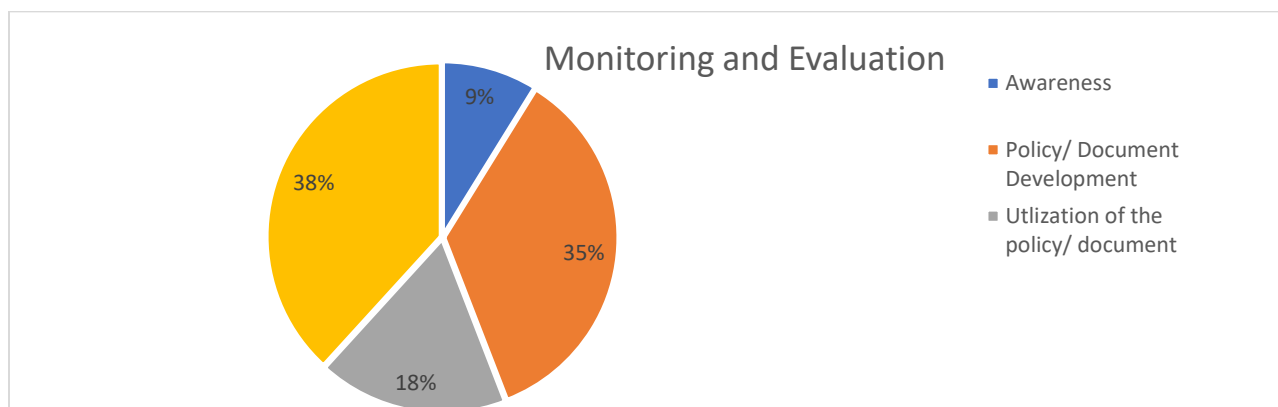
## M&E

According to project documents, 25 CBOs submitted M&E plans which they had developed with the support of the ISOs during the mentoring period. 18 of the 25 built their M&E plan based on the projects they were assigned to implement through the ISC II grant and provided Monthly reporting to ISOs using their Indicators



While the results of the third IDA showed that all CBOs reported having clear, documented and ongoing project monitoring systems in place and adequate systems to evaluate the short-term and long-term results of their own activities and programs, in both FGDs and KIIs, CBOs associated M&E with donor projects rather than with their ongoing programs and activities, with most CBOs mentioning that there was no real reason to develop M&E plans as they would change according to the requirements of the specific donor. CBOs appeared to believe that Codes of Conduct and Procurement Manuals were important for transparency and accountability, but did not tie in M&E or allocate it the same level of importance. Only one CBO mentioned that they conducted regular evaluation through the use of pre- and post- assessments, before and after activities. According to JRF, M&E was more “abstract” for CBOs, than say, Financial Management, which was directly related to funding and donors and offered tangible improvements. The ISO was referring to the novel nature of the subject area that the CBOs had not been exposed to earlier, and their ability to more easily connect the topic of financial management to their activities as opposed to how M&E related to their work.

Thirty-eight percent of the 34 CBOs who participated in KIIs and FGDs self-identified as being in the *Continued Use and Sustainability* phase for M&E on the Spectrum of Change, the lowest percentage reported in *Continued Use* among the four areas. Eighteen percent were in the *Application of Learning/Use of Tools* phase, 35% reported being in the *Development and Acquisition of Tools* phase, the highest percentage among the four areas and 9% in the *Awareness* phase.



While at first look it may seem as though CBOs self-reported on the Spectrum of Change to be in the *Continued Use and Sustainability* phases more often than they realistically could be, a deeper look at the findings depicts that the Spectrum of Change and the discussions with USAID CIS, CBOs and ISOs are relatively consistent. While 91% and 88% of CBOs reported “Consistently Using” and “Utilizing” strategic planning and procurement policy tools – which all data sources clearly show to be the main areas of improvement - only 56% reported the same for Good Governance. Fewer organizations were able to show the evaluation team proof of their good governance deliverables than those of strategic planning and procurement, and all data sources pointed to the fact that Good Governance takes time and effort to achieve. The percentage of CBOs reporting being in the Awareness phase is highest in Good Governance. This is validated by the CBOs’ statements in the FGDs and KIIs that they believe there is still much they don’t know or understand about Good Governance.

M&E findings on the Spectrum of Change are also consistent with discussions with USAID CIS, ISOs and CBOs. The percentage of CBOs reporting “Consistently Using” and “Utilizing” M&E tools is the same as that of Good Governance – 56%. However, 35% report that they are still in the process of policy development. This is consistent with the evaluation team’s discussions with the CBOs, where they reported that they knew about M&E and in fact had implemented M&E plans in their grants under ISC, but that they would have to develop different plans for different projects and donors.

## Ownership of Deliverables

It is worth noting that during KIIs, the CBOs sometimes used language indicating that they did not fully “own” their deliverables. For example, a few CBOs mentioned that they had to check with their ISO to confirm if they had actually developed a certain deliverable. A handful of CBOs did not have their deliverables readily available and needed to go back to emails from the ISO to find them, and still others were waiting for the final versions of their deliverables to be sent from JRF or NHF.

The finalization of deliverables as described by the CBOs seems to have been done by the ISO teams remotely and not exactly in the participatory manner described by the various ISC teams. Considering the fact that timelines were sometimes rushed (see Question 3.1) and that CBOs’ sense of responsibility and urgency was sometimes unpredictable (see Question 1.1), ISOs may have found it easier to finalize some sections of the deliverables on their own. During a meeting with ISO representatives, a respondent said: “sometimes mentors did the work for CBOs so they can finish.” However, USAID CIS records show that all 25 CBOs signed completion lists for all deliverables. This points to individual variation in the level of CBO understanding of what they were signing off on.

## 2.2 With regard to improvements, what similarities and differences are evident among CBOs with limited assistance and involvement compared to CBOs with extended assistance and involvement?

It was difficult to capture much qualitative data from survey respondents (I Round IDA participants). Their responses regarding improvements were very general. However, as depicted in the previous section, most of what they were able to achieve was in the realm of planning and financial processes, similar to what was reported for FGD and KII respondents.

In the FGDs, many CBOs that did not receive grants expressed less satisfaction with the project because of it. Most respondents reported that they had only participated because they believed there would be funding at the end. It was clear that, for them, the capacity-building goal of ISC was not enough in and of itself. Others in this group felt that more capacity building was required and that the time allocated for the trainings was not enough; however, even they managed to bring the discussion around to funding at the end.

Similarity between CBOs who completed Phase III and those who went on to receive grants related to their satisfaction with their strategic plans and procurement procedures. For further information on the specific achievements of CBOs, please see the next question.

## 2.3 What observations can be made about organizational performance related to improved capacity, including but not limited to achievements associated with implementation of grants?

All of the CBOs who received grants and some of those who completed Phase III of ISC I reported at least a few of the following achievements. They are listed according to the indicators of CSO sustainability:<sup>3</sup>

*“If we hadn’t taken the training, we would have never learned the things that we did. I am now better able to run the Society than I was before.” – Chairperson, Sisters of Men Society*

### Organizational Capacity

- **Constituency Building:** Improved relationships with local community leaders and decision-makers, involvement of community in planning activities, involvement of the community in other programs and projects within the CBO and response to beneficiary and community feedback.

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<sup>3</sup> USAID. 2016 CSO SUSTAINABILITY INDEX FOR THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA. Washington: USAID.

- **Strategic Planning:** Improved strategic planning, setting of clear missions and visions and understanding the difference between a mission and a vision and the importance of having them. Having goals and objectives. Better understanding of community needs and developing programs as opposed to disjointed activities to meet them.
- **Internal Management Structure:** Improved definition and division of roles and responsibilities, transparency regarding use of funds and involvement of Board in decision-making. Improved understanding of the importance of documentation and record-keeping; even larger CBOs with more programs and experience reported that they had depended on that experience and the memories of the individuals working in the CBO to guide their work, rather than documentation.
- **Staffing:** Increased numbers of volunteers and General Assembly membership, improved hiring policies and written job descriptions. Two CBOs reported that they had hired staff after ISC and others reported that it was part of their Strategic Plans to do so.

*“The benefit we received before signing our grant agreements is tremendous. We learned about the importance of documenting our work and having approved systems in order to facilitate receiving grants from donors. We also learned ways of identifying a problem in our community, how to write project proposals and how to prepare project budgets.”*  
Hada Sawaeer , Chairperson of All Jordan Charity Association

### Financial Viability

- **Financial Management Systems:** Improved financial policies, procurement policies and knowledge regarding budget preparation. Improved grant management; for some CBOs, this was the first time they had received grants of this nature. Their previous grants had been given to purchase a bus or establish a playground or computer lab.
- **Fundraising:** Improved proposal writing skills. Two CBOs reported changing their fundraising approach based on lessons learned from ISC.

### Service Provision

- **Community Responsiveness:** Improved understanding of community needs and the benefit of conducting needs assessments before granting assistance.

### Public Image

- **Public Perception of CSOs:** Increased credibility with local communities, leaders and decision makers. Additionally, many of the CSOs who had received grants stated that, through ISC, they realized the importance of the community’s perception of the organization. Some mentioned social media and how it could enhance that perception. They reported that they now had Facebook pages which they updated regularly with news of their activities.
- **Government Perception of CSOs:** Improved relationships with MoSD officials (see Sustainability section below for more information)

## 2.4 What were considered the most significant individual improvements that resulted from participation in ISC?

In KIs and FGDs, Chairpersons reported that they had a better understanding of their role as a result of ISC, and that they felt more empowered to deal with their Boards of Directors.

“Our Board is now involved in everything. They understand the strength of the CBO. They demand more of us, but they also do their best to support us.” – Chairperson, All Jordan Society

To varying degrees, Chairpersons and CBO Managers also reported increased knowledge and capacity in all technical areas covered by ISC; strategic planning, good governance, M&E, procurement, HR, proposal writing and the importance of record-keeping and documentation.

Three Chairpersons mentioned that they had learned about setting training objectives and using pre-and post-assessments from the training techniques used by ISO trainers in the ISC capacity building activities.

In the survey, 34% of respondents reported increased general knowledge and capacity after participating in ISC, 10.5% reported an increased understanding of how to reach out to donors, 10.5% an increased understanding of networking and 8% each for improved planning and improved community outreach.

Specifically, almost all the CBOs who received grants commented on the usefulness of having a strategic plan, based on their identified mission and vision, which allowed them to guide their work. Some CBOs reported they were moving away from “charity” work and focusing more on development work. For example, in the KIs, a few CBOs claimed that a majority of their work had been directed towards the distribution of food packages, but that they were now focused on better understanding community needs and developing programs to meet them. JRF however, believed that, if and when CBOs were faced with a decision to take on projects that didn’t fall within their strategic plans, they would not be able to say no to the prospect of funding.

*“At one point we accepted any project [that came our way]. Now the projects have to be within the focus area of our Society.”* Chairperson, Chechen Charitable Society for Women

## 2.5 To what extent did NHF improve its grant management capacity?

NHF highly appreciates the support received by USAID CIS regarding grant management capacity. Respondents reported that the process of managing the 19 grants USAID CIS gave to CBOs was very smooth, and that its capacity to manage USAID grants had greatly improved. In fact, all NHF respondents agreed that grant management support was the one area the organization benefited most from during the Program. In other areas, respondents saw themselves mostly as partners, giving and receiving support, rather than merely recipients of capacity building assistance. The team learned how to manage fixed-obligation grants and gained experience in the use of the related tools, including those used during the due diligence phase. Other specific areas where the ISO reported improvement were in recruitment, grant design, tendering and monitoring.

The team also reported that they were in the process of tailoring these tools, which were USAID-specific, for use in other projects.

## 2.6 For ISOs, what significant individual and organizational improvements resulted from participation in ISC?

Regarding technical expertise in training, and except for grant management support that NHF received, NHF and JRF viewed their relationship with USAID CIS under ISC as more of a partnership, with each entity learning from the other, rather than one building the capacity of the other. The two ISOs reported that they worked with USAID CIS to co-design trainings and that they learned in the process. They found the Mentorship component to be particularly useful.

*“The great thing is that we have spoken a common language with CIS from the beginning. It is a case of real partnership.”*  
– Mohammed Zoubi, NHF

As stated previously, NHF reported developing new skills, processes and tools, particularly where it came to grant management; the Grant Management Assessment Endline report states that these tools and processes were used to apply to two new grant programs to be implemented in 2018-2019. Al Thoraya found that ISC helped improve the training skills of its team, as well as build its capacity in general to deal with civil society organizations in Jordan. An Al Thoraya respondent said: “The Program developed our partnerships in governorates. We became a reference point for organizations so other organizations were

starting to ask us to recommend CBOs to work with.” JRF reported that they gained new training knowledge and skills, and that they had developed proposals for donors based on the ISC approach. Both JRF and USAID CIS believe that the restructuring JRF undertook during the ISC project lifecycle hindered its ability to effectively institutionalize learning.

### 3. What factors affected improvements of capacity and performance?

#### 3.1 How satisfied were organizations with the quality of ISO-delivered short courses and mentoring?

In addition to the ISC I support which included mentorship and training, all 25 ISC II participants participated in training (one day/topic) and mentoring (three days/topic/CBO) on a series of five topics: Procurement Fundamentals, M&E Basics, Good Governance, The Role of Civil Society in Advancing Change, Human Resources Management (NHF only) and Introduction to Advocacy (JRF only). NHF mentored 16 CBOs and JRF mentored nine. CBO distribution was based on ISO involvement with the CBOs in ISC I as well as ISO and CBO geographical location.<sup>4</sup>

*“Although we have not received a grant, we feel that the benefit obtained is far greater than the material value. Through the training we received in proposal design and writing, we were able to receive another grant from another donor. We are definitely on the right track.” Adel Nizami, Chairperson of Rawabi Jerash Charitable Association*

CBOs that received grants were the ones reporting the most satisfaction with the trainings offered by CIS in general. This could be contributed to the fact that they received more of it and that it had been more focused; however, many of the CBOs who did not receive grants were very clear in FGDs that they had committed to ISC in the hope of receiving a grant and that improving their capacity was not their main goal. USAID CIS and NHF, however, did report that six CBOs who did not receive grants insisted on being included in the capacity building component.

#### ISO Expertise

In training evaluation forms completed by training participants, CBOs consistently rated ISO trainers well (see ANNEX II, *Internal Strengthening for Change Summative Evaluation: Draft ISO Training Delivery Brief*). This was validated by CBOs’ responses in KIs and FGDs, expressing their satisfaction with the expertise of JRF and NHF staff during the training, mentoring and grant management processes. CBOs mentioned that ISO staff were knowledgeable in regards to the context they were operating in. Trainers were rated as very good to excellent, and as using a variety of interactive training methodologies.

*“[JRF and NHF staff] have the necessary expertise and the background. They have been to the South before, so they know the South very well.” – Workshop Manager, South Charity Society for Persons with Disabilities*

#### Training Timelines

JRF, NHF and AI Thoraya mentioned that they would have preferred to have more time to spend on capacity building by focusing their efforts on a couple of topics with fewer CBOs and allocating more time for follow up. They believed that training timelines were rushed in the different phases of the Program and that they had to condense content that should have taken 4 or 5 days into 1 day, especially considering the limited capacity of participating CBOs. The quality of the ISO training reports and absence of pre-and post-assessments in some cases (see ANNEX II, *Internal Strengthening for Change Summative Evaluation: Draft ISO Training Delivery Brief*) may demonstrate the rushed nature of the trainings. Additionally, training participants had varying capacities, which sometimes meant that the training material was too complicated and the trainers had to

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<sup>4</sup> RFTOP ISC Evaluation FINAL for Release, p. 8.

work to bring participants up to the level required. Finally, ISOs reported that they had to work weekends to accommodate the busy schedules of CBO Chairpersons, all of whom were volunteers.

CBOs in KIs and FGDs agreed that the fact that the capacities of participants in the same training differed was a challenge. However, they reported many less training challenges than the ISOs, focusing on the fact that ISOs were flexible and supportive and spent an adequate amount of time and effort on both the training and mentorship. This is either an indication that CBOs were wary of giving negative feedback about the ISOs, two of which were very large, very well-established national Royal NGOs, or that, as busy as the ISOs were, they were able to maintain the quality of their work in the field. The latter is more likely, as the feedback is consistent across all data sources and most of the CBOs, particularly those in the KIs, mentioned trainers and mentors by name and were able to provide specific examples of the knowledge, support and guidance they received from them.

It is noteworthy that in training feedback summaries received from both NHF and JRF for different ISC II trainings, CBOs had reported that the time allocated for trainings was insufficient (see *ANNEX II, Internal Strengthening for Change Summative Evaluation: Draft ISO Training Delivery Brief*). However, the fact that none of them mentioned this in the KIs could mean that the follow up mentorship had provided them with the additional information and support they required.

### **Grant Timelines**

In KIs with NHF and JRF, there was an agreement that the timeline along which grant-related training and the provision of the grants occurred was not ideal. The ISOs believed that all training relevant to the grants, as well as all post-training follow up, should have been finalized, by the same ISO, before the grants were administered. This was a particular issue for JRF, as the CBOs it had trained were moved under NHF's mandate in order to receive grants (see Question 1.5 above), and JRF was unable to follow up with them to ensure the application of learning imparted during the Program. The JRF team gave an example of one CBO, which had received Procurement Fundamentals training under JRF, but hadn't applied what it had learned in the training to the procurement it did in the grant with NHF. NHF respondents raised the same point emphasizing that training and grant related activities were run in parallel. This diluted the CBOs' ability to apply what they learned in their grants projects.

### **Grant Administration**

In KIs, the evaluation team found that CBOs were sometimes confused as to who they had implemented ISC with. As this was the group that had received grants, they immediately associated ISC with NHF, even when they had been trained by JRF. In quite a few instances, it took a discussion among the CBO team for everyone to remember that JRF had been involved in the process and, in at least two cases, the CBO leadership continued to insist that the work it had done with JRF had been on an entirely different project.

### **Mentorship**

The mentorship component and method of imparting learning was found by the CBOs to be very beneficial, and an appropriate means through which to transfer the general learning of the training workshops into individualized support. It reinforced the concepts learned in the training, while allowing CBOs the time and space they needed to fully comprehend and operationalize those concepts. NHF and JRF reiterated this view, stating that the mentoring and coaching was the most effective part of the capacity building. A few CBOs mentioned that they preferred the training sessions, as it afforded them the opportunity to interact with other CBOs and exchange information.

## **3.2 What internal and external factors affected organizational ability to achieve improvements?**



According to the CBOs, USAID CIS, and ISOs the following internal and external factors positively affected the CSOs' organizational ability to achieve improvements:

Internal Factors:

- The eagerness and willingness of CBOs to learn;
- The previous work or volunteer experience of the CBO management;
- The number of programs being implemented by the CBO (the more programs, the more able to achieve improvements);
- The level of specialization of the CBO (the more specialized, the better able to achieve improvements);
- Receptiveness/openness to new ideas;
- The idea that what CBOs were learning may attract donor funding in the future; and
- The level of awareness and capacity of the Board of Directors, and particularly the Chairperson of the CBO – leadership commitment.

External Factors:

- The addition of mentorship to the training process;
- The contexts within which the CBOs are working (some communities are more open);
- Trust of the community (this was mentioned in relation to grant management); and
- Involvement of community in planning (this was mentioned in relation to grant management).

Factors that hindered the CBOs' abilities to achieve improvements were the fact that most CBOs were volunteer – or family –based and that they did not have the resources necessary (in terms of time, funding or human resources) to focus on capacity building.

## **SUSTAINABILITY**

### **4. What evidence suggests that benefits will be (or already are being) sustained after the end of organizations' involvement in ISC?**

#### **4.1. What internal and external factors may affect CBO ability to sustain improvements?**

In addition to 1) the fact that ISC worked through large, national organizations such as JRF and NHF which CBOs and USAID CIS hope may provide referrals to other organizations or donors or help sustain the Program's tools or resources, 2) the achievements listed under Question 2.3, and 3) the factors listed under Question 3.2, other internal and external factors not related to ISC which may positively affect CBO ability to sustain improvements include:

- Full-time employees;
- Ownership of the CBO space in some cases;
- Projects that generate income such as a supermarket, gas station, green houses, hairdressers, kindergartens, professional development courses, room rental, productive kitchens (larger CBOs);
- Being well-established in communities; and
- Supportive Boards of Directors whose members work in harmony.

*"We've started to think outside-the-box and focus more on the needs of the community. One of the ideas we're working on is opening a private school in Al Qadisieh." – Chairperson, Tafileh Cement Factory Society*

Only one CBO spoke about the importance of succession planning to support sustainability.

CBOs and USAID CIS mentioned the following factors that may hinder sustainability:

- Lack of sustainable funding in many of the CBOs;
- CBOs are volunteer-based, no full-time staff;
- CBO remoteness from Amman; and
- An increase in the number of CBOs vying for the same funding.

*“One of the CBO Chairpersons wanted to make sure that the Strategic Plan was institutionalized. She knew at some point she would be leaving. She made sure that every Board member understood the strategic plan and had a copy of it.”*  
Fatima Abu Kaff, USAID CIS

Though CBOs mentioned that there was a tendency for CBO leaderships to remain in their positions for extended periods of time and referred to this as a supportive factor for sustainability, USAID CIS stated that there was a high turnover among Boards and referred to it as a hindering factor.

#### **4.2. What progress has been made in implementing improvement plans, independent of ISOs and/or USAID CIS?**

No CBO reported progress in implementing improvement plans independent of the ISOs or USAID CIS.

#### **4.3. What activities do organizations say they will continue regardless of ISO and/or USAID CIS support?**

CBOs reported that they would continue their activities and improvements as reported under Question 2.4. Two CBOs reported that they had submitted proposals to donors taking into consideration the lessons learned from the ISC grants, however, they hadn't yet heard back at the time of the KII.

#### **4.4 What do CBOs highlight as future capacity development priorities?**

In KIIs, most CBOs reported that they required further training on M&E and Good Governance, which is consistent with the evaluation team's findings on the Spectrum of Change. A few CBOs reported being interested in developing manuals on volunteerism, training and/or community-based initiatives. Many CBOs in the FGDs did not believe that they were in additional need of capacity building, only funding. ISOs mentioned HR training, fundraising, project management and the ability to conduct needs assessments.

The USAID CIS team agreed that there was a need for further support on Good Governance and Strategic Planning. They also felt that future capacity building efforts for CBOs should focus on problem tree analysis, the role of civil society (the context CBOs are working in, how CBOs can better support their communities, how CBOs can make a difference and have an impact and the benefits of CBOs working together and building on each other's strengths). They felt that it would also be important to build the capacity of MoSD staff to fulfil their mandate, though there was some reservation as to whether this would be beneficial given the lack of clear job descriptions defining their role in CSO oversight, accountability and performance management.

Though both USAID CIS and JRF mentioned the importance of advocacy training for CBOs, and JRF reported that for CBOs, working with decision makers to identify and adopt community issues, had become “routine,” only one CBO mentioned advocacy as a future capacity development priority, and none mentioned that it was implementing, or considering implementing, a systemized approach to advocacy. This indicates that while donors and large organizations see advocacy as an important role for civil society organizations to play, CBOs may not necessarily have the same perspective.

Regarding CBOs working together and supporting each other, there was some indication in the FGDs and KIIs that CBOs are willing to do so; however most of what was discussed focused on the competition between CBOs for funding.



#### 4.5 What internal and external factors may affect ISO ability to sustain improvements?

NHF and JRF are large, well established Royal NGOs, with mandates to support and develop civil society. Respondents said that their organizational teams have documented and incorporated the learning acquired through the Program to ensure its institutionalization. This seems to be more apparent within NHF than JRF, which has witnessed waves of staff turnover that have negatively affected the process of knowledge retention and dissemination within the organization.

According to the NHF team, the learning acquired through the Program on grants management has been widely disseminated in the organization. NHF respondents said they are currently working on adapting a grants manual provided by USAID CIS that will be specific to NHF. This will strengthen the organization's ability to design and manage grants and more effectively support CBOs as a national intermediary organization.

#### 4.6 What do ISOs and the Grant Management Assessment highlight as future capacity development priorities?

The Grant Management Assessment Endline report for NHF recommends that the ISO considers how best to structure and staff the grant unit as it grows; combine capacity building and grant elements so that organizations are not overwhelmed; build capacity on risk assessment and determine the best pre-award assessment tools for use in their future social development grant program.

USAID CIS sees room for ISOs to improve in report writing, grant management and strategic planning. It hopes that the ISOs will continue to build the capacity of their trainers. The ISOs did not report any capacity development needs.

### 5. To what extent did organizations strengthen their standing and respect among donors, peers and other stakeholders?

#### 5.1. How have improvements affected CBO and ISO recognition, credibility and trust among other organizations and the local community?

Some CBOs appreciated the opportunity to network with others during the trainings provided by ISC. However, few of them expressed a desire to continue networking or coming together to exchange ideas.

*"This was the first time we implemented a project to benefit the local community." - Chairperson, Tafileh Cement Factory Society*

As mentioned under Question 2.4, CBOs who received grants reported that their local communities were more engaged, that they had a better understanding of the objectives of the CBOs and that they saw increased participation in their activities and programs following ISC.

#### 5.2. How have improvements influenced CBO-donor interactions?

There was not much reporting by the CBOs regarding donor relationships. Of those who received grants:

- Two CBOs had written proposals for donors building on ISC, but had not received feedback on them as of

*"I am the Head of the Societies' Union of the Governorate of Balqa. I showed the Procurement Procedures to other CBOs in the area. Now they are using them as well." – Chairperson, Al Beira Charitable Society*

their meeting with the evaluation team. However, USAID CIS stated that there were reports from at least two CBOs that they had received funding as a result of their participation in ISC.

- One CBO reported that they had received invitations to a few meetings and events, and when they arrived they realized that NHF had nominated them to attend.
- A few CBOs believed that staying with the program for as long as they did would lend them credibility with other donors.
- Some CBOs believed that showing Strategic Plans, Codes of Conduct and Procurement Policies to potential donors would increase their chances of getting funding.

### 5.3. How have improvements influenced CBO leadership standing with local government/decision-makers?

Of the CBOs that received grants, one mentioned that local MoSD officials had noticed the documentation and improved processes within CBOs and that this had improved CBO standing with them. In FGDs, CBOs said that knowing more about strategic planning and report writing made it easier for them to prepare regular reports for MoSD. However, a few CBOs also mentioned the ongoing challenges of working with MoSD, including the fact that MoSD continues to see them as charity workers.

*“MoSD doesn’t encourage this type of [development]. The first question they always ask is ‘how much have you distributed?’ – FGD participant*

A few CBOs report improved relationships with local mayors and other decision-makers within the community.

*“The Mayor just called me to discuss how our Society can support Tawjihi students. We’re going to open up remedial classes as a result.” – Chairperson, All Jordan Society*

# CONCLUSIONS

ISC built on the accumulated experience of USAID CIS and utilized a responsive and participatory approach to develop a phased capacity building program for nascent CSOs in Jordan. Targeting a large group of newly established organizations, USAID CIS and ISOs understood the limitations within this group of CBOs related to the organizations' internal weaknesses and the context in which they operated. The Program anticipated the potential for a lack of commitment and had consequently made it the main criteria for moving from one phase to the next. The challenges associated with trying to cater to the common denominators between the organizations and still raise the bar for the sector's capacity were evident. Some participants proposed that aspects of the approach, including the IDA tool and the training content, could have been more effectively tailored to better align with limited capacities of ISC's main target group; however this would require increased financial, time, and human resources given the scale and diversity of the CSO sector.

ISC's core activities were relevant to the CBOs' needs and priorities, particularly the strategic planning and mentorship. A CBO's ability to benefit from the Toolkit depended on the capacity of the CBO leadership and its willingness to learn. The improvement planning was useful and relevant, but there were some drawbacks to the IDA tool, including the fact that it did not capture the quality of deliverables and that it relied on self-reporting and the capacity of respondents to assess their organizations' status as to meeting IDA indicators.

ISC responded to the needs identified during the IDA process by supplementing the Program with the mentorship component and determining which trainings the CBOs required. The trainings may not have differentiated instruction or assessment of CBO capacities; however, the addition of the mentorship component individualized the capacity building process and allowed ISO staff to partly tailor support. The Program culminated with the grants component developed in response to improvements in CBO capacity and in recognition of the need for continuing support.

ISC was relevant to the ISOs' mandates and through the ISC subcontracts, ISOs were able to expand their capacity building offerings to new technical areas and geographic reach to new CBOs.

The organizations' selective positive feedback about ISC's support reveals the areas of most importance and relevance to their work. Most CBOs, whether they participated in Round I, II or III of the IDA, found ISC most useful for Strategic Planning and Financial Management. All 64 CBOs developed strategic plans and CBOs reported an improved capacity for strategic planning, setting of clear missions and visions, having goals and objectives and moving away from "charity" work to focus more on development work.

The Procurement Policies training and support was very helpful and CBOs claimed to have made many improvements in this regard. While CBOs also took important steps towards Good Governance, at least half of them did not believe that their policies were yet fully operational or sustainable. M&E was the area where CBOs improved the least. While they appeared to believe that Codes of Conduct and Procurement Manuals were important for transparency and accountability, they did not allocate M&E the same level of importance. While the evaluation team could largely confirm the availability of tools, it did not independently verify the claims of usage made in Procurement, Good Governance or M&E.

All CBOs in KIs and some in FGDs claimed to have achieved at least some improvements in organizational capacity, financial viability, service provision and public image. On an individual level, leaderships reported to have been empowered to deal with their Boards of Directors, to have increased their knowledge and capacity in ISC technical areas, and, to a lesser extent, to have acquired training techniques from the ISO trainers.

Internal and external factors shape the ability of organizations to achieve and sustain improvements. There were internal factors that supported CBOs to progress, including the eagerness and willingness of CBOs to learn; the previous work or volunteer experience of the CBO management; the number of programs being implemented by the CBO and the level of commitment of the leadership. External factors included the trust and involvement of the community. Some CBOs were becoming more mission-driven, moving away from “charity” work and focusing more on development work.

All three ISO saw improvements in their training skills, and NHF an improved ability to manage grants. The relationships of the ISO with the CBOs also improved, though the absence of JRF from the grant management component may have compromised the strength of their relationship with the CBOs they had trained and mentored.

The ISOs faced some challenges during the implementation of training, including insufficient time to address the varying capacity among training participants, and an overlap between training and grant timelines. The quality of the ISO training reports and absence of some documentation may reflect the rushed nature of the trainings. However, CBOs found ISOs were flexible and supportive and spent an adequate amount of time and effort on both the training and mentorship, demonstrating that, despite the challenges, ISOs were able to maintain the quality of their work in the field.

In addition to the achievements made by CBOs, there were internal factors that may support sustainability and explain why certain CSOs continued in the Program to the end. These include having paid employees; owning the CBO space; having income-generation projects; being well-established in communities and having supportive Boards of Directors whose members work in harmony. Factors that may hinder sustainability include a lack of sustainable funding in many of the CBOs, the fact that most CBOs are volunteer-based and the fact that there is an increase in the number of CBOs vying for the same pools of funding.

Factors that may affect the ISOs ability to sustain improvements include the fact that they do not seem to have been engaged at the leadership level, that ISC did not build on or contribute to the ISOs’ strategic or sustainability planning and that the transfer of knowledge does not appear to have been equally institutionalized in both organizations.

Future development opportunities for CBOs include Strategic Planning, M&E, the Role of Civil Society and Good Governance, as well as the development of manuals for different program areas. While donors and large organizations believe that advocacy training is important, CBOs do not necessarily see this as their role. Further development opportunities for NHF are for the ISO to consider how best to structure and staff the grant unit as it grows; combine capacity building and grant elements so that organizations are not overwhelmed; build capacity on risk assessment and determine the best pre-award assessment tools for use in their future social development grant program.

The improvements made under ISC have positively influenced CBO and ISO standing and credibility with local communities and somewhat with MoSD. ISOs did not report significant influence on donor-CBO or donor-ISO relations, despite having previously reported examples of this to USAID CIS such as EU and UNICEF engaging them to implement programs similar to ISC and utilizing resources such as the IDA in other programs.

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