

**Access to Microfinance & Improved Implementation of Policy Reform
(AMIR Program)**

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**Feasibility Analysis for an
Entrepreneurial Training Program for Women in Jordan**

Final Report

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This report was prepared by Amanda C. Zinn, in collaboration with Chemonics International Inc., prime contractor to the U.S. Agency for International Development for the AMIR Program in Jordan.

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I. Executive Summary

Based upon my brief visit, but rich interviews, with key business associations and individuals in Amman, there exists an incredible opportunity to contribute significantly to the economy through the development of a comprehensive entrepreneurial training and technical assistance program targeting women in Jordan. The main criteria I base this determination upon are: (1) there are no such programs in existence at the present time; (2) there is a significant lack of opportunity in the job market; and, (3) reportedly, there are thousands of women ready and willing to become entrepreneurs but for the appropriate comprehensive and systematic approach and assistance.

Having said this, there exists one major concern that must be acknowledged and addressed in order to proceed. That concern focuses on the organizational capacity of the two identified business associations: the Business and Professional Women-Amman (BPWA) and the Young Entrepreneurs Association (YEA). My concerns for each of these two organizations are very different as described below.

BPWA is struggling with several organizational situations that impede its effectiveness. From my limited perspective, the organizational structure appears to be the main source of the difficulties. The current structure encourages operational micro-management rather than steering the board members to duties and responsibilities they need to be performing (policy, fundraising, public relations, membership development, board development, strategic / long-range / financial planning...) in order to have a vibrant, dynamic and effective organization. The lack of a current Executive Director (ED), in combination with a history of ED turnover, adds a restrictive dimensional component.

On the other hand, YEA appears to be organizationally sound, but may be compromised by an “overachievement” phenomenon. YEA has experienced significant growth in a relatively short period of time and has set a very ambitious agenda as specified in its strategic plan. Despite the abilities of the individuals, particularly Ms. Ghalia Alui, YEA’s Executive Coordinator, adding yet another significant project to YEA’s agenda could compromise its efficiency, effectiveness, impact and ability to achieve the proposed programs’ objectives.

It is my professional opinion, based upon my experience in growing and operating the WEB program, that significant resources must be devoted to the delivery of a comprehensive business development program. Furthermore, offering only some of the components (WEB operates a ten component program) compromises the effectiveness of the overall program. Therefore, in order to create an effective and sustainable business development program geared towards women in Jordan the following recommendations are offered as enhancements to the original proposed project:

1. Create a written instrument that would serve as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between AMIR and the two identified business associations (BPWA and YEA) to ensure that each party fully understands *and agrees to* devote the necessary resources to the initiative. This MOU would clearly identify the specific responsibilities of each party to successfully implement the comprehensive training and technical assistance program.

2. Employ a Jordanian Business Development Specialist who would be responsible for learning, adapting, implementing, coordinating, supervising and evaluating the entire project in Jordan.
3. Employ a Project Manager at WEB who would be responsible for overseeing, implementing and coordinating the project from a developmental and experiential perspective, as well as provide on-going coaching and support to all parties involved in the project.
4. Enhance the original proposed project plan to include: (1) bringing the Jordanian Business Development Specialist (in addition to the BPWA and YEA representatives) to WEB for the initial three week training; (2) sending a WEB representative to Amman *before* the training program to perform education, orientation and community outreach to build enthusiasm for and attract qualified applicants to the program; and, (3) sending a WEB representative to perform and teach the screening and selection process to ensure appropriate program participants.
5. Consider the feasibility of purchasing the rights to the WEB curriculum (in Arabic only) so that the program can be offered in Jordan beyond the contract period between WEB and Chemonics (and the entire AMIR project).
6. Consider making available on-going technical assistance and coaching by appropriate WEB personnel to the business association staff, as-needed, during the implementation of post-pilot training and technical assistance projects.

Adapting the original project outline to include these enhancements would enable the project to be “sustainable”. In the United States the microenterprise industry uses the term “sustainable” to mean that it would be able to exist ad infinitum (i.e., the capacity has been created to enable the project to continue). This is different than “self-sufficient” which is used to mean that the program will generate enough earned income to support itself over time. WEB, like many other training and technical assistance programs, acknowledges the fact that the cost to provide such a comprehensive program will never be able to be fully supported by fees charged to low-income people. However, the eventual impact and return on investment to the overall economy makes it a worthy and cost-effective program.

In conclusion, there is a phenomenal opportunity to make a significant economic impact in Jordan through the encouragement, and provision of a comprehensive entrepreneurial training and technical assistance program geared toward women. Jordan could follow in the footsteps of America in terms of women-owned businesses being the fastest growing segment of the private economy. However, to realize the full potential of this initiative will require a substantially greater investment than what was originally outlined.

II. Overview of Existing Training and Technical Assistance Programs in Jordan

Although there have been several isolated business development / opportunity workshops offered intermittently, and there have been discussions regarding implementing other more significant training / TA programs, at the present time, the offerings are disjointed, topic-specific, opportunistic and do not comprehensively address the needs of women in Jordan.

Based upon my interviews and readings, the following programs are currently being offered or discussed:

A. Women's Enterprise Center

The Women's Enterprise Center within BPWA currently provides counseling and incubator services. These services have been rated at a high level of value by the clients, but the Center Director, Mr. Ibrahim Bash, has expressed the need for a comprehensive and updated curriculum, as well as a well-developed outreach program. Shortly after my visit, the WEC was scheduled to offer a twenty-one hour training program. It will be interesting to learn the success and demand for that training program.

B. Young Entrepreneurs Association

YEA has held several workshops and seminars on a variety of topics of interest to entrepreneurs. These workshops and seminars have undoubtedly been perceived as of high value by YEA members, however, they were not intended to be a comprehensive training and technical assistance program on starting, stabilizing and / or growing a small business.

C. Empretec

YEA has had discussions with UNCTAD regarding bringing their Empretec program to Jordan. This program is geared towards existing businesses and does not expressly address issues facing women entrepreneurs. Having reviewed their literature, it is my impression that the Empretec program would be an excellent complement to the WEB program in that it would bring the entrepreneurs to the next level. I envision it as a post-WEB program. Ms. Alui, YEA's Executive Coordinator, also expressed her opinion that it would address a different market need.

D. CARE International

Currently, CARE funds two projects geared toward assisting low-income women generate income through the development of industry-specific businesses: childcare and housekeeping. While filling a niche, these projects do not provide the services the WEB-adapted program would address.

E. UNDP

UNDP is in the process of developing a program that would train trainers to assist entrepreneurs in developing businesses. In a meeting with Mr. Arvind Nandé (and other UNDP staff), we discussed the possibility of working together by integrating curriculum materials UNDP is developing with WEB's curriculum, especially on country-specific issues such as taxes, registration, etc.

At this point in time, no brochures, curriculums or other written materials have been completed for my review. Mr. Nandé agreed to forward program materials to me upon completion.

There was a delicate atmosphere in the meeting with UNDP representatives. Apparently, UNDP has been developing this program for some time. They expect to deliver the first training session in July 2000, which is after the WEB program was originally targeted to begin. This raised a little bit of awkwardness as to whether or not a new program would come in, ready for implementation, after UNDP had already invested substantial effort in developing its program. Mr. Nandé expressed his feeling that the WEB-adapted program would complement and expand the UNDP program. He said he would be supportive of implementing a WEB-adapted program in Jordan and would be happy to share information to ensure coordination, rather than duplication.

Although the UNDP program is a train-the-trainer program and the WEB program is a train-the-entrepreneur program, both efforts have targeted BPWA as one of the business associations to offer the training to entrepreneurs.

In summary, there are no existing programs which would provide a comprehensive approach to business development geared toward women. The programs that have been discussed or are currently being planned could complement the WEB-adapted program. It is my understanding that the program UNDP is planning may be aimed at a pre-WEB market. If this is the case, it could be very interesting to have a pre-WEB, WEB and post-WEB program through the UNDP, WEB and Empretec programs, respectively. The combination of programs *could* serve the continuum of needs of entrepreneurs. In any event, neither the UNDP or Empretec programs currently exist, nor are they geared toward women.

III. Economic Opportunities

The economy does not create enough new jobs to absorb those entering the labor force or make a dent in Jordan's unemployment problem. In addition, the annual average growth rate is estimated to have been between .8% and 3% over the last three years. Basically these factors make ripe an environment for entrepreneurial development. The potential for individuals to create their own job, rather than relying on the government or the private sector for a job, is a powerful and viable alternative, especially with so many educated and / or skilled persons who are not otherwise employed.

IV. Entrepreneurial Spirit and Potential

According to information I've learned through various readings and interviews, there are a wealth of women in Jordan who have the education (university or high school equivalent graduates) and / or the skill and entrepreneurial spirit (low-income women) to start viable businesses. They simply need a comprehensive and systematic approach to turn their knowledge, skills and abilities into successful business ventures. This is no different than what we see in the US and upon which WEB has built its reputable and effective program.

Interestingly, there appears to be much conflicting information regarding a woman's desire and motivation to start a business and / or borrow money for a business in Jordan. Reading both the Report on Women, Work and Legal Constraints by Amira El-Azhary Sonbol of the School of Foreign Service,

Georgetown University and the draft of the Market Survey in East Amman commissioned by the AMIR project, one can get a glimpse of the apparent disparate opinion. This is also the case when discussing this matter with business development organizations and individuals. However, many of the issues related to motivation and entrepreneurial spirit can be addressed by an educational outreach program. Informing women of the potential for success, accompanied by a systematic and comprehensive program of assistance designed specifically for women, should lead to hundreds of women taking the plunge into entrepreneurship.

V. Conceptual Framework for Proposed Project

In order to implement the project to maximize its effectiveness the following narrative conceptual framework is suggested. In the attached Excel document (Worksheet 2) you will find a preliminary budget for this proposed project design. Worksheet 3 within the attached Excel document provides a preliminary list of additional cost considerations Chemonics / AMIR would assume. Worksheet 4 within the attached Excel document provides a list of items to be clearly defined in a written MOU between AMIR, YEA and BPWA.

A. Hire a Project Manager at WEB to be responsible for implementing the contract between WEB and Chemonics. The Project Manager would create the MOU to be signed by all key players; hire a Jordanian Business Development Specialist with the assistance of appropriate parties in Amman; design and arrange for the training of the Jordanians at the WEB office; plan and deliver the trainings in Amman, including the preparation and oversight of all materials and translations of materials; develop reporting and monitoring systems, as well as the deliverables for each trip to Amman; provide technical support and coaching to the Jordanian Business Development Specialist; and, trouble-shoot and intervene throughout the term of the contract.

B. Hire a Jordanian Business Development Specialist to provide support services in Amman. This Business Development Specialist would act as the liaison between BPWA, YEA, the AMIR project and WEB. The main responsibilities of this individual would include: being trained on the WEB program in Baltimore; reviewing the WEB curriculum and replacing all inappropriate sections with country-specific counterpart sections (work with UNDP, if feasible and appropriate); coordinating the services of all interpreting services needed for the project (verbal and written translations); ensuring the continual involvement of the BPWA and YEA executives; arranging for all necessary meetings and details for the WEB Project Manager while in Amman; and, attending to the myriad details of providing the full spectrum of services to the participants of the training program (entrepreneurs and business association employees).

C. Train at least three, but preferably five (to include Jordanian Business Development Specialist, YEA trainer and executive, and BPWA trainer and executive), key individuals in Baltimore, Maryland on the effective management and delivery of a comprehensive community-based, WEB-styled entrepreneurship training and technical assistance program.

D. Send the WEB Project Manager to Amman for two weeks to provide educational, outreach and

orientation services through community presentations and business association-based sessions. Preferably, the Business Development Specialist would be able to recruit successful women entrepreneurs to attend the education and outreach sessions to promote the benefits of entrepreneurship as well as serve as successful role models. The Business Development Specialist would also place advertisements in local newspapers to ensure as many as participants as possible in the orientation sessions. This outreach step was identified as a very important activity to help educate, advocate and orient Jordanians to the prospect of entrepreneurship and create a plentiful pool of applicants for the pilot project.

E. Send the WEB Project Manager to Amman for approximately four weeks prior to the start of the Business Skills Training Course to conduct and teach the screening / selection process. This step is crucial as it: (1) ensures appropriate individuals enter the program to maximize the effectiveness of the program; (2) serves to increase participants' self-esteem and self-confidence by the mere fact that they successfully completed the selection process; and, (3) assists individuals who are not accepted by educating them on what measures they should employ to prepare for future programs thereby preparing qualified candidates for the next round of training.

F. Send the WEB Project Manager to Amman to conduct two concurrent Business Skills Training Courses which target, 15 low-income, under-educated women and 15 under or unemployed university graduate women. The course may be offered in two five-week sections with a two-week break in between. During the two-week break, trainees would work on the first draft of their business plan with the technical assistance of the business association training staff.

G. Send the WEB Project Manager to Amman for three to four weeks to assist BPWA and YEA implement a well-rounded Community Networking and Partnership component that would serve to support the entrepreneurs by building mutually beneficial partnerships and provide ongoing referrals for future WEB-adapted training and TA programs. This individual would also help establish the Mentoring, Financing, Case Management, Professional Business Consulting, and Resource Sharing components, as appropriate—all of which require building strategic alliances between key organizations and individuals.

H. Send the WEB Project Manager to Amman for four weeks to provide follow-up technical assistance to the 30 trained entrepreneurs. Simultaneously, the WEB representative would be assisting the BPWA and YEA counseling staff to upgrade their technical assistance skills.

I. Optional: Provide post pilot-project coaching and technical assistance on an as-needed basis by the appropriate WEB personnel. This would be provided on an hourly basis.

J. Optional: Develop a licensing agreement to the WEB curriculum for future use. This may be limited to a pre-defined geographic area and time frame and for use of the curriculum in Arabic only.

VI. Proposed Timeline

April 2000

Negotiate and Execute Contract

May 2000	Develop Recruitment Plan and Place Advertisements
June 2000	Accept Resumes, Perform Interviews
July 2000	Hiring Completed
August 2000	Host Jordanians at WEB
September - October 2000	Review and Adapt Curriculum
October 2000	Send WEB Project Manager to do Community Outreach, etc.
November 2000	Translation of Materials into Arabic
December 2000	Send WEB Project Manager to do Screening / Selection
January – March 2001	Business Skills Training Course
April – May 2001	WEB Project Manager Assists in Community Networking and Strategic Alliance Building
June 2001	WEB Project Manager Provides Technical Assistance Counseling to Entrepreneurs and Business Association Staff
July – September 2001	On-going TA by Appropriate WEB Staff, as-needed

VII. Outputs

This project design is expected to produce:

A. Thirty women entrepreneurs who have completed a comprehensive written business plan and launched a viable business.

B. For each of the thirty entrepreneurs who need to and are capable of accessing capital, an appropriate loan package will have been prepared. Financing is expected to be secured for all those who prepare a loan package. However, based on our experience at WEB and our discussions with business development staff in Amman, we do not anticipate that all 30 women will need or want to borrow money to launch their business. The important outcome is that all 30 women will be able to launch a viable business with the potential for growth.

C. BPWA and YEA will have well-trained Instructors and counselors to provide future programs. The capacity of these two organizations will have been built to support the ongoing activities.

D. An independent Jordanian Business Development Specialist will also be thoroughly trained in the WEB program. (S)he will have the capacity to continue to provide direct services to entrepreneurs or work with other business associations to expand the WEB-adapted program throughout Jordan.

E. Optional: Have a comprehensive, proven and effective business development curriculum in Arabic for ongoing use with thousands of Jordanians.

VIII. Conclusion

The potential economic impact of implementing a WEB-adapted comprehensive entrepreneurial training and technical assistance program in Jordan is mind-boggling. My sense is that women entrepreneurs in

Jordan could lead the resurgence of the Jordanian economy just as women have done so in so many other economies around the world—they simply need an appropriate program that will enable them to gain the skills, knowledge, capital, resources, contacts and on-going support that entrepreneurial ventures require.

The opportunity to visit Amman has provided me with an acute awareness of the potential and the resources necessary to successfully implement this initiative. Due to the realities of limited capacity by key players and the extensive resources needed to implement a comprehensive program that results in considerable success, I highly recommend the expanded program as outlined in this report.

Because this program is considerably more extensive than the original plan, both Chemonics International and WEB need to consider their commitment, resources, budget and capacity to implement this expanded program. WEB's Board of Trustees has instructed me to prepare a cost / benefit analysis of providing these expanded consulting services to Chemonics International. There are several issues related to this proposal that would require further research on WEB's part, such as protecting WEB's intellectual property rights on its curriculum and determining the value if it were to sell the rights or develop a licensing agreement for its curriculum in Arabic.

For the time-being, I will assume that Chemonics International is interested in implementing this expanded initiative. I will also assume that Chemonics desires to move forward relatively quickly. Consequently, I will begin this cost / benefit analysis so I can present it to WEB's Executive Committee at its April 4, 2000 meeting. If Chemonics determines that it is not interested in pursuing the initiative, I would very much appreciate an expedient notice to that effect so that I can cease my efforts of preparing an analysis and program budget for WEB's Executive Committee's approval.

Personally, I hope that both Chemonics and WEB will find it fruitful to pursue this initiative, as I am truly excited about realizing the promise this project holds. I would find it incredibly gratifying to assist Jordanian women in achieving their dreams and securing their financial independence, while having a lasting impact on the overall economy.

Thank you for a most enriching visit in Amman. I look forward to hearing your response to this report and hope that we will continue working together.

IX. Appendices

A. List of Documents Read During Consultancy

1. Jordan Country Report
2. Business and Professional Women-Amman (BPWA) Strategic Plan
3. Business and Professional Women-Amman Web Site
4. Young Entrepreneurs Association (YEA) Activities and Projects
5. Empretec Program Description Booklet

6. Report on Women, Work and Legal Constraints by Amira El-Azhary Sonbol
7. Women's Economic Activities in Jordan: Research Findings on Women's Participation in Microenterprise, Agriculture and the Formal Sector by Donna K. Flynn and Linda Oldham
8. Manual of Operations Jordan Microfinance Company (JMC), Microenterprise Lending Project
9. Promotional Materials of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency
10. Promotional Materials of the General Federation of Jordanian Women
11. Draft Copy of the Market Survey in East Amman, commissioned by the AMIR project
12. Miscellaneous Newsletters and Internal Documents of BPWA, YEA, and other programs / organizations

B. List of Individuals Met / Interviewed During Consultancy

1. Dr. Zaki Ayoubi, AMIR Program
2. Mr. Robert Ash, AMIR Program
3. Mr. Steve Wade, AMIR Program
4. Mr. Jamal Al-Jabiri, USAID
5. Mrs. Wijdan Talhouni Saket, President, BPWC-Amman
6. Mr. Ibrahim Bash, Center Director, Women's Enterprise Center
7. Ms. Dina O. Faidi, Principal, Creativity and Beyond
8. Mr. Ignacito U. Alvizo, Component Leader, Sustainable Microfinance Initiative, AMIR Program
9. Ms. Terri Kristalsky, Deputy Component Leader, Sustainable Microfinance Initiative, AMIR Program
10. Ms. Ghalia Alui, Executive Coordinator, Young Entrepreneurs Association (YEA)
11. Ms. Ruba Sakkijha, Activities Coordinator, Young Entrepreneurs Association (YEA)
12. Ms. Lubna Izziddin, Member, Young Entrepreneurs Association (YEA)
13. Mrs. Hiam Omar Kalimat Tuguz, Chief, Social Services Division, United Nations Relief and Works Agency
14. Mrs. Beth Kuttab, Director of Relief and Social Services, United Nations Relief and Works Agency
15. Mrs. Reem Barghouty Damen, Chief, Institute of Education, United Nations Relief and Works Agency
16. Ms. Niveen Abboushi Sharaf, General Manager, Microfund for Women
17. Mr. Arvind Nandé, Chief Technical Advisor, United Nations Development Program
18. Mrs. Wasan Hijazi, Business Training Coordinator, United Nations Development Program
19. Mrs. May De Muller, Program Officer, United Nations Development Program
20. Mrs. Reem Aslan, Canadian Embassy (Phone Interview Regarding Care International Programs)
21. General Federation of Jordanian Women (Names of Three Individuals Unavailable)