



# USAID | JORDAN

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Newsletter - September 2010



**Welcome to the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) first edition of the JORDAN newsletter. This publication reports important and timely information on USAID's activities and achievements in JORDAN.**

## Enclosed you can find:

- USAID's vision for youth in Jordan (Eyes on the future)
- New approaches & solutions for social development
- Insights on USAID support for development in Jordan
- Changes at the Mission

## Who are we?



The United States and Jordan have been partners in Jordan's development for nearly 60 years. The United States is committed to helping Jordan meet its goal of economic prosperity for all citizens. Major focus areas include democracy and governance, water, social services, economic growth, energy, and environment. In addition, recognizing that youth unemployment, urbanization, and poverty are increasingly urgent problems in Jordan, USAID has launched major new cross-cutting youth and poverty alleviation initiatives. In recognition of the important role Jordan plays in the region, the country receives one of the highest per capita levels of USAID development support in the world.

# Eyes on the future Youth Hold Keys to Future of Jordan and USAID Plans

While many at USAID/Jordan are no longer technically young (a sensitive issue for this writer who recently turned 50), focus on youth is important for a Mission that is addressing a significant demographic opportunity in Jordan - 70% of the population is under the age of 30 and 60% of working age youth are unemployed. It is critical to the future well-being of all Jordanians that this powerful resource of young people be enabled to take a leading role in the progress and development of their country. To this end, USAID/Jordan has made providing the enabling environment for youth to succeed a key objective of the entire Mission.

To better address this opportunity, USAID/Jordan updated its strategy through 2014 to adopt a groundbreaking, cross-cutting effort to integrate youth goals and measures across its portfolio. The

Mission has developed a conceptual framework that links youth to its core strategic objectives in water, health, education, economic growth, energy, and democracy & governance. Through the five-year, \$30 million cross-cutting Youth:Work program, USAID will provide opportunities for marginalized, out-of-school youth between 15 and 24 years of age. The program is initially focusing on 12 communities in Jordan to equip youth with the necessary skills to find employment and provide them with internship and job opportunities. It is working with the private sector in and around



these communities to create jobs. The demand-driven, youth-focused activities also include the provision of additional services targeting youth, adaptation of existing services to make them more accessible and relevant to youth, and programs and community projects that change behaviors and improve environments in which youth live.

Many projects already underway at USAID impact youth, such as youth employment and life skills, family planning, human rights advocacy, civil society, water and energy conservation, and school construction. Nonetheless, given the size and scope of the youth opportunity, all sectors will further expand and focus their efforts on this issue. Youth hold the keys to the future and USAID/Jordan is working hard to ensure that the young people of Jordan have the opportunity to fulfill their potential as they become the future leaders of Jordan.

# USAID Celebrates International Youth Day in Petra

Petra: On August 5<sup>th</sup>, Mission Director Jay Knott hosted the day-long event for over 500 young Jordanians during which he highlighted USAID's efforts to create a brighter future for Jordan's youth. These efforts were well represented with many USAID partners educating the participants in a creative and engaging fashion. For example, the Jordan Tourism Development Project not only gave a lecture on job opportunities in its sector, but challenged the youth in a game that required them to ask questions and engage with industry representatives, like Marriot and Radisson, who were there especially for the event. Another USAID partner, the Business Development Center, not only lectured on job interview techniques, but had pairs of young people stand in front of the class and complete mock interviews. Eight USAID/Jordan projects supported the event by developing creative approaches to engage and educate the youth present. Of course, all was not work and talented youth attending the event provided musical and theatrical entertainment for everyone at the closing ceremony.



# USAID/Jordan - Recent News

**Support for Sustainable Water Management** – Amman: Acting Mission Director Dana Mansuri and Minister of Water and Irrigation Mohammad Najjar oversaw the signing of a JD 2.3 million contract to build the Suf trunk sewer line. This large-scale project will result in reduced contamination of drinking water supplies, less groundwater contamination, and improved watershed management in Jerash. As Acting Mission Director Mansuri reminded everyone at the event, “While this trunk line is literally a concrete example of how to protect valuable watersheds, it is just part of the larger technical training, agricultural extension, and public education work underway to ensure sustainable water for all Jordanians.”

**USAID Project Continues Improvements to Ministry of Finance Management Systems** – Amman: Mission Director Jay Knott and Minister of Finance Mohammad Abu Hammour signed a Memorandum of Understanding to provide technical assistance for the establishment of a help desk and call center as part of an ongoing project to make the budget process more transparent and compliant with international best practices. During his remarks, Director Knott said, “We are pleased to continue our partnership with the Ministry of Finance and to announce our support for the Help Desk and Call Center, two important infrastructure investments that will both safeguard the financial management system and provide technical support to its users throughout the government.”

## **Assisting in the Establishment of a Professional Media Sector in Jordan**

– Amman: Acting Mission Director Dana Mansuri gave the opening speech celebrating the new state-of-the-art multi-media lab at Middle East University (MEU). This work was completed as part of USAID’s Media Strengthening Project whose objectives are increased professionalism among journalists, strengthened media organizations, and an improved legal environment for independent media. As the lead contractor, IREX worked with the University of Tennessee and MEU to procure the appropriate technology, set up the facility, and train both teachers and students on using the systems with the goal of increasing professionalism by improving the quality of journalism education and enhancing job-readiness amongst the MEU students. Acting Mission Director Mansuri captured the importance of this new lab and the larger project when she said, “There has been a nearly universal political realization that a healthy, independent, professional and free media environment is a pillar of democratization and development.”



### **Mission Director Jay Knott Congratulates Law Students at 4th Annual Moot Court Awards Ceremony -**

Amman: Mission Director Knott joined the Minister of Justice, Ayman Odeh, to congratulate the participants at the Moot Court Awards Ceremony. The Moot Court Competition is an important part of USAID's efforts to strengthen the legal and judicial education system in Jordan. With 165 students from seven law schools, this forum is unique in that it provides the future lawyers and judges of Jordan the opportunity to challenge themselves and enhance their practical legal skills.



**Mission Director Jay Knott Attends the Inauguration of Al-Iman Hospital** - Ajloun: Director Knott attended the ribbon-cutting inauguration of the Al-Iman Hospital where, USAID provided over \$1.2 million to renovate the neonatal and obstetric wards and to install needed medical equipment. This work is part of USAID's efforts to improve maternal and child care in Jordan, and is an important component of the Health Systems Strengthening Project.

## **Comings and Goings at the Mission**

It is a summer of transition for USAID/Jordan, with many senior associates leaving the Mission for new adventures – as we wish them all the best, we welcome their replacements.

Ross Hagan – Energy Office Director is leaving after five years to work on infrastructure projects at USAID/Pakistan. His replacement is Cheryl Jennings.

Edith Houston – Chief of the Social Sector Office for two years is going to work on Central and South American USAID projects from Washington, D.C. Her replacement is Mark Parkinson.

Cybill Sigler – Deputy Director of the Economic Growth Office is leaving after four years to be the USAID Office Director of Sustainable Economic Growth in Malawi. Her replacement is Paul Bruning.

Kathryn Stevens – Director of the Office of Program Management for four years is off to Moscow to be the Deputy Mission Director for USAID/Russia. Her replacement is Amy Tohill-Stull.

The new Director of the Water and Environment Office is Tom Rhodes.