

JORDAN
URBAN POVERTY ASSESSMENT
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Executive Summary

USAID-Jordan commissioned a poverty alleviation assessment conducted from July 26 – August 6, 2009. William Baldrige, financial sector advisor from USAID/EGAT/EG, Allyn Moushey, poverty specialist from USAID/EGAT/PR, Kenana Amin from USAID/Jordan, Oliver Wilcox from USAID/ME/TS, and Nate Bowditch, local economic development advisor from Research Triangle, Inc. participated in the assessment. Mr. Bowditch did not take part in drafting or finalizing the programming recommendations provided in this report.

The assessment was coordinated and managed by the USAID/Jordan program office. Kenana Amin from USAID/Jordan joined nearly all the meetings and contributed substantively to discussions and written product. Program office staff arranged and coordinated the logistics for the ten days of meetings, visits and presentations.

The assessment team met with a diverse group of implementing partners and stakeholders, selected by the Mission’s program office to provide the team as comprehensive a perspective on youth and poverty as is practicably possible in the time available. Assessment team interviews consistently featured an interdisciplinary approach to youth and poverty.

Framework of Urban Poverty in Jordan

Cross-cutting Themes: Gender Constraints and Youth

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY	SOCIAL ISSUES	GOVERNANCE
Constraints in the business environment for SMEs	Abuse and family violence	Poor sanitation and waste management & other infrastructure constraints, such as lighting
Mismatch between skills and economic demand	Gender dynamics	Lack of social service coordination & availability
Transportation & other constraints for women	Cultural barriers to work and education	Lack of community empowerment
	School leavers (dropouts)	Municipal governments lack capacity
	Population Growth	

Programming Suggestions

Select three cities with the highest number of poor people (Amman 28%, Irbid 17%, Zarqa 17%, World Bank 2009). Target each of the three elements of urban poverty (neighborhoods, economic opportunities and families), leading to a comprehensive social, economic and environmental approach in designated urban areas. Establish urban development zones to serve as the institutional convening mechanism—“bringing community, municipality, governorate and ministries together to do business better”.

Marshall U.S. urban neighborhood revitalization experience and expertise to focus on:

- 1) More effective administration of the delivery of social benefits in poor neighborhoods
- 2) Activities that build the foundation for local economic development
 - evidence based strategic planning around economic comparative advantage
 - strengthening key sector value chains in selected areas through
 - improving knowledge, technology and access to services
 - improving workforce skills and development
 - strengthening the provision of finance to key value chains
 - improving the legal, regulatory and competitive environment
 - strengthening business networks and their ability to advocate for effective reform of the business climate in their sector
 - improve the efficiency of business – municipal interactions
- 3) Local economic growth leading to significant employment and income improvements for poverty affected areas, perhaps featuring
 - job training for poor, women and youth, tightly tied to specific company hiring needs
 - improved transportation options of urban poor and women to employment centers

ASSESSMENT

Available Data on Jordan’s Poverty Problem

Poverty in Jordan is characterized by its high concentration in urban areas, where 82% of Jordanians live (Department of Statistics, 2007). Although urban areas have lower percentages of households in poverty, they house three-quarters of those under the poverty line. The World Bank recently released a 2009 Poverty Update, based on 2006 data, which has the most up-to-date and accurate data about income and expenditure poverty in Jordan. The Update found that 13% of Jordanians live below a poverty line of JD 46.3 per person, per month. Amman, Zarqa, and Irbid are home the largest shares of the poor; showing 28%, 17% and 17% respectively. While these rates have fallen since 2002, the lower middle class has continued to see a decline. Overall, the report noted that 12% of the urban population is under the poverty line.

This resulting concentration has led to a number of issues which characterize the urban poor:

- Low labor force participation and a high dependency on public and private assistance
- Higher levels of abuse and family violence
- Lower levels of educational achievement
- Crowding and other infrastructure problems

This concentration of poor families in certain neighborhoods or streets has also given rise to the popular belief that poverty does not exist in Jordan; with the exception of the rural poverty pockets. The 22 poverty pockets defined by the government are primarily located in rural areas, and have received a significant concentration of projects and resources by the GOJ and donors.

While the large proportion of the Jordanian population under 21 is a challenge throughout the country, it is of particular concern in cities. In these areas, the assessment team learned of high rates of school dropouts, drug use, crime, larger family size and family abuse. Unemployment is a national challenge, but those near economic opportunities in Amman or Zarqa seem unable or unwilling to take advantage of them. The assessment interviews suggested a few dynamics are at work. In some cases, the team was told that youth were unwilling to take low-paying jobs that were considered low status. This suggests that some percentage of Jordanian youth workforce that is unemployed has the flexibility to reject work opportunities that either offer too little pay, inadequate benefits, or in adequate career promise. Alternatively, different stakeholders reported that youth were not trained or educated in the correct subject matter to qualify for those jobs. A third dynamic described some members of the unemployed youth workforce, with less economic flexibility, fail to capitalize on even job opportunities that require few skills and as a result, slip into poverty, with those jobs then going to foreign workers. It appeared that unemployed youth from the upper-end of the socio-economic spectrum are able to exercise discretion and hold out for a promising opportunity, while unemployed youth from the lower socio-economic layers seem unable or unwilling to compete effectively with foreign laborers.

The interviews repeatedly referenced concentrated populations of unemployed young people. The concern was that long periods of unemployment by Jordanian youth did little to enhance positive community engagement. This was cited as a concern for both current and future generations of Jordanians. More than one person interviewed by the team cited the problem of brain drain in Jordan.

While visiting Zarqa, the team learned much about the challenges facing the municipal government and local NGOs. The governor noted the complex relationship between energy creation and environmental concerns, citing the presence of the oil refinery and subsequent pollution of the springs. Indeed, the Mission Environmental team noted Zarqa as a “hotspot” where there is illegal dumping and lots of heavy industry. The mayor told the team that poverty and crowding were very important issues, but that migration was heavy and the focus of the government was always on “projects,” not the

enabling environment. The CBOs in Zarqa reported problems with young women not being accepted into the workforce and formerly imprisoned youth who are not accepted in their communities. In particular, it was mentioned that women could not reach jobs that were available due to the lack of safe public transportation. A representative told the team that, “these girls may have trouble getting married” because families do not want their daughters to marry men who work in technical jobs, even though the “area is saturated with vocational training.”

One of Jordan’s greatest strengths lies in its generally high level of education and literacy. Half of those age six and above have completed secondary education or beyond, and an estimated 90% of Jordanians are literate (Unicef, 2007; JPFHS, 2007). Women also have high rates of schooling, showing near parity with men on all these same indicators. Despite their education, women still face barriers to entering the workforce. Unicef’s 2007 report cited that 89% of Jordanian youth believed that girls should have access to education, but only 64% thought those girls should eventually work.

Unfortunately this education has not translated into job creation or employment. Many stakeholders interviewed by the team (as well as the literature review) affirmed that the education system in Jordan was not preparing youth for the workforce. Vocational and technical training courses and centers were roundly criticized as ineffective and out of touch, despite numerous donor and government efforts to update them. Beyond technical skills, it was noted by many that Jordanians were not being trained in the necessary soft skills to be successful in the private sector. One stakeholder noted that “the problem is the lack of a cultural value of work. Maybe the schools, mosques and families have failed to emphasize work.”

The Jordanian culture is far too complex to be summarized in a short paragraph or assessed by a team on a two week visit. However, several generalized characteristics were repeatedly cited to the team as impacting poverty. The first, the “culture of shame,” was a general term used to reference the lack of interest by Jordanians in certain segments of the labor force. Many stakeholders reported that there were construction and other labor intensive jobs available, but Jordanians would not take them (or stay for longer than a few months) due to their low status and pay. Many reported a preference among youth for white collar, public sector or military jobs. In fact, a recent poll conducted by the Royal Court found that “70% of youth wanted to work in an office...52% wanted to leave their current course of study because it was chosen by their parents.” This, combined with an easily accessible foreign labor force and disincentives within the public assistance system, has led to the apparent paradox of simultaneously high unemployment and robust economic growth.

A second cultural factor contributing to poverty in Jordan is the general disenfranchisement of women in the labor force. As previously noted, women have high rates of education and literacy, but very low rates of participation in the workforce. Yet a preference for women to stay in the home (whether the preference is theirs or their husband’s) has led to increased pressure on the remaining breadwinner. Women cite hostile work environments, disapproval of family members and security concerns with

transportation among reasons for not seeking economic opportunity. This issue with transportation was cited by those in urban areas as well, noting the difficulty of getting safely around Amman or Zarqa. These depressed rates of female workforce participation represent a foregone economic growth opportunities for the Jordanian economy, and foregone income for Jordanian households, including those households in poverty.

Critical Gaps in Data

There is a relative paucity of data on urban poverty in Jordan. This is in stark contrast to all that is known about rural poverty in Jordan. Efforts are underway to improve some sources, including efforts by the National Aid Fund and the Commission on Social Solidarity to collect details on their beneficiaries. Overall, the team struggled to get beyond anecdotal evidence on this topic.

Possible areas for future research by the mission include the following, specific to urban Jordan:

- Demographic data on urban neighborhoods
- Infrastructure constraints and environmental problems (details only seem available on rural water issues)
- Family violence and women’s empowerment
- Economic barriers to accessing work
- Transportation assessment

A qualitative study among poor urban residents could yield important details that are currently missing from standard household surveys. This and other information is needed to effectively design an urban poverty reduction program.

Several GOJ ministries and agencies – including MOPIC, the Ministry of Social Development (MOSD), the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, and municipal governments themselves – focus on poverty reduction in explicit and implicit policy-making and programming terms. MOPIC, as the gatekeeper for Jordan’s significant foreign donor relationships, has historically managed the channeling of external resources within the country. MOPIC has invested in collecting and analyzing poverty data in Jordan and crafting the Government’s focalized response to largely rural “poverty pockets” identified from this poverty data.

MOPIC has its own “Local Development Department.” This department, in turn, has governorate and many municipal representatives in “local development units,” who monitor poverty-pocket projects. Over the last several years, MOPIC has also provided umbrella grants to national or international NGOs who in turn train and/or provide sub-grants to community-based organizations (“Qudorat”).

MOSD, by contrast, has provided cash support for particularly marginalized segments of society, such as orphans, widows and the elderly. MOSD has also been responsible for registering, monitoring, funding and otherwise supporting local NGOs, many of which are social welfare or charitable in nature. More recently, MOSD has developed and

instituted an unemployment program for the “poorest of the poor”. On balance, through its governorate and district level field offices, MOSD has developed several productive relationships with poverty alleviation and reduction CBOs.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs has more recently raised the profile of municipal development and been a national political champion for greater municipal empowerment. As the modern state in Jordan has grown in size and complexity, it has assumed many roles and responsibilities legally reserved for municipalities. The 1954 municipalities law gave localities a long list of competencies, including economic development roles (e.g. creation/regulation of local markets) with employment/poverty-reduction purposes. However, the scope of activities for most municipalities has been limited to the provision of basic of services, such as garbage collection, road maintenance and street lighting. The larger municipalities, for example, Amman and Irbid, have played greater LED roles thanks to greater resources, higher levels of human capital and (in the case of Amman) political clout.

With a new law on “decentralization” in Jordan under development, municipalities may emerge as stronger players in local economic development. Within the Ministry and the Cities and Villages Development Bank, there are already new policies and practices to finance and execute economic development projects within all municipalities, including the new requirement that all municipalities present at least one economic development project in their upcoming annual budgets.

Donor Interests and Activities

Donors in Jordan have focused on the alleviation and reduction of poverty in Jordan through funneling funding to municipalities for local development, and by providing capacity development for central government ministries and agencies concerned with poverty. The European Union provided funds for "poverty alleviation through local development" and established local development units (LDUs) in 18 "poverty-pocket" municipalities to coordinate planning and monitoring of projects. The next phase of EU programming will work in many of the same municipalities but will adopt a more long-term economic planning approach.

The World Bank is supporting institutional development for the MOSD and municipal capacity-building on local development. The UNDP has funded and is contemplating several more discreet, small-scale activities, including a project to support the Department of Statistics in creating reliable data for policy-making. Indeed, the representative from UNDP who met with the team noted that “urban poverty is a bigger problem, and there is already a huge focus on the rural...there is a lack of in-depth qualitative data on the poor...the situation of women in Jordan is overlooked, particularly in the labor force.” One challenge for donors in Jordan is identifying the policy, institutional and geographic gaps in anti-poverty initiatives.

Civil Society Interests and Activities

Traditionally, Jordan's civil society has engaged in poverty alleviation through localized social welfare and charitable efforts. In some respects, this approach is a normative outgrowth of the Islamic concepts of zakat and social justice, as well as an organizational outgrowth of the volunteerism of the 1950s, 60s and 70s. Jordan's governorates still feature many charitable community-based organizations (CBOs) that are devoted to helping take care of categories of socially marginalized populations, such as orphans, the blind, deaf and physically handicapped. These CBOs tend to be small, resource-weak and often personality-based.

Increasingly, CBOs are engaging in small income-generating activities and even providing job-related training to women and youth. In Zarqa, the team met representatives of two CBOs working on women's economic empowerment/employment and youth job training. Both groups seemed to enjoy good relations with the governorate-level office of the MOSD.

In addition to CBOs, which are common to many developing countries, one unusual feature of Jordanian civil society is the presence of royal family-patronized "NGOs"--or "RONGOs." These include three key RONGOs launched by Queen Noor, Princess Basma (the late King Hussein's younger sister) and Queen Rania that focus on poverty reduction from linked economic productivity and social development aspects. Like the GOJ, the King Hussein Foundation, JOHUD and others have mostly focused on rural poverty, and particularly in locales identified as "poverty-pockets". These organizations bring considerable assets to the table: royal legitimacy, political latitude, financial resources, human capacity, technical expertise, organizational sustainability, etc. Some question the depth and authenticity of their grassroots reach, as well as the broader "crowding out" effect they have on civil society organizations.

It is worth noting the Jordan River Foundation has begun to address the issues affecting poor urban families. Through their community centers and shelters, they are seeking to engage the local community and stakeholders about building healthier families. They are working closely with the Family Protection Departments in particular in establishing care for children from abusive homes. They are working in East Amman and acknowledge the challenges of urban poverty in Jordan.

Policy analysis and advocacy are cited as gaps in civil society anti-poverty efforts. Civil society organizations increasingly implement "rights-based" approaches to poverty reduction but no groups appear to be fomenting or contributing to public policy debates. Indeed, in Jordan, there appears to be little in the way of a poverty debate outside of the GOJ's focus on "poverty pockets."

USAID Project Interests and Activities

Economic growth at the macro level results in opportunities for increased livelihoods and higher incomes at the household level. Increasing access by the poor to economic opportunity is one dimension of a sound approach to the alleviation of poverty, for those who are able to work. The Mission's current activities to increase access to economic opportunity in order to increase household income are a viable strategy to prevent the pre-poor from slipping into the cycle of poverty.

Current USAID project interests and activities already include multiple programmatic elements relevant to a youth and poverty focus. For example, lack of access to clean water is strongly correlated with poverty in Jordan. Improving access to clean water should strengthen Jordan's ability to reduce poverty. The Mission's Water Resources Management Office. The Mission's water resources management office currently manages projects to expand and rehabilitate water supply systems, expand wastewater treatment capacity, strengthen Jordan's water management policies and better allocate available water resources.

USAID-Jordan's Economic Growth Office currently works to increase the depth of the private sector through enhancing the capabilities of the Jordanian workforce. The Office has pioneered innovative ways to increase the employability of Jordanian youth, both at the high school level and the university level. This could serve as a model to employ more broadly in the new strategy. The Office has worked effectively to increase the competitiveness of key sectors of the Jordanian economy, these pilots could be thoughtfully expanded to impact broader sections of the Jordanian economy in order to increase incomes more broadly throughout Jordanian society. USAID-Jordan's Economic Growth Office has worked to increase the capacity of Jordanian firms to capitalize on trade agreements, and to help strengthen the SME sector, which has an outsized impact on employment levels. The office has worked to assist Jordanian businesses and government counterparts to create a more effective, business-friendly regulatory environment through policy reform. It will be important to vector this "business climate" reform to the local level to support local economic development initiatives required by the new strategy. All of these initiatives can become part of a strategy to reduce urban poverty and increase opportunities for Jordanian youth.

USAID-Jordan's Health Office helps the Government of Jordan improve the quality of its health services to those in poverty now, as well as works with the Ministry of Health to keep its citizens from experiencing the poverty dimension of health by working to improve primary health care, reproductive health services and improve the knowledge of healthy lifestyles for youth and married couples. In particular, the outreach program PSP has already visited over one million women in their homes with messages about family planning, etc. This program could have its curriculum honed to directly address the issues of urban families.

The Mission's Education Office is helping to address youth needs by closing the gap between skills gained in formal education and those required for entry in to the job

market through school-to-work skills training, e-learning and enhanced secondary education.

Together with the broader Youth/Poverty Working Group, this office is also addressing the needs of disadvantaged youth through a broad spectrum project that seeks to increase: life skills, employability skills and entrepreneurship skills; youth participation in internships and community service projects; salaried or self-employed jobs for youth; increased youth continuing their education or returning to their education; and increased youth engagement and decision-making in community activities.

The Democracy and Governance Office in USAID-Jordan represents a new portfolio that is just beginning to focus on improving the public administration skills at the Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Education, and in the governorates where many of the services to the young and poor are delivered.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Poverty Alleviation and USG/USAID Mission Priorities

Jordan is a model of progress and a voice for moderation and reform in the Middle East. The United States has enjoyed a strong and strategically vital relationship with Jordan for many years and USAID is by far the largest bilateral donor active in Jordan. The Agency serves as a key vehicle for the USG to positively influence this regionally significant strategic partner.

USG goals for regional stability require that a new generation of Jordanians, growing up in a country that is an oasis of stability and model for progress for the region, benefit from increased civic inclusion and economic participation. Jordan's rising generation must become leading proponents of tolerance, critical thinking, reform, and economic progress if other regional influences are to be neutralized.

“USAID’s vision is to help Jordan become a prosperous democratic country whose government is increasingly accountable to its people”, and whose “economy will be able to provide jobs for most of its labor force.” As Jordan is a heavily urban country with 82% of its population living in its major cities (Department of Statistics, 2007), this is where USAID must focus its attention in the coming years. Within that focus, the acute lack of jobs for Jordan’s youth, together with persistent poverty in urban neighborhoods, must be addressed—and addressed vigorously and comprehensively—if USAID’s vision for Jordan is to be realized.

Focus Areas

Based on the economic, demographic, and cultural information collected during the team’s mission, a Jordan urban poverty construct, or definition, is proposed based on perceived weaknesses in three essential elements of life:

- Place (crowded, often transient neighborhoods; deteriorated, poor-quality housing; unhealthy, service-deprived urban environment)
- Opportunity (jobs not available, or easily accessed; skills not developed, or adapted to the marketplace; limited, complicated to pursue income-making & entrepreneurship choices)
- Family (safety of women and children; unavailable social support networks)

Based on that construct, the way forward must necessarily be multifaceted. Urban poverty alleviation and reduction must certainly be a cross-cutting theme for the Mission so that each project addresses one, or more, big-city-poor-neighborhood conditions. The Team also recommends that the Mission’s strategy be reworked so that urban poverty alleviation and reduction becomes a USAID strategic focus. More specifically, project activities should feature service-delivery to alleviate the hardships of poverty, small-scale infrastructure improvements to enhance living environments, and access to skills training, jobs, and income-producing avenues that will ultimately reduce the number of families living in poverty. The only way to accomplish this, in the words of one team interviewee, is by “bringing community, municipality, governorate and ministries together to do business better.” Thus the team proposes a 3-way focus.

Urban Poverty in Jordan		
Economic Opportunity	Social Issues	Governance
Constraints in the business environment for SMEs	Abuse and family violence	Infrastructure constraints - Poor sanitation and waste management, lighting, etc.
Mismatch between skills and economic demand	Gender dynamics	Lack of social service coordination & availability
Transportation & other constraints for women	Cultural barriers to work and education	Lack of community empowerment
	School leavers (dropouts)	Municipal governments lack capacity
	Population Growth/Lack of Family Planning	
Cross-cutting Themes: Gender Constraints and Youth		

Governance

Good governance and public administration are a challenge at all levels in Jordan. However, nowhere are these capacity constraints more evident than at the municipal level. Municipalities are not charged or empowered to manage much beyond fee collection, street maintenance and lighting, and sanitation. They are not able to coordinate all the different functions of government at the local level, from social services to education to community grievances.

Similarly, local communities were frequently described as disengaged from the civic process. There seems to be little historical precedent for neighborhoods or communities organizing to advocate on their own behalf. There are numerous community-based organizations (CBOs) in Jordan, and the team met with several. However, it also seems that nearly every donor and donor program has some component that seeks to build CBO capacity. Therefore, the team did not feel this topic merited much focus in the assessment.

The local municipal officials who met with the team in Zarqa described their responsibilities in the same way as essentially all other stakeholders. They noted their role in collecting taxes, fees, payments and in maintaining sanitation and infrastructure. They have a relationship with the local representatives of the National Aid Fund (NAF) and the Ministry of Social Development (MOSD), however coordination appears haphazard. As the national decentralization process takes shape and devolves (in theory) beyond the governorate, municipal governments will be expected to assume more technical and strategic responsibilities. The lack of capacity in order to make this happen effectively was cited universally as a problem by stakeholders.

This lack of capacity has a direct impact on poor families in urban areas. As there is little coordination or local accountability, they have no direct way to get problems addressed. Additionally, issues such as crowding, poor sanitation, lack of street lighting and the presence of large amounts of waste was cited as a problem for poor neighborhoods. Similarly, this leaves households to contend with a mix of government offices and representatives when they are in need of social services. The CBO and NGO community is addressing many of these needs, but also lacks technical capacity to deliver psychosocial and other services. There is a dearth in accredited individuals with Social Work MA degrees in all of Jordan and of accreditation and focus in the areas of urban planning and community economic development.

Social Issues

The team initially heard very little regarding social issues in Jordan. The focus of most poverty programs, either government or donor-driven, is primarily on income poverty. While this is certainly a key component of poverty in Jordan (and elsewhere), an alternate view of poverty could consider more than material deprivation. The governance challenges have been noted above, and this short section will consider some of the social and human capital constraints that contribute to poverty. As the team met with more stakeholders, we began to hear more about abuse, school dropouts and family violence. Therefore, we have identified various social issues that remain un-addressed in poor urban settings.

While one of Jordan's strengths lies in its high rates of female literacy and educational achievement, it still has weaknesses in regards to gender equality. Women have a lower labor force participation rate--14.7% (Department of Statistics, 2007)--high birth rates, low decision-making ability within the household, and they are vulnerable to domestic

violence. Many of the economic opportunities created thus far by the Jordanian government have remained inaccessible to women, despite their equivalent levels of education. When women are survivors of domestic violence, they have little access to legal recourse or social services support. While these problems are not isolated to poor communities, they are exacerbated by the low income and stressful living conditions there.

Jordan has been making concerted efforts to improve the situation of women, including establishing a quota system for elected representatives in both Parliament and local councils. Her Majesty Queen Rania has been a vocal advocate for women and children, helping to expand the services offered by the Jordan River Foundation in particular. Also, a majority of governorates have established Family Protection Departments which are charged with processing cases of child and family abuse. Despite these efforts, the 2007 JPFHS found that 90% of women agreed that a husband was justified in beating his wife for at least one reason, and 1/3 of ever-married women reported having experienced physical violence. Women of lower educational status or from poorer households were more likely to report violence.

These issues are all highly sensitive, and in some cases taboo, in Jordan. However, some institutions have had success with engaging women and men in conversations and training. An approach that focuses on healthy families and engaging the various stakeholders who interact with families (teachers, religious leaders, health professionals, police) could be successful in breaking the silence on these issues.

Economic Opportunity

The assessment found a number of factors contributing to material poverty in urban Jordan. These factors were grouped around three main areas:

- Constraints in the business environment for SMEs
- A mismatch between the skills available and economic demand
- Transportation and other constraints for women.

While Jordan has invested heavily in attracting large foreign companies, via its Qualified Improvement Zones and newly minted Development Zones Commission, it has been less successful in growing large numbers of small and medium-sized enterprises. The World Bank's Doing Business report and other similar analyses consistently find that regulatory and policy barriers are inhibiting economic growth. This is precisely the kind of growth where one would hope to create employment for the poor.

However, as was reported by a number of groups that were interviewed, Jordanians (youth in particular) are not gaining the right skills and abilities to match the demands of the market. There is widespread dissatisfaction with the Vocational Training Centers. Many have noted that youth have no opportunity to learn the important soft skills which are key to gaining employment. A number of mission programs are attempting to fill this gap, and appear to be successfully reaching a modest number of youth.

Transportation, even in urban areas, was cited as a factor limiting participation in the workforce. Either the jobs are too far away, or they would require youth or women to come home later in the evening, when they feel unsafe. The Jordan River Foundation runs a family center in East Amman, where women told us that a factor restricting their participation in parenting classes was the distance, costs and difficulty getting around the city. Working to improve public transportation infrastructure could be a powerful tool for increasing the ability of the urban poor to reach economic opportunities.

Results Framework Recommendations

Results frameworks would need to be developed based on whether, or not, the Mission launches a new multi-sector initiative, or tailors existing programs to poverty reduction purposes. For new multi-sector programming, results could be conceptualized in both traditional sector terms and broader, more innovative, ways. Presumably, increases in creating and obtaining local employment and personal, or family income will be central indicators of impact related to economic opportunity.

To measure impact of the three-way approach proposed above, indicators must cover all related areas. From a governance perspective, for example, measures might be developed for how different de-concentrated ministries delivered better or more efficient services. Across sectors, and over time, perception measures could be developed to determine whether local beneficiaries and their families “feel” as if “government is more responsive” to their needs, their “lives are improving,” they are “moving out of poverty,” etc.

For health, programs could measure total fertility rate, use of family planning methods, overall child nutrition indicators, improved health services in target areas, and utilization of improved health services. Levels in drop-out rates, access to schools, improvements in counseling services within schools, perception of beneficiaries towards available types of work, and utilization levels of training and vocational training programs by beneficiaries are some options to measure impact related to educational opportunities. Policy indices could also be developed in all areas such as welfare policies, incentives for environmental management and clean industry, decentralization/de-concentration, and empowerment of citizen community committees in decision-making processes. Improvements in neighborhood infrastructure such as transportation, water & sanitation, lighting, house rehabilitation, and others would also need to be measured. Finally, availability and utilization of social welfare and family counseling services would be critical to any social services programming.

Summary of Framework

Our findings support this framework as a three-pronged explanation of the situation. These three areas overlap and influence each other, and the cross-cutting themes of gender constraints and youth run throughout the framework. Without addressing all three

of these areas, any strategy at reducing urban poverty is likely to be unsuccessful. For example:

- An urban youth employment program needs a good business environment to create those jobs, internships in growing companies, and a supportive environment to allow girls to participate;
- A program to reduce family violence will be unsuccessful if it does not address the issues of family planning and population growth, and does not seek to reduce household stress through increased income;
- A municipal governance program could improve service delivery to families at risk, but would not work if simultaneous efforts were not being made to provide meaningful and real economic opportunities to frustrated youth.

This framework is based on the team’s literature reviews, numerous stakeholder interviews and background experience. However, it would be made much more robust with improved data collection on the issues identified as gaps in the assessment. Specifically, more information about the nature of municipal operations and the conditions of poor households in urban areas is needed.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

Strategic Linkages and Opportunities for Collaboration

No one effort will independently bring about poverty alleviation or reduction. Poverty alleviation and reduction are a multi-faceted proposition that must be tackled by cross-sector collaboration and coordination.

However, lack of coordination among all parties – GOJ, donor, NGO, and private sector – was a central concern repeated several times during the course of USAID’s poverty alleviation assessment. Overlapping institutional mandates, fragmentation and duplication of programs were cited as causes for the limited impact of poverty alleviation efforts in Jordan, despite the significant resources invested. USAID could play a central role in convening all the relevant players to coordinate their efforts. This also presents an excellent opportunity to showcase how good coordination can lead to greater impact.

GOJ and Donors

Overlapping GOJ institutional mandates, fragmentation, and duplication of programs were cited several times as causes for the limited impact of poverty alleviation efforts in Jordan despite the major resources invested. As such, USAID could play a central role in convening all the relevant players to support more effective coordination.

Donor efforts in Jordan track closely with Government of Jordan initiatives. As such, most donor programs now target rural poverty alleviation. Nonetheless, the World Bank recently launched a project to assist in implementing the social safety net reform agenda in Jordan and improve social work and services provided to the poor. It is imperative that

any work undertaken by USAID in this area is coordinated closely with the World Bank program. Furthermore, the Japan International Cooperation Agency and the European Commission have vocational training programs which, with USAID support and collaboration, could be focused on urban target areas.

Civil Society

Like the donors, Jordanian civil society is following the Government of Jordan's agenda by focusing on rural poverty. Thus there are capable civil society partners who can play a central role in urban poverty alleviation. Because Jordan's government institutions are weak social services providers, it will be important to partner with these strong civil society organizations at both the local and national levels. Equally important is to build a coalition/movement to advocate for the rights of the urban poor and disabled—helping them build their capacity to network and seize opportunities to improve their neighborhoods, livelihoods, and protection of their families.

Private Sector

In the private sector, there are promising corporations with impressive corporate social responsibility (CSR) foundations. Practices range from philanthropic responses during crises, to voluntary employee contributions, to sponsoring community activities, to establishing sustainable projects in poor areas, to building partnerships with civil society organizations. Several private sector corporations – mostly in the services and telecommunication sectors – have now developed impressive corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs and foundations. A National Forum for Social Responsibility was launched in March 2009, bringing together more than 50 public, private and civil society organizations committed to community giving. USAID can capitalize on this effort by helping to enhance and institutionalize corporate citizenship and social responsibility practices through GDA-like partnerships in coordination with the new Public Private Partnerships project and the provision of incentives to address urban poverty alleviation and expand youth-to-work and internship programs such as USAID's successful Maharat project.

USAID Programs

Finally, better coordination and collaboration among existing USAID-funded projects is essential because each one can address urban poverty alleviation. As health programs work on improving services for maternal and child health and chronic diseases, more emphasis could be placed on urban poverty target areas. Family planning and health messages should target the urban poor both in the types of messages and the tools used to deliver these messages. Workforce development, leadership, and skills training programs provided through INJAZ, Maharat, school-to-career, and Youth:Work programs could be customized as well. Youth:Work program beneficiaries and Maharat participants could be recruited and mobilized to build improved services for the less advantaged. Vocational training programs supported by USAID in the areas of hospitality,

construction, and water and wastewater facilities could target and recruit youth from underprivileged areas.

Potential new decentralization, human rights and local economic development programs could easily be linked to urban poverty alleviation and reduction by targeting advocacy for the rights of the poor and developing the capacity of municipalities, Governorates, and associated institutions to prepare and implement local development plans focused on urban poverty. The promotion of water and energy efficiency—such as the work being done under the Community Based Initiative for Water Demand Management—and other infrastructure support could target urban neighborhoods.

Possible Roadblocks or Challenges, External or Internal

A Mission-led Jordan urban poverty initiative is at once timely, exciting, and fraught with challenges. It seems clear from the Team’s interviews that urban poverty is a challenge whose time has come in Jordan. A great many interviewees acknowledged that it is a serious, growing and predominantly unaddressed problem.

It is widely believed that “poverty pockets” exist only in rural districts, as if to suggest that this is the only place where one finds poverty in Jordan and once those pockets have been addressed, the job will be done. A related challenge is an apparent reluctance to probe and debate the elements, or causes, of poverty. For instance with regard to housing, there is less emphasis on repairing deteriorated neighborhoods and disproportionately focus on large, huge new housing projects targeting middle income citizens. The paucity of urban poverty analysis is an internal constraint. Almost no data analysis has been done on the subject of urban poverty—let alone assessment of the effectiveness of the years-long succession of rural poverty programs undertaken by Government, NGOs and the donor community.

An additional constraint is that social issues associated with poor families—violence against women and children, drug use, school drop-outs, socio-cultural phenomena of *wasta* and culture of shame—are left essentially unaddressed in a country with only a handful of credentialed social workers.

The economic growth link to sustainable alleviation of poverty is particularly vexing in Jordan for a number of reasons. First, the needed high rates of job growth exist in economic zones that employ large numbers of foreign workers in large companies. Second, interviewees describe a business environment which tends to frustrate entrepreneurship with a combination of entrenched bureaucracy, ineffective job skills training and an almost total lack of facilitation, or promotion, by sub-national government at both Governorate and municipal levels.

PROGRAMMING RECOMMENDATIONS

Brief Programming Concepts

USAID/Jordan has chosen to follow a bold vision to attack urban poverty. In order for this effort to be demonstrative for the region, it should show its ability to succeed to difficult communities. Overall, the team recommends that the mission consider implementing the following flagship ideas in Zarqa, Irbid, & East Amman; with an initial focus on Zarqa. These areas have a high percentage of the poor, governance challenges, and are currently underserved by donor programs. The specific neighborhoods of focus will need to be determined via further study. As described in the conceptual framework, these different aspects of the urban poverty challenge need to be addressed simultaneously in order to be successful.

Complementing the two flagship programs described below, the mission should consider expanding/modifying its existing programs to provide their services in those areas. Some of these programs would need modifications to extend the program to the selected urban poverty areas, while others would need modifications to customize the existing programs to cater to the needs of the less advantaged. During the design phase of the two flagship programs, the Mission should further review its existing programs to explore opportunities of collaboration.

Economic/Local Economic Development

Marshall U.S. urban neighborhood revitalization experience and expertise to focus on:

- 1) More effective administration of the delivery of social benefits in poor neighborhoods
- 2) Activities that build the foundation for local economic development
 - evidence based strategic planning around economic comparative advantage
 - strengthening key sector value chains in selected areas through
 - improving knowledge, technology and access to services
 - improving workforce skills and development
 - strengthening the provision of finance to key value chains
 - improving the legal, regulatory and competitive environment
 - strengthening business networks and their ability to advocate for effective reform of the business climate in their sector
 - improve the efficiency of business – municipal interactions
- 3) Local economic growth leading to significant employment and income improvements for poverty affected areas, perhaps featuring
 - job training for poor, women and youth, tightly tied to specific company hiring needs
 - improved transportation options of urban poor and women to employment centers

Strong Families Program

As the assessment and conceptual framework have described, there are serious social issues facing poor urban families in Jordan. An NGO in Zarqa noted that the “younger generation is lost, and turning more to drugs and alcohol.” These social issues include, but are not limited to:

- Family violence
- School violence
- Juvenile justice system constraints
- Lack of psychosocial services
- Gender-based barriers for women and girls
- A dearth of capacity at the municipal government level

Despite this, there is a real lack of any significant donor or GOJ led effort to address these challenges. Social challenges such as domestic violence have taken a backseat to economic development, or are simply not spoken of. Part of this disinterest is reflected in the lack of any detailed information on the prevalence or rate of these issues (i.e. no interest, no research). Any serious program undertaken by the mission will need to first seek to correct this information gap.

The challenge of addressing these issues was frequently described as sensitive, difficult, taboo, etc. To be sure, most of these topics would be tricky to broach in any society. Additional sensitivity to important cultural beliefs about family and gender are extremely important here. However, the team believes that by focusing on “healthy and strong families,” a strengths-based approach, that a new USAID program could take on this challenge.

A “Strong Families” program would involve a community or neighborhood-wide approach to an urban area. Any of these isolated issues could be worked upon separately, but they have much greater impact when addressed together by the same stakeholders. As the representative from Amman’s municipal government told the team, “No one ministry can solve this poverty problem itself.” A full approach would involve these interest groups:

- Municipal government, including local MOSD employees
- The local Family Protection Department
- Local police and courts
- Teachers and parent groups
- Local religious leaders
- Local NGOs and CBOs
- Health workers and doctors

If a consistent message can be agreed upon, and conveyed from all these angles, improvement in these areas could be achieved. An example would be the case of domestic violence, reported in the assessment to be a serious problem in Jordan. If young people, boys and girls, hear positive messages about what makes a strong family (no violence) from their teachers and local religious leaders, they will be more likely to seek help for their family, and develop one of their own later in life. If men hear the same

messages from local political leaders, religious figures, and police they will be less likely to visit violence upon their spouses. Finally, women, upon hearing these messages from their doctors, parent groups, local NGOs, children, and religious leaders will be less likely to endure violence against their persons or perpetrate it against their children. If they are unable to escape a bad situation safely, they should be confident that their local police and court systems understand the challenges they are facing and take them seriously.

Naturally, the causes of these social issues are not simply poor social messaging. Many of these problems are exacerbated by the stress of living in poverty, crowding and a lack of hope for the future. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that any effort in this area be complemented by economic growth programming. Similarly, many of the issues with staff capacity and municipal systems will need to be addressed by the governance component of the framework.

It is time to take these issues seriously, and USAID/Jordan can be a pioneer for breaking the silence. A number of existing mission programs could be expanded or morphed into addressing some of these components, but this should be done under a holistic framework.