

YOUTH:WORK *Jordan*

**An Assessment
of the
Jordanian Ministry of Social Development's
Capacity to Support Youth at Risk**

August 2010

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Executive Summary

Program Overview

Youth:Work Jordan (YWJ) is a community-based, five-year initiative that seeks to improve the life and job prospects of Jordan's most disadvantaged youth, ages 15-24. Under the program, The International Youth Foundation (IYF) is partnering with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Jordanian Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), along with several respected national and local Jordanian organizations, to improve and expand community-based services, with an overarching focus on promoting the employability and civic engagement of Jordan's youth. The initial two-years of YWJ is supporting activities in 12 selected communities exhibiting significant socio-economic challenges, located within the areas of East Amman, Zarqa, Russeifa, Irbid, Jordan Valley, and Ma'an.

Within these localities, YWJ seeks to accomplish four key goals:

1. Provide youth greater access to life, employability and entrepreneurship skills through training, internships, and job placement.
2. Deliver youth-friendly services that effectively respond to young people's needs and are relevant to their lives.
3. Support young people in improving their own communities through small scale infrastructure and rehabilitation projects.
4. Generate knowledge and lessons learned around youth employment programming that can be used to improve policy development and promote systemic change, as well as scale up successful models that can be shared with the global community.

In support of these goals, IYF is working closely with the MoSD to help strengthen the capacity of the MoSD's Central Ministry's Training Unit, MoSD Field Directorates, and YWJ Seconded Staff in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of youth development programs that are youth friendly and prepare youth for successful livelihoods and engagement in their communities.

MoSD's Role in YWJ

MoSD was positioned as the primary governmental partner under the Youth:Work Jordan program due to a number of important factors. Initially, complementing the YWJ program's direct focus on highly vulnerable youth, MoSD is one of the few public or civic organizations in Jordan with a mission that focuses directly on the socio-psycho-economic aspects of Jordanian families and youth as a means to address poverty alleviation. Under this framework, the MoSD is the Government's primary agent working with Jordan's most disadvantaged and marginalized populations including youth at risk. Additionally, given its strategic role in the oversight of all Jordan's non-governmental organizations, the MoSD's level of capacity to both provide services to youth and communicate knowledge about youth needs and best practices for youth development affects the scope, level of quality, and availability of youth-friendly services throughout Jordan.

Since the inception of the program, as Youth:Work Jordan's main governmental partner, MoSD has played a substantial role in supporting the design and implementation of the YWJ program. Of particular interest, during the program's inception phase, MoSD played a key role in the identification of YWJ's targeted communities and provided USAID and IYF with valuable

information on Jordan's Poverty Pockets and communities most at need. Thereafter, working closely with IYF and USAID, MoSD continues to provide strategic direction and material and human resources for the program at all levels.

In addition to strong support from the central headquarters of the MoSD under Their Excellencies the Minister and Secretary General, two MoSD staff members are seconded to the YWJ Program Management Unit (PMU) and work full-time in YWJ's offices to support day to day program implementation. In addition, as the program works heavily in target communities, MoSD has also provided critical on the ground guidance and support through its Field Directorates, through both Field Directors and YWJ Field Directorate YWJ Liaison Officers.

Assessment Overview

At the outset of program design, and through close consultation of the YWJ core partners, it was agreed that IYF should work closely with the MoSD to help build its capacity to better support the development of at-risk youth, particularly under YWJ's four component areas. Such efforts would accordingly be intended to both build the capacity of the MoSD to deliver and support effective, holistic services for youth at risk and also set a foundation for long term, local ownership and sustainability of the YWJ program. In this respect, the engagement of the MoSD in Jordan's largest donor funded youth program could offer a powerful opportunity for this central institution in Jordan to further its mandate by better coordinating and collaborating with international partners who were similarly focused on improving the plight of the most vulnerable of Jordanian youth.

Under this general framework, the objective of this assessment was to therefore identify specific areas within the Ministry that, if improved, would strengthen its capacity to support effective services focused on empowering youth at risk and communities with socio-economic challenges. After significant consultation and discussions with the MoSD and USAID, IYF has focused on the following Ministry units for this assessment and subsequent capacity building:

- The Training Unit in the Central Ministry and Trainers;
- Field Directorate Leadership in YWJ targeted communities; and
- Ministry staff seconded to the YWJ program.

These units were selected by core YWJ partners given their unique position as key influencers in facilitating broader change and increased capacity across the Ministry in the delivery of services for vulnerable youth, particularly those that are out-of-school and out-of-work and living in areas with high levels of poverty. As detailed in the following sections, the MoSD training unit is envisioned to serve as a central repository of information and training support using the cascade model to all Ministry staff, particularly those working in the field directly with vulnerable populations. Furthermore, the Training Unit also has access to a significant number of trainers within the Ministry system and particularly at the field directorate level – individuals who are well positioned to ensure institutionalization of quality programming approaches through training of colleagues and new staff, even with high turnover and occasional changing of staffing roles across MoSD.

Similarly, field directorates were selected given the central role they play in direct service delivery to all populations, particularly vulnerable youth. Field directorates are also closely connected to civil society organizations in local communities working with youth populations, and their increased capabilities could accordingly have a ripple effect within the broader set of institutions directly

servicing this population. Moreover, given YWJ's strong emphasis on partnering with community based organizations (CBOs) in each target community, capacity building approaches for MoSD personnel in the field could go hand-in-hand with programs supporting youth, providing a testing ground for newly acquired competencies related to positive, holistic youth development.

Finally, the partners also have focused on seconded staff from the Ministry who are working directly with the YWJ PMU. While building the capacity of individual MoSD staff is an aim of YWJ across the board, the targeting such individuals was considered important because of the critical role such staff will play in connecting and leveraging the work of the Ministry to YWJ program activities under all components.

More broadly, the YWJ program also aims to support the Ministry in better coordinating with and benefitting from the work of international donors in Jordan. In this respect, the MoSD is playing an increasing role in working with Jordan's donor supported activities, and the YWJ program also hopes to learn from the experience of seconded staff to support the Ministry in developing greater systems and supports in this area.

Methodologies Used in the Assessment

As described in the following sections which provide further detail on the methodology employed in the assessment, the assessment was conducted using various techniques including desk research, review of internal documents related to MoSD functions, and operations and field visits to targeted units. Semi-structured interviews and one-on-one meetings with approximately 60 personnel in the targeted units and MoSD leaders were also held. The objective of such interviews was to assess each unit based on its mandate as it relates to youth programming and how capable the unit is to carry out such mandates. In this analysis, particular focus was placed on assessing each unit's organizational infrastructure and staff capabilities in light of review areas under the assessment. In addition, shared information meetings were conducted with external stakeholders, including international donors and other capacity building programs.

Summary of Key Findings and Recommendations

In presenting key findings and recommendations, it is important to note that while this assessment will serve as the basis of capacity building plans for the MoSD under the YWJ program, findings are also presented that go beyond the scope of YWJ's mandate related specifically to at-risk and vulnerable youth and with selected Ministry units. Nonetheless, we have presented all findings in hopes that our efforts can also serve as a resource for other entities interested in working with the MoSD to build its capacity more broadly.

IYF anticipates that at the completion of the capacity building period, the MoSD should have greater internal capacity to oversee and manage youth development projects, monitor and evaluate such projects, and deliver relevant youth-friendly services at the community level to greater numbers of disadvantaged young people in an effective and sustained manner. Accordingly, in conducting the assessment, IYF has identified a number of specific areas to enhance the knowledge and skills of the Ministry's staff charged with focusing on youth while at the same time identifying a number of broader institutional challenges that may interfere with the more effective delivery of MoSD programs and services to at-risk youth:

Challenges for MoSD staff:

1. **Knowledge of Youth Development Principles and Effective Approaches:** The assessment indicated that MoSD staff do not share a common understanding regarding the provision of effective services to youth. These areas closely paralleled areas of focus under the YWJ program and included:
 - Knowledge of theories of change and minimum standards regarding positive youth development, especially with respect to youth employment, entrepreneurship, and life and workplace skills;
 - An understanding of core elements of youth-friendly service provision, including a focus on prevention and promoting positive holistic development within youth, offering age, gender, and developmentally appropriate activities, and involving parents and the community in youth development programs in meaningful ways; and
 - How to better encourage youth participation, engagement, and volunteerism within their communities.

2. **Knowledge of other Technical Areas and Program Management:** Beyond the provision of services to youth specifically, the assessment found challenges in a number of areas related to the effective administration of programs, including those related to youth. Specific areas included:
 - Technical Areas -*
 - Conducting needs assessments of youth and the community;
 - Building public private partnerships and community based alliances;
 - Program Management -*
 - Knowledge and experience of standard program management practices in planning and managing projects including scope, budget, and schedule management;
 - Monitoring and evaluation – knowledge and experience in performance monitoring and evaluation and impact assessments

3. **English and IT Capabilities:** Minimal proficiency of English language skills, and to a lesser extent IT skills, was found to impede MoSD staff's ability to communicate with peers and other international stakeholders and to remain up to date with the latest developments related to their job responsibilities. For example, the assessment findings found that there is a need for better utilization of IT and of emails for communication, networking, and knowledge sharing purposes and the use of internet as a source of knowledge. While some MoSD staff have received training in these areas, this training has not been able to raise proficiency levels to adequate levels and quality continuing education is required to ensure improvement of their skills in these two critical areas.

4. **Effective Training Practices:** The MoSD Training Unit should play a central role in propagating technical expertise throughout the Ministry in its areas of focus, as well as ensuring that both Central Ministry and field staff have the ability to manage and undertake the operational tasks required of them. However, the assessment found that Training Unit staff and a number of its master trainers would greatly benefit from an enhancement of their skills in the following critical areas:
 - Conducting training needs assessments;
 - Planning effective training interventions;
 - Incorporating a varied menu of effective adult learner-centered pedagogical strategies;
 - Managing effectively the various stages of the training cycle;

- Conducting training evaluations and impact assessments.

Institutional Challenges:

Challenges at the staffing level feed into broader institutional challenges, and the assessment identified the following three broad challenges that also impede the effective delivery of effective social services for families and at-risk youth:

- 1. Reduced Capacity to Expand Services:** In integrating the MoSD as our core governmental partner in the YWJ program, and in particular working with and engaging the Field Directorates and YWJ seconded staff in program design and implementation, MoSD did not appear to have the broader institutional systems to support systematic planning when kicking off new partnerships with new projects and donors. The MoSD has recently begun an organizational restructuring and as a part of this restructuring is redefining job descriptions and roles and responsibilities of the overall ministry staff. While this process is not yet complete, this restructuring is a positive step toward helping the MoSD to better deploy their staff working on international projects.
- 2. Training May Not Be Applied to Staff Core Functions and Responsibilities:** While many staff have received training, a strategy for how this training fits within overall ministry priorities and is integrated into individual job functions in light these priorities appears to be lacking. This is a reflection of the lack of overall management plans noted previously and the need for trainings to be linked to specific opportunities which enable staff to practice new skills they have developed through the various trainings and to receive on-going follow up and coaching to make sure the concepts and skills learned are internalized.
- 3. Limited Knowledge Management:** The MoSD has a large network of experienced staff members working directly with the most challenging populations that are gathering a wealth of knowledge about how to best meet the Ministry's mandate. However, the MoSD does not appear to have a systematic way of gathering and synthesizing this knowledge, disseminating information about best practices and technical expertise developed by either staff within the ministry or external vendors who provide training or other inputs and/or making all of it easily accessible.

Key Recommendations:

In light of the assessment findings highlighted above and discussed in more detail in the content of this report, IYF has put forward our capacity building recommendations which we believe will serve as a foundation to equip the Ministry with improved processes and a more knowledgeable, empowered staff as it expands its mission to play a bigger role in working with external donors and shaping Jordan's family and youth focused policies and programs.

Major recommendations which IYF will act upon and address in its capacity building action plan include:

- 1. Build Capacity of MoSD on Youth-at-Risk Programming:** It is imperative to build the capacity of the MoSD on youth-at-risk programming through workshops, followup and coaching, and participation in best-practice conferences with practitioners from around the

region so that MoSD can gain the expertise it needs to play a larger role in supporting programs to improve youth livelihoods and civic engagement. MoSD is doing an enormous amount of work in family social services and is already interacting with youth through these activities and other capacities. However, the services provided in support of youth development in particular have not been well targeted for this specific population's needs. To shoulder this role, MoSD would need to analyze what services are currently being provided to youth and evaluate the youth friendliness of such services, with the relevant staff thereafter being trained to help address gap areas. The assessment found that priority areas for capacity building in such areas would include:

- **Volunteerism and Civic Education Training:** Given their close connection to communities and their needs, MoSD and its network of supported NGOs can provide a powerful platform to launch large scale volunteer programs. But their current efforts are scattered and there is a need for internal training on how to foster a culture of youth civic engagement and manage volunteer programs for maximum effect.
 - **Youth Employment and Youth Friendly Services:** MoSD is the main social services arm of the Government and is in daily contact with neighborhood families and youth, and as such, its staff needs to be in a position to make recommendations to CBOS and families on youth employment opportunities and how to ensure services offered are accessible and friendly to youth.
 - **Needs Assessments and Research Studies:** The MoSD produces brief reports of good quality that contain valuable data on poverty levels, unemployment rates, neighborhoods and youth, but such reports generally aren't well packaged for broader presentation and use by the wide variety of stakeholders that could also utilize such information to help address community needs. One of area of support would accordingly be to build the capacity of MoSD to better share and package their surveys and needs assessment for such purposes.
 - **Establishing partnerships and alliances that benefit youth-at-risk:** As Jordan's main for governmental overseer of civil society organizations, MoSD is in a unique position to bring together a diverse group of public/private/NGO stakeholders in support of youth related issues. Capacity building is needed to train MoSD's relevant staff in how to reach out, dialogue and convene an alliance of partners in support of a cause and spur collective action to address challenges within local communities.
2. **Build Capacity of MoSD in Program Management and other Technical Areas:** A number of surveyed ministry personnel have significant qualifications and experience and are strong assets to a program of this nature. However, a big challenge to be addressed is ensuring that these staff have a better understanding of basic concepts and skills in program planning, management, budgeting, and monitoring and evaluation that will enable them to put systems in place to support specific institutional and program needs. In addition, it is recommended that MoSD staff receive training in specific technical areas that are relevant to YWJ including how to conduct community needs assessments for vulnerable youth and how to build community alliances to form effective, multi stakeholder partnerships. Increased knowledge and experience in these two areas are especially relevant to the MoSD Field Directorates who are working

closely with YWJ's program partners to assess the needs of vulnerable youth and to build community level alliances and public private partnerships in support of program implementation.

- 3. English and IT Capabilities:** Based on the experience of YWJ and the extensive use of English in YWJ's Project Management Unit and with stakeholders on a daily basis, MoSD staff seconded to international donor projects should be sufficiently equipped with English speaking and reading skills, as well as skills in using the internet to communicate with professionals elsewhere and to do research on effective practices and policies. This will allow for seconded staff to read, synthesize, understand, and share important documents in English and engage in strategic meetings held with USAID, IYF and other English speaking stakeholders.

Furthermore, as the main representatives for MoSD for the program, the seconded staff play a critical role in relationship building between MoSD and international donors, and additional English language will empower the seconded staff to more actively engage and network with English-speaking program stakeholders and donors. Likewise, MoSD Field Directors and YWJ Liaison Officers should also improve their English and IT skills which will allow them, like the seconded staff, to communicate more effectively with YWJ partners and other professionals around the world through email and to utilize the internet to research best practices and policies of state-of-art positive youth development programming.

- 4. Improve Training Practices:** To better manage and improve the quality and relevancy of training programs, it is recommended that MoSD training unit staff and trainers receive advanced training on how to plan and manage training programs, how to conduct training evaluations and impact assessments, and how to conduct training needs assessments.

In addition to the above recommendations that IYF will act upon, IYF has provided three additional institutional level recommendations for the Ministry to consider and undertake itself over time to provide a more effective delivery of a broad range of social services for families and youth.

- 1. Build the Capacity of MoSD to Better Utilize Its NGO Network:** MoSD holds a unique position in overseeing almost 3000 NGOs in Jordan. The MoSD should consider how to better tap into the resources, expertise, and enormous wealth of knowledge that this network of organizations can offer. Organizing a community of practitioners that meet periodically in forums on specific topics, as well as participating in email networks, share experiences and learn from one another would be one way for the MoSD to capture and synthesize this expertise and make it available electronically. Such an approach could help the MoSD to refine and package the types of services reaching youth at risk in order to better support YWJ's activities and sustain the program in the long term.
- 2. Improve Processes with External Partners:** IYF recommends that when the MoSD is negotiating partnerships with other specific donors it should put in place processes and protocols that will clarify expectations and outcomes of the program, as well as the roles and responsibilities for the individuals working on the program. This in turn will also inform the specific capacity building training that may be required to better enable the staff working on these projects to carry out their core functions effectively.

- 3. Knowledge Management:** In order for the MoSD to develop a more focused direction for its programs and to prioritize requisite changes leading to improvement in operational effectiveness, IYF recommends that the Ministry develop a system to document lessons learned, resources and tools, including a registry and database of trainings, as well as a roster of staff with specific technical knowledge and expertise. Such a database would be beneficial not only for YWJ but for other prospective donors interested in working with the MoSD to help both MoSD and such donors best define where they can optimally provide support.

Similarly, while it is still early to carry out a comprehensive evaluation of the results of having MoSD staff seconded to the YWJ Program Management Unit, initial indications suggest that such a collaboration model could be a powerful avenue to provide MoSD staff with in-depth, close-up exposure to designing and implementing a large scale, donor funded development project. Hence, it is recommended that alongside the implementation of the YWJ program, MoSD capitalize on this experience by strategically documenting and ensuring knowledge transfer and integration of lessons learned from the YWJ project into overall Ministry processes, particularly as it works closely with other donor funded projects.

It is our hope that through this assessment and the implementation of YWJ's Capacity Building Plan, Jordan's Ministry of Social Development will be well poised to effectively address the challenges of disadvantaged young people across Jordan. As noted above, the Ministry is uniquely positioned to have a significant impact on young people and the way their needs are identified and served throughout the Kingdom. Indeed, the Ministry can play both a critical role in providing direct and youth friendly services to at-risk youth, and in communicating those needs and best practices for addressing them to the larger community of stakeholders across sectors in Jordan.

Providing greater detail on the areas discussed above, this report outlines the rationale, methodology, and assessment of the capacity of the MoSD Training Unit, Central Ministry seconded staff, and Field Directorate staff. As each unit is assessed, recommendations for building MoSD's capacity to deliver quality youth programming are also included. These recommendations are broken up between those that IYF will address in its capacity building plan for MoSD and those that have broader implications at the institutional level and which the Ministry is encouraged to undertake itself and overtime.

A separate report outlines IYF's recommended capacity building approach for the first two years of capacity building, after which we will strategically evaluate progress on current capacity building efforts and make longer term plans for the duration of the five year program based on the findings.

I. An Assessment of the MoSD’s Capacity to Support Youth at Risk

Introduction

The MoSD Capacity Assessment was conducted to evaluate the institutional capacity and priority training areas of the MoSD units with the highest relevance to YWJ’s mandate and objectives. As such, capacity building is viewed as a natural complement to activities to be undertaken under the program with strong MoSD support, both at the macro, policy level as well as within YWJ target communities. More generally, however, the assessment has also been framed to serve as a resource for other stakeholders in Jordan interested in investing in the capacity of the Ministry. This is because the Ministry plays a critical role in the support of vulnerable populations in Jordan, and well targeted support from the many donors and other relevant actors in the country would be invaluable in support of this vital mission.

The assessment was conducted in two phases. An “inception phase” superseded the formal gap assessment and helped guide assessment activities. Accordingly, during this inception phase, an initial, informal appraisal was conducted by IYF staff both to gain a clearer understanding of the structure of the MoSD as it relates to youth programming and to finalize the selection of interviewees, focus group participants and topics to be covered by the full assessment.

From there, in the second phase, IYF, in consultation with USAID and MoSD, narrowed the scope of the assessment to focus on a more in depth “gap” assessment of selected units within the Ministry that relate most to youth programming and have the greatest potential to bring about institutional change within the Ministry. A detailed outline of the process for conducting the inception and gap assessment phases can be found in *Annex A* to this report.

Rationale, Objectives, and Methodology

This section provides a brief overview of MoSD’s overall mission, mandate and structure to help inform IYF regarding the Ministry’s objectives and programs in relation to youth development. It then describes which departments within the Ministry were selected for the assessment and why. Lastly, this section outlines the methodologies and approaches taken to carry out the assessment.

Overview of MoSD Mandate and Structure

As a first step to better understand the Ministry’s mandate and structure, IYF conducted a desk review of MoSD’s bylaws and website and conducted interviews with the senior leadership of the Central Ministry staff.

The MoSD provides support to a broad range of low income segments of Jordanian society. Specifically, it is called to do the following:

- Provide care (residential and community care) for families, women, the elderly, the disabled, and children;
- Raise awareness of critical social issues facing Jordanian society and culture;
- Provide grants for income-generating (micro) projects to support underprivileged families;
- Manage and support Local Community Development Centers (LCDCs);

- Encourage working partnerships with service provider NGOs and oversee their work as per the role described in the Societies Law;
- Coordinate with the Ministry of Health (MoH) on free health insurance for poor people
- Support the work of the National Aid Fund (NAF) which has responsibility for the administration of cash benefits;
- Provide services to youth, focusing on juvenile offenders, disabled youth, orphans and street youth institutionalized for begging.¹

Services to youth are provided either directly or indirectly through the following divisions that have a presence both in the Central Ministry and the Field Directorates:

- Productivity Enhancement Division
- Poverty and Social Defense Division
- Societies Division
- Communication and Societal Awareness Division
- Persons with Disabilities Division

Divisions present only in the Central Ministry include:

- Human Resources Division (Training Unit)
- Planning and Institutional Development Division

According to MoSD’s three-year strategic plan (2009-2011), the Ministry continues to move towards a partnership-building approach to fulfilling its mandate by working in closer coordination with non-government organizations in the delivery of services to targeted vulnerable segments of Jordanian society and directly and indirectly to youth populations.

Selection of MoSD Units for Assessment

In selecting the target groups within the MoSD for this assessment, priority was given to those units that were found to be the most involved in youth-related programming, particularly as they relate to YWJ’s program objectives, and had the greatest potential to facilitate a systematic institutional change within the MoSD. With this in mind, the YWJ core partners agreed to focus the study on the following three “key influencer” units or groups of personnel within MoSD that are the most catalytic in helping the institution make system changes in terms of quality, scope, and relevance of its programming: the Training Unit, the Field Directorate leadership, and Seconded Staff from the Central Ministry. The rationale for selecting these units is as follows:

Training Unit – Reaching throughout and across all levels of personnel of the Ministry, the MoSD training unit is designed to serve as the central repository of information and training support to all Ministry staff. The Training Unit also has access to a significant number of trainers within the Ministry system and particularly at the field directorate level. These individuals are well positioned to ensure institutionalization of quality programming approaches through training of colleagues and

¹ Other youth may benefit indirectly from the services and activities provided by the MoSD to communities through Local Community Development Centers, free health insurance, or income enhancement projects established through loans and grants from the MoSD productivity enhancement directorate. The Communications and Community Awareness Division of the MoSD, in addition to its support to NGOs, usually includes some activities which benefit youth. These activities and awareness raising campaigns usually aim at raising community members’ awareness about women and child’s rights, and promote volunteerism, civic engagement, and employment.

new staff, even despite high turnover across MoSD. Accordingly, by focusing efforts on the Training Unit, it is anticipated that knowledge and skills gained by the Ministry can be retained in one central unit that is also tasked with the transfer of such knowledge across large numbers of MoSD staff.

Given this position of the Central Ministry Training Unit, questions asked during the assessment attempted to dig deeper in terms of its organizational structure and the competencies of its staff to best spread knowledge on positive youth development to the rest of the Ministry.

Field Directorates - Field Directorates, and Liaison Officers in particular, were included due to their close connection to service delivery, their close interaction both with young people and community non-profit organizations at the local level, and their close involvement with the YWJ program. Increased capabilities within the MoSD field Directorates will help influence quality service provision within the broader set of institutions directly serving youth populations in target communities. Moreover, given YWJ's strong emphasis on direct interface with youth in target communities, capacity building approaches for MoSD personnel in the field could go hand-in-hand with training programs, providing a testing ground for newly acquired competencies related to positive, holistic youth development.

For the Field Directorates, the goal was to assess their role in the field as a key reference on youth development in their communities, and their effectiveness as a governmental entity providing services that are responsive to the needs of youth. In this regard, IYF focused on how the Directorates interact with both local and international stakeholders. The understanding of youth issues and the level and quality of support provided to youth was also a significant focus of our research. Ultimately, this assessment sought to clarify how to activate the role of Directorates as an active member on the ground of multi-stakeholder projects like YWJ.

Central Ministry Staff Seconded to YWJ - The seconded staff was also included in light of their work to support the YWJ program as part of the YWJ PMU staff. In this respect, the targeting of such individuals for capacity building support was considered important because of the critical role such staff will play in connecting and leveraging the work of the Ministry to YWJ program activities under all components. Moreover, the ability of this staff to take the lead in transferring the acquired knowledge and skills back to the Ministry would be vital in helping to ensure the sustainability of program efforts after the end of the program.

With this understanding of the role and importance of seconded staff, IYF's goal was to analyze the effectiveness of integrating seconded MoSD staff within the field offices of international donor projects, and define what is needed to make this approach effective, including the level of readiness and qualifications of seconded staff. To this regard, IYF focused on the staff's ability to work with international donors and partners outside of MoSD, their capabilities to manage large projects, and knowledge of relevant technical areas. Through this review, it is important to see how well seconded staff can gain the necessary technical and managerial skills, and then transfer that knowledge back to the Ministry for broader dissemination and utilization.

Methodology and Approach

Given the objectives of the assessment and diversity of resources available, the research team concluded that a variety of different approaches should be employed to collect information. A

detailed outline of the assessment approach by unit, including specific data collection forms used, documents reviewed, etc. can be found in Annex F. A summary of the approaches taken for the assessment is as follows:

- **Desk Review** - A desk review of relevant reports and documents that previously addressed MoSD capacity building efforts was conducted in order to avoid any duplication and verify the areas of focus. Examples of the types of documents reviewed include the MoSD Strategic Plans, MoSD Training Guidelines, MoSD Training Plan Impact Assessment Report, MoSD Productive Families Program Instructions, MoSD Administrative Organization Ordinance, and documents from the World Bank Jordan Social Protection Enhancement Program.
- **Central Ministry Interviews** – Semi-structured interviews, guided by a questionnaire, were conducted with the Director of Human Resources in the Central Ministry, Training Unit staff and key trainers, as well as the MoSD staff seconded to the YWJ program. In all around 10 interviews were conducted with the Training Unit, trainers and senior management. Meetings were also conducted with MoSD senior Ministry officials to provide briefings on the initial findings and obtain feedback and input on capacity building priorities.
- **Field Visits** – 8 Site visits to the Field Directorates were conducted to review documents and conduct interviews with selected staff from the MoSD Field Directorates including those from Irbid, North Shuneh, Deir Allah, East Amman, Marka, Russeifa, Zarqa and Ma'an. One-on-one, semi structured interviews using a standard form were conducted with a total of 53 individuals.
- **Information Sharing Meetings** – USAID contacts for the YWJ program were consulted regularly to help inform assessment priorities and share initial findings. Three information sharing meetings were also held with the World Bank Program Manager and AED/Civil Society USAID-funded consultant who are working on a capacity assessment assignment of the MoSD pertaining to the new Bylaws of Associations. In this respect, the project aims to provide technical assistance of MoSD in relation to their work with civil society organizations.

In conducting the assessment, the research team first reviewed the mandates for each unit to better understand its current role and function and ground our review of capacity constraints. The organizational and staff capacities of each unit were then assessed to determine how well both the organizational structure and professional abilities of staff helped to facilitate the implementation of the units' mandates.

Specific data collection forms were also developed to identify relevant documentation and include them in report analysis and findings. These included job description forms, biodata forms, and project management capability assessment forms. More broadly, the following were broad categories of inventories and data collection used to collect data to inform the assessment:

- **Current Capacity Building Efforts:** This included an inventory of current efforts to build capacity within the Ministry, including training programs and other donor funded initiatives. Examples of these programs include training in communications skills, strategic planning,

report writing, public administration and finances, social research methodologies and work place readiness skills. (See Annex B.1 & 2 for full list of training programs by external and internal providers)

- **MoSD Trainer Capabilities:** An inventory of experienced MoSD trainers and evaluation of their needs in the areas of youth related subject matter and training /facilitation skills. (See Annex D for complete inventory)
- **Youth Development Resources:** An inventory of any toolkits, training modules, and effective practice publications in youth development available from the MoSD and trainers delivering the training. However, it is important to mention that not all training toolkits or materials are available at the Training Unit. Each trainer keeps his/her training modules with them. (See Annex B2 for list of resources)

Information gathered through these methods collectively helped to inform findings of the assessment and provide a strong foundation to guide the formulation of recommendations found later in this document.

Assessment of Selected MoSD Units

This section details findings under the assessment of the capacity building needs of the Central Ministry Training Unit, Field Directorates and the MoSD Seconded Staff to YWJ. In each of the sections below, a summary of the relevant Unit's mandate is provided followed by overall capacity findings for this unit.

Based on these findings, specific recommendations related to YWJ capacity building efforts are also presented for each unit in order to: (1) enhance the Unit's interaction and participation in Youth Work: Jordan programming; and (2) more broadly introduce and expand the Ministry's service delivery in the areas of employment, entrepreneurship, youth-friendly services, and civic engagement/ volunteerism of vulnerable youth.

1. Training Unit Assessment

Mandate

The Training Unit (TU) is part of the Human Resources Division of the MoSD and seeks to improve the competencies and performance of the Ministry's staff in the delivery of quality services to targeted vulnerable populations. Its specific tasks include:

- Conducting training needs assessments for MoSD staff;
- Developing and implementing an MoSD training plan for all staff each year;
- Contributing to designing training programs in response to identified needs;
- Overseeing and monitoring the implementation of the training plan in coordination with internal or external training providers;
- Facilitating training/internships for college/university students at different centers and institutions of the MoSD;
- Supporting the efforts of local and international volunteers at the different MoSD centers and institutions to ensure maximum benefit from their efforts;
- Coordinating the attendance of MoSD staff to seminars and conferences held outside Jordan
- Coordinating with the Civil Service Bureau staff scholarships and trainings sponsored by the MoSD outside of Jordan;
- Preparing achievement reports, document training achievements, and updating the MoSD training database.

Organizational and Staff Capacity Findings.

The TU is managed by two individuals in the Central Ministry who are responsible for all the assessments, coordination, and reporting of training activities throughout the Ministry. The TU managerial staff oversees the process of gathering information related to training needs through distributing a form that MoSD staff in the Center and Field Directorates fill out and send back to the TU after being reviewed and approved by their supervisors and directors. The TU management then prepares the annual training plan after analyzing the received forms giving priority to topics most requested by respondents.

Beyond determining and supporting training needs, one of the main functions expected of the TU is monitoring the implementation of the training plan and reporting on progress on capacity building

to MoSD senior management. However, reports prepared by the TU staff are mostly progress and achievements reports. It appears that training impact assessments are rarely conducted.

The TU also hosts 27 trainers, who work both in the Central Ministry and the Field Directorates (*see Annex D for full list*). While this is an important capability to note, such trainers often have other ministerial duties. For example, almost all the Field Directors interviewed for this assessment were also trainers. External service providers (both governmental bodies outside of MoSD and private companies) are also contracted to conduct trainings for MoSD staff on an as-needed basis. The cost of training is covered from the ministry's budget or through support of particular donors.

Consistent with our analysis of the findings, the following is a synthesis of observations in terms of organizational and staff capacities within the Training Unit.

Organizational Capacity

- 1. Lack of Overall Management Systems:** The TU does not have a formal project management system in place, either to carry out training programs in an effective and organized fashion, or to formally document and track successes or challenges being faced. Issues or challenges encountered by the Unit may be documented as they are raised depending on the judgment of the individual within the unit receiving them, leaving the management team with little guidance on how to run the unit efficiently.

At the same time, one positive note is that a formal government operating system (procedures, policies, and regulations) exists that governs the use of external training and is being followed regularly by all staff.

- 2. Limited Staff / Training Support:** The capacity of the present staffing arrangement of the TU does not appear to enable them to fully carry out TU functions adequately or to properly perform the duties assigned to them in their job descriptions. The TU appears to be under staffed both from a management perspective and trainer perspective. Notwithstanding the high demand for the Unit's services, there are no fulltime trainers fully dedicated to the unit and Ministry training needs. This is especially true considering that the trainers are not TU staff and they take on training in addition to their other work responsibilities. This demand will probably increase with MoSD's increased role in advancing the development agenda of the country and related roles and responsibilities of its staff at all levels of the Ministry.
- 3. Insufficient Quality Control:** Training manuals used are either prepared by the trainers of the MoSD (who are in different locations), or by external training providers. As a result, there is no central repository for the manuals that are used in the trainings, which means there is no way to verify the quality of trainings or share resources and tools from past trainings should the Ministry need them as a future reference. To address this problem, the Human Resources Division recently published Training Guidelines to be used by the Unit. However, implementation mechanisms are not yet in place and relevant training on applying these guidelines has not been provided.
- 4. Limited Trainee Data:** The TU has a MoSD Training Database that houses data showing training received by each staff member all through their employment at MoSD. This information is entered and updated by the management staff in the Central Ministry.

However, the database does not provide details on the assignments staff members have worked on during their professional life in MoSD or elsewhere, such as roles in liaising with donor projects, project management experience or conducting trainings, which makes it difficult to correlate how certain trainings could be most relevant or helpful in empowering staff to carry out their job descriptions.

5. **Space/Location Constraints:** Training is provided in one of two MoSD training centers in Jordan: one in Amman, the other in Ma'an. Given the demand for training and the remote locations of most of MoSD's staff, the space is inadequate to conduct all the needed trainings.
6. **Financial Resource Constraints:** The availability of financial resources is a constraining factor in the Unit's ability to plan and delivery effective training programs. For example, a lack of funding was mentioned as specifically affecting the ability of the Unit to deliver sufficient English language training because the training budget is limited and priority is given to technical training that is needed. Another example cited was that there have been insufficient funds to support the delivery of training on impact evaluation.

Staff Capacity

1. **Previous Trainings have not Provided Key Skills for Job Functions:** Both the Training Unit staff at both the managerial level, as well as on the trainers' levels have received a number of trainings through the MoSD. These trainings include, but are not limited to Project Management, Communications Skills, and English Language and IT skills. (*See Annex C for full list of trainings received*). However, these trainings have not been offered in a systematic fashion, nor have they been sufficient to enable trainers to fully carry out their duties. In particular, staff cited lack of English proficiency as a key hindrance to being able to communicate with external donors, international training providers, and to stay up-to-date with the latest developments related to the training profession.

In addition, it appears that the training being rolled out isn't always tied to the overall strategic plan for training being developed by the Training Unit management in the Central ministry. This is due in part to the fact that the Training Unit management is not fully equipped to manage the overall process of training. As a result, while the development of training plans is helpful, the plan has not been executed in an effective way.

On a positive note, while the Training Unit staff does not know how to measure the impact of training programs on their own, they do recognize the importance of monitoring and evaluation in training planning and are eager to make progress in this area.

2. **Gaps in Skills Related to Training:** There are a group of trainers that regularly deliver trainings in the field however some trainers are better equipped than others. Furthermore, the knowledge that has been gained through attending workshops does not appear to cover all the areas related to the work of trainers and the Training Unit. This includes:
 - How to conduct training needs assessments;
 - How to plan trainings;
 - How to adequately manage training programs;

- How to conduct training evaluations and impact assessments; and
- How to outsource/manage training contracts effectively.

Furthermore, while a number of ministry trainers have significant qualifications and experience and are strong assets to youth development programs or other ministry priorities, ensuring that these staff are best positioned to provide training support in critical areas requires an overall vision and system that links such training to the strategic needs of the Ministry.

3. **Unfamiliarity with Important Training Content Areas:** In general, most MoSD trainers have received a minimum of 180 hours in training of trainers courses, many of which have been provided by international service providers. Examples of these include the UNICEF Adolescent Program, the ILO Child Labor Program, and the Questscope Mentoring Program. However, most trainings that staff has received and given relates to social work and dealing with youth in the juvenile justice system.

Of the 27 trainers within the MoSD, only seven have been trained in basic life skills for youth, and only one has been trained in youth participation and volunteerism. None have received training on positive youth development, employability, entrepreneurship, or youth-friendly services, and this gap is not currently being filled through external service providers.

Training Unit Recommendations

1. **Provide Advanced Training in Priority Topics:** Across all assessed units, it is recommended that MoSD staff should be provided with the training necessary to enhance their capacities in critical areas. A full list of suggested trainings for all assessed Units can be found in Annex E. It is worth noting that both language and IT skills were cited as hindrances to effective service delivery in all three units, and further training in these two skills should be considered a priority area for staff training. In addition, additional training in project management, on top of any basic project management training that staff may have already received, is recommended to help continue to improve MoSD's programmatic and operational systems and processes. Finally, Training Unit managerial staff in particular should receive advanced training on how to conduct training needs assessments, designing and managing training programs, and monitoring and evaluating the impact of trainings.

This training should be tied to a specific action plan that will allow the TU to apply the skills gained from their training to make concrete improvements in their training plan and activities.

2. **Institute Training and Regularized Protocols related to new Training Guidelines:** In order to build on the institutional resources already available and ensure quality standards are adhered to for all trainings, we recommend the Human Resource Department organize training for TU staff, MoSD trainers, and HR Division Heads in the field on the Training Guidelines that have been developed by the MoSD Human Resources Department. Such training should make clear and assign roles and responsibilities regarding training activities to ensure the application of these Guidelines throughout the entire Ministry.

- 3. Develop a Comprehensive Registry and Database, including Directory of Master Trainers and External Providers:** MoSD should expand its current registry of trainers to build a comprehensive database that includes information on the Training Unit's projects, activities, and trainings conducted by staff (including the purpose and outcomes, content, time length, participant completion list, evaluation/impact results, etc). The Training Unit also appears to regularly use external service providers to support the building of capacity of MoSD staff. (*See Annex B for a list of external training providers*). These external providers may advise and provide services in effective youth program development, monitoring and evaluation, and also offer short-term trainings for staff. To ensure all these resources are easily accessible to relevant Ministry staff, an updated inventory should be taken periodically. Current databases used by the MoSD appear to have some of this functionality, and optimally could be built upon to address gap areas.
- 4. Designate and Focus Efforts on Most Senior Trainers:** In order to give more structure to the cascade model of training, thus making training efforts more efficient, it is recommended that the capacity building interventions for MoSD trainers focus on training for MoSD's senior and more experienced trainers, who would in turn provide training to a second group of less experienced trainers through a training of trainers model. Specifically, the senior trainers would be trained on preparing a staff training plan, materials, and manuals on topics to be covered by the program; trainings related to youth development, employability, entrepreneurship, and youth-friendly services would also be given to this group. These trainers would be selected based on years of experience, number of trainings delivered, and accreditation.
- 6. Improve Staffing Capacity:** It is recommended to have two trainers from MoSD's pool of trainers to be assigned to the Training Unit full time. This will boost capacity resources for training and help better managing the technical areas related to the design and delivery of training programs, as well as curriculum development. It is recommended that overtime MoSD consider exploring options for the development of regional qualified training centers and raising funds to support such a model.
- 7. Overall Management System:** More training should be linked to specific program opportunities so staff can have the opportunity to practice what they been trained on, rather than having skills developed but then forgotten or not capitalized upon. In doing so, the Ministry will empower its staff to more creative and to utilize their skills taught.

2. MOSD Field Directorates Assessment

Mandate

Core functions of staff in the field directorates include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Managing service delivery under MoSD's overall mandate to Jordan's disadvantaged populations identified previously;
- Coordinating with other ministries' directorates on issues of concern to the governorate or district;
- Managing relationships with local and international development voluntary organizations; and
- Contracting with non-governmental organizations to implement projects in the community.

YWJ program activities are a part of all of these core mandate areas for field directorate staff. In this respect, within each Field Directorate, specific duties that relate to the YWJ program are as follows:

- Coordinating with the Ministry of Labor field directorates in areas related to training and employment, particularly for youth;
- Overseeing and building the capacity of local non-governmental organizations to ensure programs are delivered efficiently and effectively and with maximum community ownership;
- Supervising the operations and activities of juvenile care centers; and
- Defining, planning, and implementing community awareness activities in coordination with other local stakeholders.

To help fulfill these tasks under the YWJ program, the MoSD has assigned Liaison Officers from each Field Directorate to work closely with YWJ's stakeholders in each of the target communities. The role of the Liaison Officer is to serve as the primary YWJ MoSD representative in each community and provide stakeholders and IYF guidance on the local context.

Organizational and Staff Capacity

The organizational structure of the Field Directorates is an exact reflection of that of the Central Ministry. Services are delivered in each of the Field Directorates under the following three broad categories:

- *Social Development Services* - The provision of community development services is delivered through three community development related divisions: (1) Productivity Enhancement Division; (2) the Societies Division; and (3) the Communications and Community Awareness Division.
- *Social Care Services* - Social care services are provided through another three divisions: (1) Family; (2) Social Defense; and (3) Persons with Disabilities Divisions.
- *Staff Development and Other Support Services* - Staff development, administrative and financial support services are provided to all Directorate divisions by the following divisions: (1) Human Resource; (2) Finance; and (3) Administration.

The following observations can be made after conducting an analysis of the Field Directorates' capacity building needs:

Organizational Capacity -

- 1. Lack of Overall Management Plans:** Staff responsibilities and duties mostly stem from the Central Ministry's annual plans. However, much like the Training Unit, formal project management methodologies are not practiced, nor are systems employed to monitor progress against objectives and long term Directorate goals in light of annual plans or the Ministry's overall mandate.
- 2. Lack of Clarity around Roles and Responsibilities:** For YWJ in particular, clearer direction from the MoSD is necessary on Liaison Officers' responsibilities with respect to YWJ in order to activate their role in the communities. The difference in role between the Liaison Officer and the Field Director on YWJ matters has not been clearly distinguished and is not uniform across YWJ communities. For example, YWJ partner meetings are sometimes attended by the Liaison Officers and other times they are attended by the Field Directors. In addition, the Liaison Officers are not empowered to take on responsibility and make decisions on behalf of the MoSD Field Directorate.

The lack of direction and clarity around the Liaison Officer role may result in significant challenges because this reduces the ability of MoSD to further internalize best practices of effective youth development supported under the YWJ Program within the Field Directorates and to expand and sustain these efforts over the long term.

- 3. Staff Rotations:** MoSD's practice of rotating staff between positions and Directorates and the frequent changes in job positions and descriptions that result from these rotations also can pose a serious challenge for YWJ's efforts to build the capacity of field staff working with the program. Such rotations also reduce staff opportunities to practice their newly acquired skills and build knowledge on youth related issues in a manner that will further benefit the Ministry for the longer term.

Staff Capacity –

- 1. Field Staff Require Greater Education and Training:** Of the eight field directors interviewed, all hold at least Bachelors' degrees and most hold Masters' degrees. They all have considerable experience in all technical areas of MoSD work and most have risen through the ranks of the Ministry until they came to their current positions. However, most staff members in positions below the Division Heads have completed only a high school education (e.g. Tawjihi), reducing their ability to successfully undertake roles and responsibilities required of them.
- 2. Skills Gaps in Program Administration & Programmatic Technical Areas:** Much like the Training Unit, most staff in the field directorates have received some level of training in program administration areas such as strategic planning, leadership skills, project management, staff performance appraisals, communication and negotiations skills, report writing, IT and English. However this training is insufficient. For example, the English training delivered is very rudimentary and a higher level of comprehension is required in order for staff to search the internet for tools and resources, interact with English speaking professionals, and network with an international community of peers working on youth issues.

In addition to the skills deficiencies in program administration, the assessment found that field staff working on the YWJ program lack sufficient training in programmatic technical areas such as youth friendly services, community needs assessments, monitoring and evaluation and gender awareness.

3. **Underutilization of Knowledgeable Staff:** As with the Training Unit, many of the field directors themselves are trainers on the topics referenced above. In addition, MoSD has also given numerous seminars and conferences in areas related to its work. However, as noted in the operational challenges above, this training is not necessarily directly tied to overall strategic goals and annual management plans, reducing the benefit that is possible to gain from such experiences. Similarly, individual roles and responsibilities do not often create the space for field staff to apply what they have learned and further practice and build newly developed skills.
4. **Knowledge of Youth Programming:** Field staff working with the YWJ program lack proper training in a number of areas related to the provision of effective youth services including:
 - Conducting comprehensive studies and compiling research data regarding youth. The newly envisioned role of MoSD necessitates more capacity in carrying out youth studies to help inform policy makers in the MoSD to make well informed decisions about youth related issues.
 - Knowledge of best practices in youth programming including:
 - Youth employment services;
 - Youth entrepreneurship and how to best advise youth on designing, establishing and managing their own businesses;
 - Youth friendly services; and
 - Youth volunteerism and civic education;
 - Knowledge of alliance building methods and public private partnerships;
 - Conducting awareness campaigns around critical issues effecting communities.

Field Directorate Recommendations

1. **Provide Advanced Training in Cross-cutting Technical/Management skills.** As with staff in the training units, it is recommended that MoSD staff within field directorates be provided with updated training necessary to enhance their capacities in critical areas. These areas include but are not limited to:
 - Planning and budgeting projects;
 - Managing project, including scope, budget, and schedule/time management;
 - Monitoring and evaluation;
 - Building public private partnerships and community based alliances; and
 - Business English and IT.

A full list of suggested technical/administrative trainings for MoSD field units can be found in Annex E of this report.

2. **Build the Capacity of Field Staff on Best Practice Concepts Related to Youth-at-Risk:** Building the capacity of Field staff on youth-at-risk programming is imperative to better

understand and interact with YWJ's target group, as well as to ensure that MoSD can play its newly envisioned role of empowering youth economically and psychologically. IYF recommends that field directorate staff receive training on best practices and minimum standards for effective delivery of:

- Youth employment and entrepreneurship programs;
- Youth friendly services; and
- Civic engagement and volunteerism.

3. Clarify the Roles and Responsibilities of Liaison Officers Designated to Work on International Projects Like YWJ. MoSD needs to review and be more precise regarding the roles and responsibilities and level of authority that should be delegated to the liaison officers of Field Directorates designated to work in close coordination with international projects like the YWJ program. The following is a draft list of potential roles and responsibilities of the Liaison Officers for YWJ:

- Serving as a liaison between the MoSD field directorate, Coordinating NGOs, and the YWJ PMU;
- Participating in a collaborative manner in the elaboration and review of YWJ work plans in their Directorates and assisting in reporting on achievements back to the YWJ PMU;
- Participating in the meetings between CNGOs and the YWJ PMU as may be relevant and useful;
- Facilitating and providing the support needed by CNGOs from the Field Directorates in the implementation of their activities and ensuring the support of other related governmental entities;
- Engaging different Divisions within their Directorates in YWJ activities to ensure institutionalization and sustainability of these activities;
- Providing support as needed to develop sustainable long-term relationships with youth recruited by the project; and
- Supporting communication and outreach activities targeting the youth and their communities.

4. More robust engagement with the staff within Field Directorates' Community Development Services and Social Care Services. As mentioned above the Social Development Services is responsible for the provision of community development services through three community development related divisions: (1) Productivity Enhancement Division; (2) the Societies Division; and (3) the Communications and Community Awareness Division. Social care services are provided through another three divisions: (1) Family; (2) Social Defense; and (3) Persons with Disabilities Divisions.

A more robust engagement with these two services would both support the building of their capacities to plan and implement effective youth friendly programs, and also leverage their unique capabilities related to juveniles and youth at risk. Much like the seconded staff, the roles of each of these divisions could be activated with respect to international projects like YWJ by having MoSD staff work alongside project staff in the communities so they may "learn by doing" on how to build a comprehensive youth service delivery program within the various Divisions in the Field Directorates.

For example, programs like YWJ could work in close coordination with the MoSD Communication and Community Awareness Directorates in developing and implementing annual plans that incorporate awareness messages around youth civic engagement and volunteerism. With proper capacity and support, such Directorates, who are closely linked with local communities, can play an important role in activating Jordanian youth around efforts to improve their communities and take a greater stake in their own futures.

In addition to the MoSD Community Development Services and Social Care Services, the National Aid Fund reports to the MoSD and provides direct services to youth that are not just limited to juveniles. As such, YWJ should consider reaching out to National Aid Fund staff and including them in trainings on youth friendly services and youth employability topics due to their active involvement in the National Employment Project that is led by Ministry of Labor.

An important mechanism for engaging the divisions outlined above will be the development of YWJ Information Offices some of which are expected to be located in the Field Directorates and once opened and fully functional will allow other staff from the Directorate to benefit from the project.

3. Assessment of MoSD Staff Seconded to YWJ Program

Mandate

In the Memorandum of the Understanding (MOU) signed between IYF and the MoSD to identify the roles, responsibilities and commitments of each partner in the YWJ program, the MoSD committed to supporting the YWJ Program Management Unit (PMU) through seconded staff to work closely with the IYF/YWJ management team. Two staff members were provided by the MoSD to support the PMU. This arrangement was designed with the expectation that seconded staff would acquire the needed competencies to be able to transfer and reflect the practical experience gained from the program back to the MoSD after its completion, thus providing the MoSD with the skills and expertise needed to support youth-friendly community activities for the long term.

Specific MoSD seconded staff functions and responsibilities include the following:

- Serving as the primary liaison within the MoSD and its field directorates;
- Closely participating in the implementation of YWJ program activities;
- Serving as a resource on issues that are related to social development in general and the Ministry in specific and providing data that informs the design and implementation of program activities;
- Coordinating YWJ program activities related to MoSD staff on the level of Ministry and Field directorates;
- Acting as an advocate for youth development concepts, identifying and implementing methods for strengthening the youth development programming within the MoSD, and providing the needed technical assistance to the adoption of related initiatives in MoSD and its field directorates;
- Working with MoSD Human Resources department and field directorates to identify and address youth related capacity building needs within the respective directorates;
- Leading in the dissemination of best practices and lessons learned in youth programming within the MoSD; and
- Supporting reporting requirements for the program through providing weekly activity reports to the YWJ PMU and regular reports to MoSD, as well as preparing appropriate contributions to quarterly and annual reports and generating other technical reports on an as-needed basis.

Two staff members have been provided by the MoSD to support the overall management role for the YWJ program. They are physically housed within the offices of the YWJ program, and they report to their own respective supervisors within the MoSD units from which they came.

Organizational and Staff Capacity Findings: The following is a synthesis of observations on the organizational capacities of the MoSD seconded staff to YWJ and their capacity to carry out their core functions and responsibilities:

1. **Greater knowledge and Training in Areas Related to YWJ:** While the MoSD seconded staff have received some training through MoSD in different administrative areas such as report writing, communication skills, and English and IT skills, the IYF research team noted the following areas where capacity building of seconded staff would more effectively link the

programming of YWJ to the Central Ministry and Field Directorates and other Government of Jordan entities.

- Knowledge and experience regarding standard program management practices and systems;
- Experience in capturing and synthesizing lessons learned, documenting best practices, and monitoring and evaluation;
- Experience in coordinating donor projects; and
- Experience in working with youth or managing youth projects.

- 2. Business English:** The lack of English skills has been a serious impediment for MoSD seconded staff working on the YWJ program. Given the extensive use of English in YWJ's office and with stakeholders on a daily basis, it is imperative that seconded staff have better English speaking and reading skills. The inability to read important documents or fully comprehend the English spoken in strategic meetings held with USAID, IYF and other English speaking stakeholders significantly limits their participation and ability to provide valuable insight on significant issues related to the program.

IYF has addressed this challenge by supporting English training classes for seconded staff as part of their professional development and by engaging a regular translator to translate important program documents, although the latter can be time consuming. Furthermore, as the main representatives for MoSD for the program, the seconded staff play a critical role in the relationship building between MoSD and international donors, and the inability of the seconded staff to engage with English speaking program stakeholders and donors limits their ability to foster those relations.

- 3. Seconded Staff Qualifications:** The recent rotation of a former Field Director to lead the MoSD YWJ seconded team has been an important positive development for the YWJ program and is making a significant difference with respect to communicating with and engaging the MoSD Field Directorates. As such, one critical finding is ensuring that senior level MoSD staff with strong relations and experience in the field are being dedicated to programs such as YWJ.

Recommendations

- 1. More Closely Consider the Qualifications of Seconded Staff.** In an effort to further enhance and expand the work of the Central Ministry seconded staff, a formal review should be made to identify the optimum qualifications for a Central Ministry seconded staff member to be embedded in an international donor program. Such qualifications will be critical to ensure maximum two-way benefit for both the Ministry as well as the international, donor funded program. This will in turn enable seconded staff members to excel within the Project Management framework and the build trust and confidence among all parties required to transfer project learnings and increase Ministry capacity.

Furthermore, how MoSD views itself in a partnership with an external donor – either as a strategic advisor, overseer or actively implementing - is an important consideration when identifying seconded staff for a program.

2. **Conduct Formal Training in Project Management and M&E.** Seconded staff should receive formal training on project management, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting, as well as presentation skills in order to enhance their professional qualifications to better perform their work within the YWJ program as well as to build their capacity to empower them to take a bigger lead in transferring the acquired knowledge and skills back to the Ministry to ensure sustainability after the closing of YWJ.
3. **Better Define Roles and Responsibilities of Seconded Staff.** Seconded staff are in a unique but challenging position, working in a core project management unit, but primarily responsible for directly supporting the transfer of knowledge and the building of long term capacity at the Ministry in project areas. While these purposes are highly complementary to all project activities, it is important to ensure all stakeholders better understand this role and the project responsibilities that accompany it.

Accordingly, a document such as a roles and responsibilities chart should be circulated among internal and external members of multi-stakeholder programs like YWJ (e.g., local governments units, and MoSD Central Ministry, Field Directorates, National NGOs, CBOs, etc.) identifying the roles and responsibilities of seconded staff within the program, as well as those of other program partners. Such a mechanism would also position the relevant MoSD staff working on the YWJ program to practice and develop constructive feedback mechanisms to more effectively communicate concerns and identify solutions to these concerns.