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# MASAQ Rule of Law Project

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## **MASAQ Small Grants Program and Grantee Project Profiles**

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## MASAQ Small Grants Program and Grantee Project Profiles

The USAID Rule of Law Project (MASAQ) is working in partnership with the Jordanian Ministry of Justice to strengthen judicial institutions, improve delivery of court services, enhance the overall efficiency of the judicial system, and improve awareness of the justice sector through Civil Society Organizations.

During the period of January 2006 – November 2007, the MASAQ Small Grants Program awarded eleven (11) grants with a total value of \$240,370 to seven (7) civil society organizations (CSO) to enable them to participate more actively in building public awareness of and providing citizen input to the judicial reform program. The grant recipients implemented 169 project activities that increased the ability of Jordanian citizens to access justice sector and promote good governance and respect for the rule of law. These activities benefited 12,198 Jordanian citizens, judges and journalists and grassroots level female and male youth and adults, in 37 communities in Jordan.

### **CSO: Adaleh Center for Human Rights Studies**

**Project Name: Female Journalists – Catalysts for Promoting Human Rights and Rule of Law in Jordan**

**Period: May 2006 – April 2007**

**Amount: \$25,000**

The Adaleh Center for Human Rights Studies concluded its one-year long USAID-funded grant activities in April 2007 with an awards ceremony recognizing media professionals' coverage of human rights, violence against women and rule of law in Jordan. The MASAQ Rule of Law Project grants program enabled the Center to launch its nationwide awareness campaign, "Injustice Anywhere Threatens Justice Everywhere," which shed light on the role of media in promoting rule of law and human rights.

During the campaign, Adaleh organized a series of training courses for 45 Jordanian journalists on human rights and rule of law reporting, produced a journalists' handbook of best practices

in reporting these issues, distributed 500 copies to targeted organizations and individuals, conducted visits for journalists to "hard to reach" prisons and women's rehabilitation centers and began a dialogue with Members of Parliament on promoting a rights agenda. Adaleh also sponsored a three-month long national journalism competition during which 29 journalists published 55 articles in the local press related to human rights, rule of law and violence against women. Winning articles were published in a pamphlet and distributed among journalists, media outlets, and civil society organizations. These activities increased journalists' awareness of the legal system in Jordan and improved their ability to report on human rights, especially rights related to women and children.



*Journalist pledging his support to the campaign*

**CSO: Adaleh Center for Human Rights Studies**

**Project Name: Balanced Media Coverage of Judicial Decision Making and Court Proceedings**

**Period: July – November 2007**

**Amount: \$18,000**

The Center prepared a questionnaire to assess judges' views and understanding of current press coverage of court proceedings and judicial decisions, and to obtain recommendations for improving and enhancing the relationship between court judges and media reporters. The Adaleh Center worked very closely with the Higher Judicial Council and Jordanian Judicial Institute in selecting 90 Judges, and 10 prosecutors to participate in these project activities. Adaleh also selected 20 Journalists. During the project period, the Center conducted two roundtable events, which were attended by 29 judges and 14 journalists, to discuss the results of the questionnaire. The highlight of this project was that it brought judges and journalists together for the first time to discuss their views on media reporting of court proceedings and decision making processes. At these roundtables, communication mechanisms were identified to overcome mistrust and misunderstanding between judges and journalists, thereby closing communication gaps. In an effort to build the capacity of journalists and to gain public trust in the judicial system, two two-day advanced training programs were conducted for 28 journalists on how to convey court proceedings and judicial decision making in their reporting to the public. Adaleh also launched a public awareness campaign at Petra University by conducting four seminars to promote the integrity and neutrality of the Jordan judicial system, reaching 99 students from the Human Rights Forum, and Faculty of Media and Journalism.

**CSO: Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF)**

**Project Name: Increase the Public's Knowledge at the Grassroots Level about the Judicial and Legal System in Jordan**

**Period: April 2006 – March 2007**

**Amount: \$27,300**

In rural areas of Jordan, citizens lack knowledge of their rights and obligations under Jordanian law. Under the MASAQ Rule of Law Small Grants Program, the NHF helped improve Jordanians' quality of life by implementing 19 awareness sessions, workshops and civic education programs for 799 adults, youth, and children (464 females and 260 males) in four rural communities (Al Hassa, Al-Jaffer, and Northern and Southern Al Azraq). This grant program increased the knowledge of rural communities on Jordan's legal system and highlighted the importance of women's participation in the formal legal system. To encourage active participation of youth in the program, NHF organized a contest in which youth created drawings depicting concepts such as women's participation in the legal system, the rights and duties of citizens under the law, how laws are made, how the public can achieve justice through courts, how the legal and judicial system form part of a democratic society, the types of courts, and the Jordanian constitution. Youth winners traveled to Amman where they were recognized in an awards ceremony attended by dignitaries from the Ministry of Justice.

NHF succeeded in obtaining trust from very conservative traditional rural communities, who resisted NHF's project activities in their villages at the beginning of the project. "I found these training courses to be essential to the family and for its benefit. The program is both cultural and social and it teaches children how to use the law since the law does not protect the ignorant" said Mohammed Sandah Al Shishani, Southern Azraq Chief of the Shishani family.

**CSO: Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF)**

**Project Name: Increase the Public's Knowledge at the Grassroots Level about the Judicial and Legal System in Jordan**

**Period: July – November, 2007**

**Amount: \$18,000**

NHF replicated its Phase I effort in two new villages in Aqaba Governorate (Dabet Hannout and Hummaimeh), which are classified by the Jordanian government as poverty pocket areas that suffer from high unemployment, low income, and low educational attainment. The project also responded to demands in the Phase I villages (Al Hassa, Al-Jaffer, and Northern and Southern Al Azraq) by conducting educational sessions on labor law. In addition, the NHF conducted interactive theater sessions for adults and children to raise awareness of the social impact of domestic violence and the legal protections available through family law and built linkages with other community empowerment initiatives in all of the villages in Phase I and II. Other activities include focus group sessions, drawing contests, and coloring activity book on labor law, family violence, and Jordanian legal system.

During the 5-month period of the grant program, “Increase the Publics’ Knowledge at the Grassroots Level about the Judicial and Legal System in Jordan”, the Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF) implemented 16 training workshops for adults and youth and 5 interactive theater plays for a total of 875 adult and youth (710 males and 165 females). In addition, 400 children benefited from the activity book (200 male and 200 females) and 36 participated in the drawing contest (23 females, 13 males). Moreover, 144 people attended the drawing exhibitions.

**CSO: Jordanian National Forum for Women (JNFW)**

**Project Name: Promoting Women in the Legal Profession**

**Period: May 2006 – April 2007**

**Amount: \$25,000**

In Jordan, women are underrepresented in the legal and judicial sectors. Women who should seek legal advice and redress through the court system are intimidated by this male-dominated system, as are women who might otherwise consider entering the legal profession. With MASAQ’s grant funds, the JNFW educated the public about gender-based discrimination faced by female judges and lawyers and raised awareness among women, especially those in rural areas, about the judiciary, courts, their legal rights, and how they can access justice. As part of its program, the JNFW conducted a survey of 360 women in the legal profession to identify the main obstacles they face in their careers. The JNFW produced a brochure that promotes women in the legal profession and conducted awareness-raising sessions on legal education for women targeted to school students, law students, and NGOs.

On February 6, 2007, the JNFW launched its \$13,000 media campaign promoting Jordanian women in the legal profession. This three-month campaign featured a public advertisement aimed at everyday Jordanians. The advertisement is now posted at universities, on roadside billboards, on bus shelters and even on the exterior of a bus that circulates through Amman. These posters raise public awareness of the equal rights of male and female judges and lawyers currently practicing in Jordan, and encourage other women to enter legal professions. The JNFW succeeded in recruiting volunteers, including judges, lawyers, and university professors to implement project activities. Seven hundred and eighty three (783) participants attended 24 awareness sessions held throughout Jordan. Five thousand (5,000) copies of the project brochure were printed and distributed through JNFW centers throughout Jordan and JNFW is still receiving requests for brochures from universities and the Jordanian National Commission. JNFW received a request for more information on the survey results from the House of Parliament; the Parliament is preparing a research survey about the status of women for the year 2007.

**CSO: Partners-Jordan**

**Project Name: Building a Culture of Mediation in Jordan**

**Period: July 2006 –May 2007**

**Amount: \$23,788**

Jordan has undertaken a reform process within the justice system that is intended to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency of the judiciary and promote its independence. As part of the overall judicial reform program, Jordan passed a mediation law to reduce the caseload of court dockets and improve the judicial process. But the general public is still unaware of the mechanisms and benefits of mediation. Through this MASAQ grant, Partners translated and localized training materials from Street Law, Inc. and the National Crime Prevention Council of USA, trained a cadre of volunteer mediation trainers to teach mediation concepts and techniques to youth, and introduced and implemented two mediation curricula in Jordan, benefiting 449 youth ages 9 to 16 and ages 17 to 22 (195 males and 254 females). By targeting youth, Partners is educating the younger generation about dispute resolution mechanisms, thus building awareness of and demand for mediation services and promoting a culture of dialogue and conciliation within the school environment. At the February 13<sup>th</sup> launch, "Building a Culture of Mediation in Jordan," held under his patronage, H.E. the Minister of Justice, Mr. Sharief Al Zua'bi highlighted the government's belief in and commitment to using mediation as a way to reduce the burden on the courts.

**CSO: National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA)**

**Project Name: Know Your Rights in Marriage (Marriage Guide for Muslims in Jordan)**

**Period: July 2006 – May 2007**

**Amount: \$25,000**

In Jordan, traditional norms, rather than the law, relegate women to an inferior position in married life. The NCFA, an advisory body under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Rania, has prepared a draft legal Guide to marriage that explains the duties and obligations of each party under Jordanian law. The Guide was finalized, field-tested, published in Arabic with a small grant from the USAID MASAQ Rule of Law Project, and is the first of its kind in the Arab world. It explains the rights and obligations of each party in a marriage according to the legal provisions of Jordanian family affairs law and encourages adherence to these guidelines as one way of preventing divorce. The NCFA held 13 launch workshops in Amman and each of the 12 governorates, attended by 769 participants, and a public seminar entitled, "Rights of Married Couples" at Aal Al Beit University in Mafrq, introducing the NCFA-published *Legal Guide to Marriage* to over 300 attendees. The event's overwhelming attendance reflects growing interest in the marriage guide, which has distributed 10,635 copies nationwide through domestic violence centers, women's health clinics, bridal shops and NGO networks. NCFA has also entered into an agreement with the Supreme Judicial Department (SJD) to distribute the guide to couples who are planning to marry, thus ensuring sustainable distribution of the guide in the future. By the end of May 2007, SJD had distributed 2,250 marriage guides through local courts across the country.

**CSO: National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA)**

**Project Name: Know Your Rights in Marriage (Marriage Guide for Christians in Jordan)**

**Period: July – November 2007**

**Amount: \$18,000**

With the grant from MASAQ, NCFA produced a Christian Marriage Guide working with a group of lawyers specialized in Ecclesiastical Law. The guide highlighted the commonalities of regulations related to marriages under different Christian religions as well as the peculiarities specific to each group. The result of extra-ordinary cooperation among the nine participating Christian churches, lawyers and experts in Ecclesiastical Law, the guide outlines marriage regulations for each Christian denomination. NCFA published the guide to raise awareness among couples of their rights and responsibilities in marriage starting from engagement, but also included the grounds for breaking the marriage contract, separation of the couple, a discussion of the couple's financial rights in marriage and alimony in case of separation.

Published in both English and Arabic, the guide is the first of its kind in Jordan. NCFA received formal letters of approval from Christian churches that contributed to the guide. NCFA launched the guide in October 2007 at a ceremony attended by nearly 100 representatives of all officially recognized Christian denominations in Jordan, governmental and non governmental institutions, foreign embassies, international organizations and experts in the field of family affairs. 4,720 copies of the guide are currently in circulation kingdom-wide. Churches, youth groups and other Christian organizations are using the guide as an important tool in pre-marriage counseling sessions and other awareness building activities.

Already, the Jordanian Christian community is finding the guide to be quite educational and enlightening. Bashar Akroush, an accountant, commented that the guide "contained so much information we did not know about Christian marriage.... It had a wonderful reception here in my firm and [among] other friends." Jordanian civil society organizations also are putting the guide to good use. "The guide is an important step in educating marrying couples to be aware of their rights and liabilities in marriage life," says H.E. Asma Khader, Coordinator at the Sisterhood is Global Institute.

**CSO: Al-Hayat Center for Civil Society Development**

**Project Name: Enhancing Awareness of and Respect for the Rule of Law among Young Jordanians in Irbid Governorate – EDRAK I**

**Period: October 2006 – May 2007**

**Amount: \$23,000**

Al-Hayat Center received a MASAQ grant to build young Jordanians' understanding of their constitutional rights and duties, the legal and judicial systems in Jordan, and of the concepts of good governance and rule of law. Through its grant, the Al-Hayat Center investigated what young Jordanians (aged 16-25) in Irbid know about the concepts of good governance and rule of law; the relationship between rule of law and the legal and judicial systems; and the importance of rule of law for development. The Al-Hayat Center summarized the findings and results in a guide entitled "Rule of Law in Jordan, Bringing it Within the Grasp of Youth," which was distributed to organizations working with youth in Jordan, providing them with examples of youth initiatives for good governance and rule of law interventions that can be carried out in other areas of the country. The Al-Hayat Center worked directly with youth at universities in Irbid through 11 workshops, camps, high school work days, and publicity campaigns, to build their knowledge of and respect for the rule of law. Al Hayat provided youth-centered activities and 2,530 youth participants walked away from these activities with a better understanding of the rule of law. For example, 140 youth participated in 3-day camps, where they were provided with an enhanced toolkit for problem solving and project management skills.



*Participant presenting her group's initiative at the Workshop in Irbid*

**CSO: Al-Hayat Center for Civil Society Development**

**Project Name: Enhancing Awareness of and Respect for the Rule of Law among Young Jordanians – EDRAK II**

**Period: July – November 2007**

**Amount: \$18,000**

In Irbid, the Al Hayat Center successfully completed the pilot phase of the project with the previous funding, and this funding enabled them to roll out the project activities in the Central and Southern regions of Jordan. Al Hayat Center implemented 13 activities, including camps, high school workdays, and university open days to enhance the knowledge of Jordanian citizens (male and female adults and youth) at 5 high schools and 6 universities in Central and Southern regions about the Jordanian judicial and legal system. The Center also published a second edition of the guide "Rule of Law in Jordan,

Bringing it Within the Grasp of Youth”, which highlighted similarities and differences across regions and included new youth initiatives that were developed by university students participating in the 4-day camps of the project. These project activities reached out to 4,214 (2,368 male and 1,846 female) high school and university students, of which 80 students participated in 4-day camps and they were provided with an enhanced toolkit for problem solving and project management skills. Among them, 20 students had opportunities to conduct high school workdays and university open days and to apply what they learned at the camp. Al Hayat produced project posters and brochures that promoted rule of law and good governance concepts, and 680 posters and 6,750 brochures were distributed at project events. At each event, participants filled pre- and post-surveys to measure the knowledge of the students before and after the event. During the project, 1,752 surveys were filled out. The results of these surveys show significant transfer of knowledge to students from the targeted universities and high schools of both central and southern regions of Jordan on the concepts of rule of law and good governance. This project produced the second edition of the guide, Rule of Law in Jordan, Bringing it Within the Grasp of Youth. Five hundred copies of the guide were printed and 390 copies have been distributed to governmental and non-governmental organizations, youth associations and centers, and university and school libraries. Al Hayat continuously receives requests for the guide from the public.

**CSO: The Queen Zein Al Sharaf Institute for Development (ZENID)**

**Project Name: My Rights and Duties as a Jordanian Worker**

**Period: October 2006 – May 2007**

**Amount: \$23,000**

Recent international attention has focused on frequent and flagrant labor abuses in Jordan’s industrial cities. Well before international attention became focused on this issue, ZENID, one of Jordan’s leading national institutes dedicated to promoting learning for social development, conducted interviews with Jordanian workers in the Sahab industrial city about the work environment and their level of awareness regarding their legal rights. This research revealed significant problems with unemployment, poor working conditions, labor abuses, poor understanding of labor rights, ignorance concerning the role of the government labor office and complaints about the lack of responsiveness of the labor office, and reticence on the part of employees to lodge official complaints about labor abuses. Under the MASAQ grant program, ZENID established a Legal Consultation Office within one of its centers in Sahab to serve as an independent center to provide workers and job seekers with legal information, offer consultations on labor issues, help them navigate the legal system, document worker complaints, advocate on behalf of workers to reduce labor abuses, and serve as a link between workers and factory administrators. ZENID conducted 21 orientation and awareness sessions, training workshops, and focus group sessions with the attendance of 380 people from Sahab industrial city. A booklet on "My Rights and Duties as a Jordanian Workers" booklet was produced and 1800 copies were distributed to workers and job seekers through the awareness sessions and the legal consultation sections. More copies were requested by the representatives of unions during the final event as well as from other NGOs. Orwa, one of the Consultation Office staff, said, "After the legal training I received, I am able to answer various questions about legal concerns, now I am working and I know what are my Rights and Duties, based on Jordanian laws." A worker from the factory said, "This is my 3<sup>rd</sup> year working in the factories and now I have discovered that all what I know about my rights is only like a seed in a hay stack". The head of the labor office in Sahab expressed his appreciation for the ZENID efforts and facilitated the project mission in conducting awareness sessions in the factories. The Governor of Sahab expressed his gratitude to the project during the final event and endorsed the project’s recommendations.