WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AS A ROUTE TO GREATER EMPOWERMENT

JORDAN CASE STUDY

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Management Systems International
Corporate Offices
200 12th Street, South
Arlington, VA 22202 USA

Tel: + 1 703 979 7100

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ACRONYMS

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DCHA	Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance
DRG	Democracy, Human Rights and Governance
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GOJ	Government of Jordan
IAF	Islamic Action Front
IEC	Independent Election Commission
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
IRI	International Republican Institute
JNCW	Jordanian National Commission for Women
MC	Municipal Council
MP	Member of Parliament
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
STIP	Science, Technology, Innovation and Partnership
WiP	Women in Power

MAP OF JORDAN

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A solid majority of people in Jordan believe democracy is the best form of government, but while a majority of them (63 percent) support the general principle of gender equality, there is less enthusiasm for gender parity in politics, economics and family life.[1] Public opinion polling data in Jordan finds that only 44 percent of men agree that women and men should have equal rights, compared to 82 percent of women, while 57 percent of men and 42 percent of women believe men are better leaders. An "enabling environment," where women are welcomed into and confident about entering leadership arenas, is not in place.[2]

The importance of tribal identities and the growing dominance of religious conservative discourse on the appropriate roles of males and females may reduce Jordan's positive gains in gender equality during the last decade. A critical link to the political participation of women is their economic participation and independence. Women's economic participation remains among the lowest in the Middle East region; without access to and control over financial assets, women's political engagement (at least in terms of running for political office) may not improve. Mobility challenges were also repeatedly highlighted as limiting both women's economic opportunities and their political participation. This included the absence of safe, inexpensive public transportation between Jordan's cities as well as the social limitations around women's ability to move to the locations where opportunities are.

Increasing women's political participation does require fair electoral processes, campaigning skills and social media savvy. But women's political empowerment must go beyond technical approaches. One important finding from this case study points to the need for USAID/Jordan to focus on addressing cultural and social norms so that the enabling environment for women's greater political empowerment and participation will become reality at the grassroots, where all politics — especially gender equality — is local and elections are won and lost.

This analysis also underscored that political participation is a challenge writ large in Jordan. Structural issues, such as the electoral law and the limited decision-making authority within local governments, were raised repeatedly by interviewees of diverse backgrounds and experiences; the word "injustice" was used frequently to describe frustrations with the system. Respondents identified the weakness of institutions and the reliance on personal relationships and patronage systems as not just a challenge to women's political participation, but a disincentive for all people to participate in political processes. The challenge of norms around gender roles is combined with a lack of norms around democracy and civic engagement and the absence of a structure that enables or encourages participation. It was noted that these challenges cannot be fixed through training alone; even if people feel empowered in the abstract, their options and incentives for action are limited without opportunities to engage meaningfully in the political system. Targeting norms and attitudes — around gender equality as well as democracy — may help to make some progress and represents an area of opportunity for current and future programming.

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[1] Pew Research Center. 2012. Global Attitudes Project. Most Muslims Want Democracy, Personal Freedoms and Islam in Political Life. http://www.pewglobal.org/files/2012/07/Pew-Global-Attitudes-Project-Arab-Spring-Report-FINAL-Tuesday-July-10-2012.pdf

[2] Millennium Challenge Corporation. Compact Gender Analysis. 2012.

II. INTRODUCTION

Project Background

The Women in Power (WiP) project is a learning activity supported by the Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DRG) in the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA). Its goal is to further USAID's understanding of women's political leadership and empowerment, including the results of selected USAID-supported programs. The project is also piloting a new measure of women's leadership and political influence while providing specific recommendations for future programming and research. This work is taking place in three phases from October 2013 to December 2014:

- Phase I of the project examines USAID programming dedicated to increasing women's descriptive representation and leadership. The main deliverable is a desktop study of ongoing and completed programs supported by DCHA/DRG's Elections and Political Transitions (EPT) team to better understand their technical approaches, results and lessons learned.
- Phase II of the project will consist of five qualitative case studies selected from the desktop study. The project team will look more deeply at the objectives and achievements of select programs in the five countries. Through these case studies, the team will compile lessons learned and examine the relationship between select USAID-funded programs to strengthen women's political empowerment and the state of women's leadership in these countries.
- Phase III of the project will test a new measure of women's leadership and power across all formal government sectors (executive, judicial, security and legislative) to advance critical thinking and guide future programming around women's leadership and political empowerment. This model will be tested in at least 20 countries, including the five case study countries.

Managed by a four-member DCHA/DRG team, this project is being implemented in partnership with Management Systems International (MSI). The MSI team includes three leading academic specialists on women's political empowerment. Building on the findings from all three phases, DCHA/DRG will convene a group of other leading donors and practitioners to share experiences and consider creating a coordinated global learning agenda around increasing women's political leadership and empowerment.

Jordan Case Study Methodology

The project team used a case study approach to explore the extent to which women in elected roles wield political power, and suggest how policies and programs might better support women's political empowerment.

The WiP team chose Jordan as the Middle East country that best fits several selection criteria, e.g., USAID expectation of ongoing programming; a relatively authoritarian political environment (a "not free" rating by Freedom House), a type of context in which USAID often works, with particular constraints on women's political leadership; and programs that were at least moderately successful in meeting their targets, to assess achievements and lessons learned.

The WiP research team developed a common analytic framework with guiding questions for all five case studies (see Annex 1), which was adapted to each specific country case study by the country teams.

Prior to the U.S.-based team members' arrival in Jordan, prospective interview respondents were identified through consultations with USAID/Jordan, the USAID/Washington Regional Bureau for the Middle East, and the Washington-based offices of the three implementing partners, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), the International Republican Institute (IRI) and the National Democratic Institute (NDI). The local Jordanian team put together a contact list and the research coordinator scheduled interviews. The Jordan research team included four members: Dr. Kai Spratt, team leader, Summer Lopez, USAID DCHA/DRG team member, Dima Toukan, Jordanian researcher with expertise in the democracy and governance sector and Namar Kayed, logistics coordinator.

Over 11 days, the Jordanian country team conducted 45 semi-structured interviews in Amman, Irbid and Al Karak with program implementers, key stakeholders, female political and civil society leaders, civil society organization (CSO) staff members, USAID implementing partner staff members and representatives of other donors that fund women's empowerment programs, as well as other respondents recommended by USAID/Jordan, the Jordanian researcher and other sources in Jordan. The team conducted five focus group discussions with male and female project participants. Most interviews were conducted in English, but all participants had the option to be interviewed in Arabic with translation provided. The list of interview respondents is in Annex 1.

The team held daily debriefs to share observations, reflections and analyses to discuss what had been learned and what questions needed to be addressed. The team shared their preliminary findings with USAID/Jordan prior to departing the country.

III. CONTEXT

Contextual Factors

The Jordanian political context continues to change in response to both regional developments sparked by the "Arab Spring" that began in 2011 and a parallel increase in domestic pressures for political reform. Jordanians voiced opposition to what many view as government's failure to address political and economic needs. Revisions to the electoral and political framework continue to be contested and implementation of reforms is weak. Nonetheless, recent political developments open opportunities to support a deepening of democratic reforms. King Abdullah II has changed appointed governments, revised laws governing public gatherings and political activity and amended the constitution. Moreover, the effect of the Syrian crisis and the influx of refugees, coupled with the country's already-strained economic resources, have added to Jordan's internal challenges.

While many Jordanians continue to call for widespread reforms both in regular protests and online media, such demands have been largely muted by broader concerns about security and the economy. Freedom House rates Jordan as "not free" in terms of fundamental

political rights and civil liberties[3] with considerable censorship of the media, limits on freedom of association and a weak political culture, all of which are important components of a stable democracy.[4] These structural barriers constrain <u>all</u> political actors from fully participating in Jordan's democratization and influencing the political process. These structural barriers are amplified for women, and they remain underrepresented in the institutions where power truly lies. Although women in the Parliament of Jordan may be influential within that body — and indeed they are being recognized for their success there — the dynamics of political power in Jordan mean that they have limited power overall.

JORDAN'S WOMEN'S QUOTA

In Jordan's mixed-member proportional electoral system, 108 members are elected from 45 single or multi-member districts, 15 seats are reserved for women from 12 governorates and 3 Bedouin districts and 27 members are elected through a proportional representation system. For the allocation of the 15 reserved seats for women, the election commission will calculate the percentage of votes for unsuccessful women candidates in district elections by dividing the number of votes they obtain by the total number of votes cast in their constituency. The 15 women candidates who obtain the highest percentage of votes nationwide will be declared elected on the condition that no governorate obtains more than one reserved seat for women (Article 51 of Law no. 25, 2012 on parliamentary elections).

Source: http://www.quotaproject.org/uid/countryview.cfm?CountryCode=JO

In view of the historically low level of women's political representation in Jordan, the country implemented a quota system[5] in 2003 to accelerate women's *de facto* political equality at the national and municipal levels. The quota increased for each election, increasing from the 2003 level of six seats to the 2013 level of 10 percent (15 seats total — one for each of the 12 governorates and one for each of the three Bedouin districts).

The parliamentary election of Jan. 23, 2013, which the country's first Independent Election Commission (IEC) oversaw, was intended to be one effort by the government to restore credibility to Parliament, which would in turn serve as a mechanism of democratic accountability and a venue for further reform.[6] During the January 2013 election, women won 18 seats out of 150 in Parliament, exceeding the quota. Fifteen of these women won through the reserved seat system, two through the proportional representation lists and one via an outright victory through the majoritarian system.[7] Women also won 29 percent of municipal seats (270 through the quota and 56 outside of it), exceeding the 25 percent quota. However, no women won a mayoral seat in the 2013 elections. (In the 2010 municipal elections, one woman won.)

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[3] http://www.freedomhouse.org/regions/middle-east-and-north-africa#.U6IZBygx_zl. Accessed June 18, 2014.

[4] Rowland, J. (2009). "Democracy and the Tribal System in Jordan: Tribalism as a Vehicle for Social Change," Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection. Paper 749. http://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection/749

[5] For the 108 directly elected seats in Parliament, there is also a quota of nine Bedouin seats, nine Christian seats and three seats for Jordanians of Chechen or Circassian descent. All other seats are reserved for Muslims.

[6] The Carter Center's Study Mission Report for Jordan's 2013 Parliamentary Elections. Feb. 14, 2013. www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/news/peace_publications/election_reports/jordan-2013-study-mission. Accessed June 18, 2014.

[7] Quota Project, Jordan, last updated March 24, 2014 (accessed July 31, 2014) http://www.quotaproject.org/uid/countryview.cfm?CountryCode=JO.

Overall Status of Women in the Country

Jordanian legislation is civil except for the Personal Status Law, which is derived from Islamic Sharia Law and affects women's and girls' rights in both familial and economic matters. In addition, the Nationality Law limits the right of conferring children's nationality to male citizens, which has implications for citizenship and thereby the right to vote and run in an election. In 2013, the Gender Inequality Index ranked Jordan 100th of 187 countries.[8] Gender inequality is apparent in both private and public spheres. Although the judiciary's collective response toward women's rights claims has improved during the last decade, gender-based violence (GBV) remains pervasive.[9]

Women's low political empowerment is mirrored by, and related to, their low economic participation.[10] Women's official workforce participation stood at 14.1 percent in 2014, compared to an average of 30 percent in other countries in the region. Women's leadership in all levels of public and private sector economic activity is "very humble," with no women heads of labor unions, trade associations or business councils. Female health status and education attainment indicators continue to improve; Jordanian women rank first regionally in using the Internet and constitute 44 percent of Internet users in the kingdom.

Changes in Women's Leadership and Political Empowerment

So much of our history (of the women's movement) in Jordan is undocumented.

— Female former Jordanian senator

Individual and small groups of women started working on equality issues and the right to vote in the 1940s. The Jordanian Women's Union was founded in 1945 and a women's movement with specific political agendas emerged in the early 1950s with the establishment of the Awakening League in 1952, which called for women to have the right to vote and run for office. The Federation of Arab Women, established in 1954, petitioned the Jordanian Cabinet for women's right to vote and run for the Jordanian House of Representatives.

Political progress came to a halt in 1957 with the banning of political party activities, followed by the imposition of martial law. During the 1970s, Jordanian feminists were working to secure equal citizenship for women and advocating for greater mobility. In 1974, the United Nations issued the Declaration of the International Women's Year; as a result, women received the right to vote. Martial law was imposed again from 1967–1991, stunting political and civic life in general and the women's movement in particular. Unable to organize politically, women's organizations went back to their roots to provide social services the government did not deliver. Overall civic engagement in Jordan has increased since regional upheavals began in 2011, and citizens are more willing to air dissatisfaction with government performance.[11] Hundreds of civil society organizations dedicated to charity

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[8] UNDP – Global Human Development Report 2013.

[9] Clark, C.J., Bloom, D.E., Hill, A.G. & Silverman, G.I. (2009). "Prevalence Estimate of Intimate Partner Violence in Jordan," *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal*, Vol. 15 (4), p. 880-889.

[10] Labor Market Transitions of Young Women and Men in Jordan, ILO, June 2014.

[11] USAID/Jordan. Country Development Cooperation Strategy 2013-2017.

and service delivery now exist throughout Jordan, but comparatively few focus on advocacy, public policy or gender equality.[12]

The king has laid out a vision for Jordan's transition to a market economy and democratic state, but this transition has been uneven and contested by the opposition. While Jordan may have maintained relative stability and avoided the extreme upheaval of some of its neighbors, it is influenced by the regional turmoil. The descent into bloodshed in Syria has dampened recent, more vociferous local calls for reform and the political opposition is left fragmented and protest-fatigued. Undermining all movements and their ability to make the government accountable and transparent is the hegemony of the security sector and its quest for stability — at the cost of progress on democratic and economic change. The influx of refugees from Syria impacts Jordanians' sense of entitlement, the recent capture of large portions of Iraq by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) raises fears and continued conflict throughout the region stokes worries of violence or intra-group conflict erupting in Jordan, validating limitations on civic freedoms.

Movements that promote human rights and gender equality are constrained as well by an increasingly strong conservative Islamist discourse that is spreading through TV and radio, funded largely by external sources such as Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Egypt. This discourse is used selectively by the Government of Jordan (GOJ) to promote specific policy objectives. For example, in a number of cases related to women's rights, the Dar al-Ifta'a[13] has issued fatwas that contravene stated government policies.[14]

Initiatives funded by donors have supported efforts among line ministries to allocate gender-sensitive budgets (with support from UN Women and USAID) and establish gender units. However, by 2011, only 18 of 108 ministry departments had completed a gender audit. Some legal reforms have favored women's rights, such as in the Labor Code, Protection from Domestic Violence Law and changes to the Personal Status Law, and the Civil Retirement Law now gives widows the right to combine their pensions with those of their husbands. Still, several conflicting policies remain and Jordan holds reservations on two articles in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) articles, which it ratified in 1996. Despite requests from the king to amend laws that discriminate against women and girls, resistance in Parliament persists, reflecting entrenched male privilege and an emerging religious discourse that promotes traditional and separate roles for men and women.

Influences on Women's Political Empowerment

Progress in the status of women has been driven primarily by two main factors: leadership within the royal family and donor priorities. Nearly all informants interviewed for this case study acknowledged that when gender equality is a priority for donors or the international community, the topic appears on GOJ's radar, at least symbolically. One example is the women's quota. A quota that is externally sourced simultaneously poses dangers and

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[12] USAID/Jordan. Country Development Cooperation Strategy 2013–2017.

[13] Dar al-Ifta, or the National Fatwas Committee, created in 2006, headed by the Grand Mufti, is made up of state- employed religious clerics to issue religious rulings. See reference below for citation.

[14] Robbins, M., & Rubin, L. (2013). The Rise of Official Islam in Jordan, Politics, Religion & Ideology, 14:1, 59-74, DOI: 10.1080/21567689.2012.752359

presents opportunities. Opponents of the quota in Jordan accused the government of imposing a policy to gain foreign aid or simply "to appear 'modern' and in tandem with changing international norms," without taking the more substantial measures necessary to empower women.[15] The Jordanian case also demonstrates that gender quotas can have surprising political effects that move beyond formal politics, particularly in challenging traditional gender norms. Many women reported that the quota improved women's sense of political efficacy and encouraged more women to run for office, especially at the municipal level.[16]

The Royal Court funds and endorses many projects and initiatives. Princess Basma, the king's aunt, has been a tireless promoter of women's and girls' greater economic, social and political status, but she recently was silenced as a result of a corruption scandal against her husband. The king recently appointed two women to the five-member IEC, which decided not to institutionalize a women's quota, and this act has been lauded by most women's organizations as demonstrating the king's confidence in women's leadership. The prestige afforded by the Royal Court doesn't necessarily result in substantive changes, but does lay groundwork for social dialogue and parliamentary discussion about female equality and empowerment issues. The king "has been consistently positive in his discourse on women's empowerment,"[17] but this discourse has not successfully persuaded his appointed government to actively address myriad injustices that Jordanian women and girls face.

Many of the leading women's organizations are large, Amman-based and primarily elite-led institutions. Leadership at these organizations reportedly follows two trends: 1) capable women are appointed to leading positions, but may also be drawn away to fill other positions or 2) leaders become entrenched and the organization they lead may lose vision as they pursue initiatives driven by the government or by donor funding. National women's organizations were described as "ineffective," "uncooperative" and without organizational and leadership capacity to inspire collective action or effectively advocate with powerful societal and government blocs that oppose gender equality (and other social progressive movements), despite years of training and capacity building by myriad national and international organizations. Because they are typically elite-led, these organizations can be disconnected from the experience of women at the grassroots and may even take a discriminatory attitude toward such women. Interviewees noted that elitism within the national women's organizations limited their ability to work collaboratively with women in Parliament who came from outside Amman, and whom they viewed as less educated and underqualified.

Donors heavily influenced the adoption of CEDAW, the women's electoral quota[18] and efforts to address harmful laws and social norms. The extent to which these initiatives have been and will be implemented will be one important indicator of the government's stated commitment to these issues.

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[15] Evidence points to Jordan's adoption of a municipal quota for women to qualify for international aid, specifically from the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC). David, A., and Nanes., S. (2011). The Women's Quota in Jordan's Municipal Councils: International and Domestic Dimensions. *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy*, 32:4, 275-304, DOI: 10.1080/1554477X.2011.613709

[16] David, A., and Nanes, S. (2011). The Women's Quota in Jordan's Municipal Councils: International and Domestic Dimensions. *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy*, 32:4, 275-304, DOI: 10.1080/1554477X.2011.613709

[17] Key informant interview.

[18] Interviews for this case study revealed that many women's organizations and individual female commentators offered either lukewarm support for the quota or outright opposed it when initially introduced.

There are promising trends among a new generation of male and female social activists who want to advance social justice in general and gender equality in particular. Rather than work with women's national machineries like the governmental Jordanian National Council for Women (JNCW), a long-established nodal organization that works mostly to promote policy and legal equality and has generally been seen as weak,[19] newly emerging non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have decided to focus on women's *practical* needs rather than their strategic needs to effect change in the everyday lives of men and women suffering injustice and discrimination. This focus results from frustration with the lack of progress on implementing international agreements like CEDAW that are not seen as immediate to people's lives. As one informant noted, "Issues politics are case studies in a new political movement in Jordan." It was also noted that, while working on "gender equality" or "women's rights" may be taboo or challenging, working at the local level with women (and some men) on concrete issues was more accepted and viewed as a useful entry point. Other women's activists expressed concern that this represented a failure to appreciate or tackle the broader structural issues that prevent real progress toward gender equality.

More than 70 percent of Jordan's population is under age 30. The youth cohort is not a monolithic group and is as diverse in its attitudes toward democracy, civil society activism and gender equality as older cohorts are. For the majority of youth, economic insecurity is the major concern. A number of people cautioned against assuming that youth are necessarily more progressive, and noted that conservatism is on the rise within universities in particular. Tribal identity and loyalty, which were less pertinent in their parents' generation, are now promoted as strategies to secure access to jobs, resources and political power in a system that many think reinforces social divisions rather than uniting Jordanians. For example, one youth leader noted, "The Election Law does not allow us to vote for the right person. I had to vote for my tribe. I want to participate in the laws so that I have a real choice and suitable people are elected."

USAID Project Results Assessment

The team interviewed 45 informants,[20] with several interviews conducted in groups, and administered five focus groups in three sites. The WiP team interviewed all of USAID's prime partners, stakeholders who lead efforts to promote gender equality and female politicians from a range of political backgrounds, and had several opportunities to meet with local partners and project participants. The team did not select participants in focus groups randomly, relying instead on USAID's partners to facilitate meetings and identify community-based participants in the focus groups.

USAID goals in programming regarding women's political participation have been fourfold: 1) support women candidates to run for political office at all levels; 2) build the capacity of elected women, especially those in Parliament; 3) support civil society engagement in the political process; and 4) strengthen the Independent Election Commission to improve the electoral process so that women are part of that process.

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[19] A new secretary general of JNCW, Dr. Salma Al Nims, who is from this new generation of social activists, was appointed in May 2014. Her first priorities are to empower a culture of change within the organization and develop JNCW into a catalyst for civil society to demand equality. (Interview notes, June 3, 2014.)

[20] Not all informants were able to provide business cards.

USAID's main Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DRG) partners in Jordan are the U.S.-based nonprofit organizations IFES, NDI, IRI and IREX, each of which partners with a number of local NGOs. The team examined USAID's program under the Consortium for Electoral and Political Systems Strengthening (CEPPS), and within that program, NDI and IRI's efforts to advance women's political participation. USAID partners have contributed to women's political participation in all these areas — though quantifying the outcomes and impact of this progress is difficult to ascertain, due mostly to the way results are reported and a lack rigorous evaluation.

IRI

IRI has been working in Jordan since 2005. It has supported the capacity of political parties to develop issue-oriented platforms and policy positions and communicate these platforms to citizens. Women candidates are included in these trainings and make up a minority of participants. IRI reports note that "for social and cultural reasons, many women in Jordan require specialized attention and encouragement to attend candidate trainings. The challenges women candidates face are unique and are not generally addressed in mixed-gender trainings." IRI's focus is predominately at the municipal level, where it has been training women on how to run for municipal council and supporting women elected to these positions. It works with mayors to increase their interaction with citizens through events like town hall meetings, where community members can raise issues and concerns. IRI also works with citizens' committees, made up of male and female community volunteers who meet to address service delivery issues in their community. IRI also conducts public opinion research examining Jordanians' attitudes on national priorities, political reform, electoral politics and local governance.

IRI recently began a new project called EMPOWER, focusing on women in "poverty pockets" as defined by UNDP.[21] IRI is working in four poverty pockets with 25 women in each "pocket." EMPOWER focuses on women between the ages of 18 and 35 to increase their political participation. Women desire to know more about political participation. IRI identifies participants for this project through local women's associations from different sectors rather than publicizing the training and allowing women to self-select. In several cases, interviewees noted that the process of selecting program participants is opaque, and intermediary organizations have too much influence over who is invited to participate. Increasing the transparency of this process would reduce the risks of unintended exclusion and increase trust in the program.

Women will participate in trainings that prepare them to advocate with local officials on their priority issues. The project provides training in communication and advocacy skills, increasing confidence to interact with mayors, members of Parliament (MPs) and other decision-makers. These skills are important because for most women this is the first time they have been in a room with a "decision maker" outside of their own family. During FY15 IRI will work in four new poverty pockets and does not plan to provide ongoing training or mentoring to women in the first four project sites. According to informants interviewed at

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[21] "Poverty pockets" are defined as "districts/subdistricts with 25 percent population or more below the national poverty line." Thinking Differently About the Poor: Findings from Poverty Pockets Survey in Jordan. Prepared by United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation. 2010. The most recent World Bank data (2008) for Jordan show an overall poverty headcount ratio (those living below $1.25 per day) of 13.3 percent.

the IRI office, they will report on the number of women participating in the training but have no plans to follow up in fiscal year 2015 to track the consequences (positive or negative) of their participation.

The case study team met with one of IRI's citizens' committees in northern Jordan. A lively group of 14 men and women, included one woman who had recently been elected to the municipal council on her second try. They were satisfied with the training received from IRI, and after the municipal election they helped conduct a survey on local priorities. They enjoyed being introduced to technology like iPads/iPhones to collect survey data, which were transmitted to IRI in Amman. (The committee will be using the results to lobby the municipal council for changes.) The team said this may have been a missed opportunity to build capacity among the committee members to analyze the survey data themselves, versus sending it to Amman to be analyzed and then returned to them.

The citizens' committee's priorities focused on establishing public parks, repairing roads and undertaking city cleanliness campaigns. The level of frustration among members of this committee quickly became apparent, fueled by several issues: Mayors have limited authority and limited access to funding, so even getting new bulbs for streetlights can take years; the culture of volunteerism is not common in Jordan so it is difficult to mobilize neighbors to participate in activities such as a cleanup campaign; there has been an overall decline in civility and frustration that leads to "bad behavior" and people shirking their civic responsibilities like paying taxes and paying for housing permits. Several informants noted, "In the past we never had hardliners in Jordan. Now we do. We need tolerance." One perspective that came up several times was: Without the municipal council (MC) having input and responsibility for determining how municipal funds are used, how can citizens hold it accountable?

Following much activity before the election, group members noted that, since the election, they meet only when IRI mobilizes them to have a meeting, and their efforts are individual, not actions taken as a committee. Individuals in the group observed that, even though women are equal to men legally, men dominate; women are still considered to be inferior and the barriers to their political participation include a lack of implementation of existing laws. Their advice: Change will take time, and start with the young generation.

NDI

NDI has been working in Jordan since 1997. In recent years, NDI's activities have focused in two main areas: 1) building the capacity of women to run for and be effective in Parliament, including offering trainings on amending legislation, networking and connecting with women's NGOs, media and constituents to address concerns and priorities; and 2) working with women's NGOs on women's political participation. This includes information-sharing among NGOs, coordination with NDI activities and educating women on their rights. During the electoral cycle in 2013, NDI worked to develop the capacity of civil society to engage in the election process and promote the transparency and integrity of the electoral process. NDI supports the Women's Caucus in the Parliament, which is independent from the structure of the Parliament and is not included in its bylaws. NDI provided a trainer and technical assistance to support the caucus's drafting of legislative priorities, including legislation for the disabled, amendments to laws on social security, labor and retirement (which discriminate against women) and on addressing GBV.

Challenges for the caucus include reaching consensus, the quality of members' participation and the fact that members are spread among limited support staff. These issues are challenges for male MPs as well.

NDI notes that caucus successes include meeting regularly, agreeing to change leadership every three months and MPs networking with the Ministry of Social Development, the National Family Guidance Committee and other stakeholders. Each female MP is involved in a parliamentary committee, bloc or both. NDI has seen some female MPs pushing social issues, such as changes to Article 308[22] and the Nationalities Law. According to NDI, female MPs are getting much more visibility in the media, which is seeking them out for their opinions and perspectives.

For several years, NDI has been supporting the Parliamentary Fellows Program, wherein university students provide research and informational support to women MPs, as well as manage their social media pages on sites such as Facebook and Twitter. Although staffing remains a challenge, many interviewees cited this program as a valuable source of support for female MPs while also exposing a new generation of young people to women in positions of power and to new opportunities for political participation.

NDI has also provided capacity-building support to the legal steering committee of the JNCW to create fact sheets on the gender implications of issues such as the social security law. NDI tracks if female (but not male) MPs discuss topics in Parliament on which they've received NDI training.[23] The organization is also supporting female parliamentarians' efforts to break the stereotype that "women's issues" (e.g., health and education) are the only issues female MPs care about, and is undertaking training for female MPs on a newly drafted investment law.

NDI reports that some campaigns have addressed social norms, but their outcomes are not clear. The organization asserted that currently there is no donor funding for programs to address social norms on women's leadership. In NDI's experience, women are able to run when their family or tribe supports them. They also report that women candidates have faced violence and divorce and had their campaigns sabotaged by family members who are opposed to their political participation.

IFES

Most informants interviewed for this case study said they considered IFES successful in its work to build the capacity and sustainability of the IEC. IFES has supported strengthening the legal framework of the electoral administration process and the capacity of the IEC to administer national and subnational elections, and seeks to build public confidence in the IEC through public and medial outreach initiatives.

IFES has supported the appointment of women in a number of leadership positions within the IEC, including policy chair and training chair. At the time of the case study, 30 percent of IEC staff members were female. IFES has an internal policy to increase women's role as

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[22] Article 308 in the Penal Code allows a rapist to marry his victim instead of going to jail.

[23] ABA-ROLI, another USAID implementing partner, is also working with the JNCW, helping them to build an advocacy unit so the legal committee's legislative recommendations could be provided in a more institutionalized manner. They also helped with the development of a template for legislative review.

trainers and as attendants at polling stations: During the last election, at least one woman staffed each polling station, a significant improvement from the past.

IREX

IREX is implementing USAID's new three-year "Women's Empowerment Project," awarded in April 2014. This project supports USAID/Jordan's country development and cooperation strategy (CDCS), which has a special development objective to promote gender equality and female empowerment. The CDCS states the Jordanian Mission's intention to integrate attention to gender equality across all mission projects and to stimulate social dialogue on gender equality, support national and local leadership on gender equality and improve access to services for women and girls. At the time of the field work for the case study, IREX was assembling its key staff and working on its first-year work plan. A key strategy of the project is to use communications tools that target different audiences through a variety of platforms — from social media like Facebook and Twitter to community radio to online videos — to stimulate constructive dialogue on gender inequality as a barrier to Jordan's development. Project activities will include a call to action on what citizens can do to advocate for gender equality; this step is often missing from social mobilization efforts that focus just on raising awareness. The project will support the capacity of the JNCW to create new partnerships and collaboration among women's organizations, as well as build the capacity of the organization to support the implementation of the National Strategy for Jordanian Women (see following section). The project is funded to conduct gender audits with government ministries to assess and address institution barriers to gender integration. An additional role of the project is to coordinate the international donor response to gender inequality in Jordan.

IV. WOMEN'S POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT BENCHMARKS

> There is no "conspiracy" against the women's movement in Jordan. The diminished women's movement, and most civil society movements, is a byproduct of the overarching pursuit of national security.
>
> — NGO leader

There are myriad "women's organizations" in Jordan. Some are apolitical, focusing on charitable causes or improving service delivery. Others challenge the status quo by advocating for political and social change that will deliver gender equality, while still others promote a more conservative vision of women's roles. Some work within institutions that promote Islamist ideology and some within academia to sharpen students' ability to critique and contest social, cultural and political values. Some organizations focus solely on action to change harmful customary and religious norms. As one author notes, a "key challenge in measuring women's movements is that any measure of size does not tell you much about impact."[24] This is certainly the case in Jordan. Concentrated largely in Amman, most of these organizations remain dependent on donor, government or royal family largess. Many would

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[24] Tripp, A.M. (2014). Some Thoughts on Measuring Women's Movements. Paper for Management Systems International.

argue that these organizations — run by well-educated elites — do not represent the majority of women in Jordan, nor do they champion the practical issues that undermine political, economic and social equality of women generally and poorer women in particular.[25] As a result, some women's organizations — particularly, some interviewees suggested, those that are run by a newer generation of activists — have walked away from a policy-based approach to achieving gender equality in favor of working on specific issues, such as honor crimes or Article 308: grassroots issues that impact women in their daily lives. A focus on addressing the *practical* needs of women and girls in Jordan is a viable strategy that deserves more attention, given the continuing challenges to social and political empowerment of females through legal and policy change in Jordan.

At the policy level, the National Strategy for Jordanian Women, developed with leadership from the JNCW and updated for 2012–2015, has three priorities: 1) economic empowerment, 2) political empowerment and 3) social and cultural empowerment. Informants noted that the strategy was updated without the participation from all key women's organizations and few grassroots organizations were involved, so implementation may be problematic. The first priority of the national strategy — and of most of the individuals interviewed for this case study — is economic empowerment. Many informants interviewed for this case study noted that women's political empowerment is inexorably linked to women's economic empowerment and independence.

It is too early to judge the impact of the recently established Women's Parliamentary Caucus (which has been supported by USAID and other donors) on women's ability to influence Parliament to enact gender-responsive changes in laws, as well as government budgets and priorities. A majority of the 18 women MPs have joined the caucus, but a few have declined to join. In a scorecard[26] recently released by the Hayat Center measuring MPs' performance in the most recent session, female MPs received five of the top 10 scores, and the top performer was a female MP. The scorecard does not have an indicator to track how MPs perform on promoting gender equality, nor any other substantive issues, as it measures only activities or roles that reflect engagement in Parliament. These indicators — for example, introduction of legislation; committee membership; requests for general debates; and questions posed to members of government — could, however, provide a means to better measure the actual activity and influence of female parliamentarians. Although this was the first time the Hayat Center released such scorecards, they could provide a valuable means of measuring trends in women's influence within the institution of Parliament.

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[25] Based on Tripp's note, one could argue that some women's organizations are not social movements, per se, since they represent the elites, not "ordinary people … and influential citizens [who] join forces in confrontation with elites, authorities and opponents."

[26] The methodology adopted 12 indicators to measure the performance of the MPs, with a maximum possible score of 275 points. These indicators measured attendance and absence, interventions, crucial interventions, number of questions posed to the government, membership of permanent office or committees, reference to themes of the national agenda during the conference deliberations, membership in parliamentary blocs, requests for general debates, social networking (i.e., use of Facebook and Twitter), suggesting a bill (proposing a law), interpellation and submission of a motion. See http://www.hayatcenter.org/publication/1389608733.pdf.

TABLE 1. WOMEN IN POSITIONS OF LEADERSHIP IN JORDAN

Position	Quota	# of Women	Method of Selection
Mayors (except Amman)	None	0/93	Elected
Municipal Council	25%	326/1124 (29%)	56 women directly elected outside quota
House of Deputies / Majlis al-Nuwaab[27]	10%	18/150 (12%)	Elected
House of Senate / Majlis al-Aayan	None	9/75 (12%)	Appointed by king
Cabinet (includes prime minister)	N/A	3/27 (11.1 %)	Appointed by king. Women lead 3 Ministries: Social Development, Transport and Culture
Judiciary: *Lower court judges and public prosecutors* ***Constitutional Court*** ***Higher Judicial Court***	15% (target)	178/978 (18.2%) 0/11 0/11	Appointed by Higher Judicial Council
Security:[28] ***Public Security Force*** ***Military***	N/A	Unavailable ?/25,000 ?/88,000	

As shown in Table 1, women wield little formal power in Jordan, but are seeing gains at the lower levels of administrative and political hierarchies. For examples, increasing numbers of women lawyers are being appointed to the judiciary and as public prosecutors, and in exceeding quotas for municipal council. However, positions at the highest level of secular courts are exclusively male.[29] While women are employed in the police and security forces, data on the proportion of women in positions of leadership in these branches are not publicly available. In local elected positions, the role of municipal councilor is limited and mayors (none of whom are female) hold the authority that does exist. Jordan is still below the regional average for the Arab States in terms of women in the lower house (12 percent vs. 17.8 percent), but is above the regional average in the upper house (12 percent vs. 7.7 percent),[30] possibly due to these seats being appointed by the king and not won through elections.

Women's inability to move up the ranks is not explained by educational attainment; in Jordan, women overall surpass men in this regard. Instead, it appears to be the result of a combination of factors, including discriminatory norms, attitudes and policies, a lack of

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[27] In the 2013 elections, 18 women won election to Parliament: 15 through the quota, two as heads of national proportional representation lists and one elected through the majoritarian system in the districts.

[28] n.d., Data from Government of Jordan website, http://www.kinghussein.gov.jo/government5.html. Accessed June 20, 2014.

[29] Women cannot serve in Sharia Courts.

[30] Data from the InterParliamentary Union website, http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm. Accessed July 31, 2014.

economic opportunity and independence for women (which many interviewees cited as a prerequisite for political participation), the limited options women face in managing their domestic and reproductive roles and responsibilities. Most women drop out of the workforce when they have children, and if they do return, they enter at positions far below the rank of males of the same age. The GOJ has recently enacted legislation to require daycare services for working women (but not men), but services are often expensive, hard to find and not always socially acceptable. As in many countries, women's limited political leadership is likely also influenced by the perception that political power is a zero-sum game, that more women in power would mean pushing out men. This sort of dynamic frequently plays out within political parties, but given the minimal role played by political parties (aside from the Islamic Action Front) in Jordan, that could create more opportunities for Jordanian women to avoid being limited by party leadership that views them as a threat. However, a similar dynamic seems to occur within the tribe for women from a tribal background, where many interviewees reported determinations being made about whether a women's political participation would be tolerated, supported or prevented.

Barriers to Women's Political Participation

> "We don't know where we are going or how to get there (for women's empowerment)."
>
> — Female lawyer

There are numerous legal, economic and cultural/social barriers that have a direct impact on women's political participation in Jordan. Some of these structural and economic issues impact men as well as women, but to a different degree. The cultural and social issues primarily impact women.

Legal Issues

Constitution: In September 2011, the Royal Committee on Constitutional Review proposed amendments to Jordan's constitution, including an amendment to Article 6, which prohibits discrimination based on race, language or religion. The Royal Committee promised women's rights activists that it would revise the article to include the term "gender." However, the final draft submitted to King Abdullah did not include this term. Article 9 of Jordan's nationality law denies women married to foreign-born spouses to pass on their nationality to their husbands and children. Women's rights activists continue to call on the government to amend the law in accordance with its obligations to CEDAW.

Electoral Law: The electoral law was revised in June 2012, allowing voters to cast two votes rather than one: one for a district representative and one chosen from a list of five candidates in his or her constituency competing under a proportional electoral system at the national level. Fifteen seats are reserved to guarantee women's representation (up from the previous 12). While the institution of a proportional system will promote gains for parties rather than tribes, only 17 seats (or 12 percent) of the now 150-seat Parliament were elected on this basis. Critics contend that the new electoral law perpetuates the status quo by ensuring most parliamentarians continue to be elected along tribal lines — which also favors male candidates. Many informants were ambivalent about the effect of the quota on women's political empowerment. Some noted that "the quota is not a victory for women; people continue to think women are weak and can't be elected on their own."

Political parties in Jordan are extremely weak, and the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated Islamic Action Front (IAF) (which boycotted the 2013 election) is essentially the only well-organized party. Most represent narrow parochial interests and are composed of prominent individuals representing a particular family or tribe.[31] These individuals are usually male, unless the tribe is contesting for the women's quota seat.

Judiciary: Jordan's constitution provides for an independent judiciary. Jordan has three main types of courts: civil courts, special courts (some of which are military or state security courts) and religious courts, from which women are barred. Overall, the king may appoint and dismiss judges at the request of the Higher Judicial Council, which also manages court promotions, transfers and retirements. There are no women on the Higher Judicial Council. Until five years ago, less than 5 percent of judges were female; women now comprise up to 50 percent of new appointees to the lower court (representing a real increase in the number of women lawyers overall and a proactive appointment of women to the bench). While there has been a female attorney general in the past, the most senior ranks of the judiciary includes few women now. Of 978 judges and public prosecutors, only 178 are female.[32]

Inheritance and Property Rights: Women in Jordan legally own and inherit less than their male relatives do. When women have owned and inherited property, they have been frequently and intensely pressured to give up their land to male family members, leading to family dislocation and greater poverty among widowed women and their children.

Economic

> "My family did not support me running for Parliament — they didn't accept me as a political leader. What enabled me to run is that I am financially independent."
>
> — Female MP

With few natural resources and a small industrial base, Jordan has an economy that is heavily dependent on external aid from abroad, tourism, expatriate worker remittances and the service sector. Among Jordan's longstanding problems are poverty (15 percent to 30 percent), corruption, slow economic growth and high levels of unemployment, especially among well-educated women. Jordan ranked last in women's economic participation among 139 countries in the 2010 Global Competitiveness Report. Unemployment is extremely high: 19 percent of male and 48 percent of female youth between 19 and 24 years old want to work but can't find jobs. For men, the transition from school to work is slow (on average 15 months), but for women the school-to-work transition often never takes place,[33] or women may work for a few years and then leave the formal workforce. A general mismatch between the low quality of jobs available in the economy and the level of skills and education of the domestic labor force has led many rural Jordanians to move to Amman to look for work or seek better jobs abroad. This strategy is often not available to women who may not be permitted by their family to travel on their own, even within the country. Women also face legal or religious restrictions on the hours they work or type of work that they do. Attitudes toward women working are changing, albeit slowly, in part due to the rising cost of living in a rapidly urbanizing society.

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[31] Congressional Research Service. Jordan: Background and U.S. Relations J. M. Sharp. May 8, 2014. http://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33546.pdf. Accessed June 20, 2014.

[32] Ibid

[33] World Bank. 2010. Soft Skills or Hard Cash? What Works for Female Employment in Jordan?

The government remains the largest employer, employing 51.4 percent of women compared to 36.7 percent of men. Female workers are heavily concentrated in three public sectors: education (41.7 percent), health and social work (14.6 percent) and public administration (14.1 percent).[34] The public sector is the top choice for some Jordanian women due to its shorter workdays, more generous benefits and general social acceptability of women working in this sector. However, a drive toward fiscal tightening and privatization has resulted in reduced public-sector employment while the private sector generates few alternative job opportunities, directly impacting women's employment opportunities. According to the Department of Statistics, for example, 98 percent of all private firms in Jordan are micro (typically family-owned businesses) and small enterprises that employ only 1–4 and 5–19 workers, respectively. In addition, the private sector is unable to offer wages and social security benefits comparable to those in the public sector.[35] Overall, the mean monthly wages of men and women are rather homogeneous, but the cost of childcare and commute can render women working full-time an illogical economic choice for many households.

The percentage of female-headed households is approximately 10 percent to 12 percent in Jordan; families headed by women tend to be among the poorest of the poor. Poor women's low level of economic activity makes women dependent on public transfer and private generosity, resulting in a significant impact on women's empowerment and a loss of influence and control over decisions and external factors that affect their lives. The access of women-headed households to assets and finances are less than that of households headed by men. For example, only 44 percent of households headed by women own agricultural land and 30 percent own livestock, while 68 percent of households headed by men own land and 36 percent own livestock. Similarly, only 21 percent of women heads of household receive loans for agricultural development and 9 percent for income-generating activities, compared to 43 percent and 14 percent, respectively, of men who are heads of households.[36]

Without access to or control over assets and wages, one significant barrier to women's political participation in Jordan is the cost of running for political office. For the 2013 parliamentary elections, all candidates running for an individual seat or on a party list were required to pay a fee of 500 Jordanian dinar (JD) (approximately $760) deposit;[37] the fee for running for MC was 150 JD. This and other campaigning costs poses a greater burden for women, who generally earn less than men, have fewer assets against which to secure a loan or may be dependent on husbands and families for economic support that may not be forthcoming. While there is no regulation of campaign finance sources in the electoral law, there is no tradition in Jordan of fundraising from individuals (outside of family or tribal connections) or businesses. Several interviewees noted that a group akin to the U.S. organization Emily's List[38] might be valuable to support Jordanian women with few resources, or lack of family financial support, to run for political office. It was noted that fundraising in support of specific individuals would be viewed as organizational suicide for a

[34] Labor Market Transitions of Young Women and Men in Jordan, ILO, 2014.

[35] Center for Development Policy and Research. 2011. Jordan's Paradox of Growth without Employment: A Microcosm of the Middle East? [DV.65]. SOAS, University of London.

[36] Millennium Challenge Corporation. Social and Gender Integration Plan, Millennium Challenge Account – Jordan July 2012.

[37] The deposit is refunded if a candidate withdraws before the election is held.

[38] Interview with NDI staff. Emily's List is a U.S.-based organization that raises funds to find, recruit and train women community leaders across the country to run for office in congressional and gubernatorial contests. Its efforts support pro-choice Democratic female candidates.

women's organization or other CSO, but there is no technical reason why existing women's organizations could not raise funds to be made available for female candidates in general.

While the government's strategy of boosting job creation led by the private sector may address some of the unemployment issues in Jordan, donors and the government are generally not addressing social and cultural constraints that impact women's unemployment rates and political participation, as discussed in the following section.

Cultural/Social

Gender inequalities in Jordan stem in part from traditional gender roles embedded in Jordanian cultural and religious discourse. Traditional attitudes that place a high value on women's roles in the private sphere and within the family can constrain the women's labor force and their political participation. These attitudes are based on social and religious notions that biological differences between men and women determine their social function, that therefore men and women have distinct and complementary responsibilities in the family and different but equitable rights associated with those responsibilities.[39]

According to the "traditional paradigm" of Jordanian gender roles, women marry and contribute to the family as homemaker, wife and mother. It assumes that the man will be in charge of the household and provide for his family financially. Because men have that primary responsibility, strong social support exists for them getting jobs first when they are scarce.

As daughters, wives and mothers, women are perceived as vulnerable and in need of protection that should be provided by the father, husband, brother or son. Men's responsibility to provide financially for the family and protect their daughters, wives and children is justification for their exercise of authority over women in all areas of decision-making regarding both the public and private spheres — including how they vote, if and where they work and if they can run for political office. Due to this traditional paradigm, a woman's interaction with and representation in politics and society is often mediated by her father or husband (or, if widowed, her son.) While this paradigm exists to some extent all over the world, it has become institutionalized and pervades the legal framework in Jordan and many other countries.

This traditional paradigm recreates and reinforces stereotypes about male and female abilities that become automatic and uncontested. For example, many informants expressed frustration with the socially accepted notion that women could not be effective leaders. There are, and will always be, exceptional women in Jordan who run for political office, strive to head major corporations or lead powerful ministries, but until and unless the majority of men, boys, women and girls see females as capable of being leaders, those women will always be the exception.

In some cases, religious injunctions exist against the mixing of males and females who are not related, and this impacts women's political (and economic) participation. These limitations, as well as competing family responsibilities, may make it difficult for some to participate in party meetings, council sessions, etc., particularly in the evening or on weekends, when women have family responsibilities. Such events may be purposefully scheduled for times when women <u>cannot</u> participate.[40] Women's caucuses are valuable

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[39] Millennium Challenge Corporation. Social and Gender Integration Plan, Millennium Challenge Account – Jordan July 2012.

[40] Interview with female politician.

venues for women to meet and strategize about promoting gender-sensitive policies and budgets, which is useful if they can then find socially acceptable space to advocate for these issues and challenge male colleagues on them.

Social attitudes that derive from these gender norms are an important, under-examined influence on women's political participation in Jordan and are undoubtedly not experienced the same way by all Jordanian women. Many informants noted that "no women will elect a woman" because most men *and* women believe men are better able to lead. Other interviewees described the support they received from other women as critical to their success. Many women — particularly those living in Amman who considered themselves progressive and were in positions of leadership — noted that patriarchal structures are responsible for women's limitations, but many interviewed outside Amman who had run for office (successfully or not) noted that their husbands and families had supported their efforts. Women from rural areas seemed more likely to state that "things are changing" than were some in Amman, who were quick to note the conservatism of the rest of the country. Women who have run obviously represent a small minority of women overall, and many also had stories of families prohibiting women from running for office or otherwise participating.

Media plays an important role in presenting women as leaders and role models. Several NGOs in Jordan train journalists to improve their coverage of social justice and women's issues. However, much of the media — especially TV drama, 70 percent to 80 percent of which is from Egypt, Turkey and Syria — tends to present women in stereotypical ways and has no discernable influence on women's political participation or attitudes toward women's political participation. Since the Arab Spring, TV soap operas have raised important political and social themes, but often address them in ways that are conservative and detrimental to women's equality. For example, a current popular soap opera addressed the issue of polygamy by promoting the idea that "it is better to be the second or third wife than not married at all." Or media treats gender issues in "sob story" fashion, for example, encouraging people to feel sorry for women suffering from honor crimes rather than be outraged by the concept of honor crimes.[41]

TABLE 2. GENDER GAP ON VIEW OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP[42]

Country	% Saying Men Make Better Political Leaders			
	Total %	Men %	Women %	Gap
Lebanon	32	45	20	+25
Tunisia	75	83	66	+17
Jordan	50	57	43	+14
Turkey	52	58	45	+13
Pakistan	62	67	57	+10
Egypt	42	41	42	-1

Source: Pew Research Center Q101

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[41] Key informant interviews.

[42] Pew Research Center. 2012. Global Attitudes Project. Most Muslims Want Democracy, Personal Freedoms, and Islam in Political Life. http://www.pewglobal.org/files/2012/07/Pew-Global-Attitudes-Project-Arab-Spring-Report-FINAL-Tuesday-July-10-2012.pdf

It is widely agreed that male champions are critical to involving men in advancing women in politics. Appointing a man as a chair or encouraging men to participate in parliamentary gender equality bodies may seem counterintuitive, but has proven a successful means by which to give men responsibility for the gender equality agenda and to create male champions.[43] More can be done in Jordan to identify positive examples of men's gender equality advocacy so that others may follow. For example, getting men in other countries to support the legislative initiatives of women, men's co-sponsorship of gender equality legislation and the involvement of men in public activities and outreach to promote gender equality have all proven to successfully empower male champions. However, encouraging men to do more than just *support* women who challenge gender inequality — getting them to actually *lead* — can be difficult. Emphasizing the wider social benefits of gender equality and avoiding the discourse of "women's issues" or "gender" has proven useful.

While the king is a vocal advocate for women's equality and other men support and work on behalf of female equality in Jordan, male champions for women's equality are relatively few and not as public as men (often religious leaders) who dominate the airways championing traditional roles for men and women. One informant who ran for municipal council noted, "Women who succeed in Jordan are either divorced, widowed or never married because 'husbands will break you down.'"

At the same time, many of the women candidates interviewed cited their husband's support as a critical factor. Some outside Amman also noted that their husbands were even willing to help with household chores to alleviate some of that workload. Their husbands, however, insisted that no one know they played these more domestic roles. While some Jordanian men are willing to support their wives' ambitions and embrace a new way of thinking about gender roles to some degree, social pressures to adhere to expected norms still run deep for men as well as women. It also, however, highlights a possible entry point to engage these men and allow them to support one another.

One interviewee noted that men also struggle with and suffer under society's gendered expectations on them, particularly the responsibility to provide for their families in a weak economy. Men have their own experiences of injustice and rights violations, but it is never discussed and donor programs never address these issues. Including men in discussions about gender norms and rights issues more broadly — not just women's rights — could alleviate concerns about women's empowerment as a threat to men's power, and may also build a stronger network of men willing to raise these issues and challenge prevailing norms.

Glass Ceilings

Occupational sex segregation[44] exists in all aspects of the Jordanian workforce, as both vertical and horizontal segregation is present. The consequences of women's limited economic advancement, despite their higher educational attainment than men, and low

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[43] Palmieri, S. (2013). Sympathetic advocates: male parliamentarians sharing responsibility for gender equality. *Gender & Development*, 21:1, 67-80, DOI: 10.1080/13552074.2013.767501

[44] Occupational sex segregation refers to the division of labor, in the context of paid employment, as a result of which men and women (or members of different ethnic or religious groupings) are channeled into different types of occupational roles and tasks, such that there are two (or more) separate labor forces. It is conventional to distinguish vertical job segregation, by which male employees, for example, are concentrated in the higher-status and better-paid positions, from horizontal job segregation, where the different sexes or ethnic groups work in different types of occupations, e.g., men are engineers, women are typists, etc. http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1O88-occupationalsegregation.html. Accessed Aug. 1, 2014

female participation in the workforce leads to lower female incomes, lower average household income and greater economic dependency by women and girls. This economic dependency limits women's ability and independence to run for office. The social pressure to conform to traditional gender roles means women interrupt or abandon careers as lawyers, managers, administrators, educators and business owners that in time would find them in positions of leadership and authority as judges, senior government officials, policymakers and Cabinet ministers and successful entrepreneurs. Focusing attention on individually successful women has distracted from collective action to challenge structural discrimination ("glass ceilings") or has promulgated the myth that women "don't want to work." Several interviewees noted that more Jordanian women in the labor force has not translated into a redistribution of labor in the home, creating double burdens for women; they noted that daughters have seen their mothers struggle to manage all the demands of employment and domestic responsibilities and as a result say they "don't want a life like my mother's," rejecting the idea of a career after marriage.[45]

Ironically, "reserved seats for women may be perceived as an 'inadvertent ceiling for women's participation, leading elites and citizens to assume that seats not explicitly reserved for women are therefore implicitly reserved for men.'"[46]

Informal Power

During fieldwork for the case study, the team met many dynamic and powerful women — female MPs, former senators, leaders of national NGOs, business owners, academics and women of all educational and socioeconomic levels who had run with great enthusiasm and ingenuity for municipal council and for Parliament. The team met women who were essentially volunteering to run government-supported social service centers for women and girls in several governorates[47] and women who volunteered at local youth and community-based NGOs dedicated to improving the lives of people in their community and country.

Women's sources of informal power lay inside their households, where they could cajole and convince members of their families to support their personal ambitions (as opposed to supporting women's political candidacy solely to promote their affiliated tribe). Women who had won elections frequently had strong local networks due to existing positions in their communities; e.g., one owned a housewares shop and another was a school principal. Women who ran for MC and Parliament frequently were known in the community as good people who care about others and won election because people have "faith in them." Women have informal power in the institutions in which they dominate, at least among the rank and file. The former principal, for example, was elected outside the quota and believed direct improvements she made to the school and the neighborhood had bolstered her campaign. The impact of these women's efforts was visible to the community and seems to have successfully outweighed reservations about voting for a woman. This was another theme that emerged during the case study: Despite agreement that patriarchal attitudes

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[45] This comment came mostly from well-educated, middle-class women who have more options for outside employment than poorer women do.

[46] The Carter Center's Study Mission Report for Jordan's 2013 Parliamentary Elections. Feb. 14, 2013. http://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/news/peace_publications/election_reports/jordan-2013-study-mission. Accessed June 18, 2014. Page 24.

[47] In one site, a woman who headed a social service office for the government had not had a raise in salary for 10 years and her 300 JD salary hardly covered transportation and other costs associated with fulfilling her role.

would limit support for women's greater political participation, most agreed that if a woman could prove herself and deliver for her constituents, people would support her. Women's accomplishments need to be more emphatically promoted in their communities.

Best Practices and Lessons Learned

> "A challenge to gender equality in Jordan is that women reject women's rights."
>
> — Female Lawyer

USAID's 2013 DRG Strategy[48] articulates a set of principles and best practices against which to assess its projects to promote women's political participation in Jordan. As the strategy notes, "two critical outcomes [are] envisioned by this strategy: greater citizen participation and inclusion and more accountable institutions and leaders." Best practices include:

- <u>Empower reformers and citizens from the bottom.</u> USAID/Jordan's DRG projects, such as the ABA Rule of Law and IRI EMPOWER projects, focus more at the community level — trying to reach some of the poorest women with information about their legal rights and training them to communicate their needs and concerns with local decision-makers. But more can be done to make access to project activities more participatory, democratic and transparent, and monitoring and evaluation systems need to look at outcomes and impacts of these activities;

- <u>Free and fair electoral processes enable citizens to exercise their right to elect their leaders.</u> By all accounts, the elections of 2013 were free and fair following intensive support to the IEC by USAID and other donors. IFES's work with the IEC increased the number of women working at the polls throughout the country and supported a process in which the king appointed women to 30 percent of the senior commission positions. For the most part, women were able to cast their ballots without interference though research is needed to ascertain the extent to which men and women's choices were dictated by family or tribal leaders. At least one interviewee noted that women routinely feel pressure — both implicit and explicit — from their families regarding how to vote.

- <u>Encourage host governments and civil society to employ legitimate and effective accountability mechanisms.</u> The parliamentary scorecard the Hayat Center used to objectively track the performance of MPs is an exciting example of accountability mechanisms. Media coverage was intense following the release of the results and was important to show not only the capacity of women MPs to perform (which challenged myths of female competence) but also to quantify the underperformance of several male elites in the Parliament. The scorecard's indicators, which look at the impact of MPs' interventions in Parliament, could be analyzed to look at the actual influence of female MPs.

At the same time, this case study revealed some lessons learned.

<u>It is difficult to assess the outcomes or impact of projects activities seeking to increase women's political participation and political power based on the way that project results are reported.</u> For example, *48 women who attended IRI campaign trainings in preparation for municipal elections won seats on municipal councils, comprising 14 percent of the 345 women who won office in the*

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[48] USAID Strategy on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance. 2013.

elections. What is missing is the denominator, or how many women attended the training: Did 48 of 49 women who attended the campaign training win election, or 48 of 300? Similarly: *220 constituents attended a town hall organized by a female parliamentarian.* Were these constituents participants in NDI or IRI community engagement activities? In what ways was the female MP responsive to constituents' issues? Did the community view the MP as a leader? There is also a lack of comparison between the outcomes for male vs. female participants in the same activities (for example, delivering campaign messages) to understand if the project approach is having the same impact on men and women. Rather than report on numbers, projects should report on the percentage or proportion of women (or men) participating in or reached by the project activities. This will better gauge the trend in women's participation and develop indicators to assess, over time, the outcome of the projects on women's participation, sense of leadership skills and community support for women's leadership.

Although they were made up of impressive individuals, the committees did not necessarily operate cohesively, but engaged together only in activities initiated by IRI, according to conversations with a citizens' committee in Irbid and a youth committee in al Karak, both facilitated by IRI. The team simultaneously met with an existing youth group in the same city that seemed active and cohesive, and noted that it is important to build on existing networks where possible, as newly created entities will take time to become sustainable.

Some groups construe "gender" as a foreign idea and an attempt to undermine the male/female balance of power. The word "gender" has a negative connotation. It is important to understand how implementing partners define and explain the term when implementing their programs. If a more appropriate local term is available, it should be used.

Politically-promising women and girls sometimes face difficulty engaging in exchange activities due to cultural constraints on female mobility. During case study interviews, women expressed interest in traveling to other cities, districts and governorates within the country to learn from and find solidarity with women in other regions of Jordan. These kinds of activities should target non-elite women, and criteria for participation should be transparent and public.

Relying on local women's associations (usually branches of national organizations) from different sectors to choose project participants, rather than publicizing the training and allowing women to self-select, seems to be common in Jordan. Local NGOs "select" women to participate and, as a result, may put up barriers to women who are eligible for the project but unknown or undesirable to the NGOs. This approach may also reinforce discrimination against poor women or those from certain sects or communities. Several respondents noted that USAID partners and national women's organizations lack transparency in the process and criteria for selecting project participants. At the same time, another interviewee noted that working through local, grassroots NGOs is important because they are known entities, and women's families will be more comfortable with them participating in a meeting or training if it is organized by a local group.

USAID programs had worked with women who were interested in running for office before the elections, and then shifted to working with women who were elected, according to several interviewees. They urged that these programs continue to work with women outside of political office even after the elections to build the pipeline for future elections.

Women's access to the Internet has increased in recent years due to more widespread usage of smartphones, interviewees noted. Even at the local level, many women who had run for

office reported having Facebook pages, although several said their children managed the pages for them. This access presents an opportunity for programming to engage and mobilize women via technology.

USAID/JORDAN COUNTRY DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION STRATEGY 2013–2017

DO 2: Democratic Accountability Strengthened

Recognizing the presently marginal position of women and youth in the political system, programs under this DO will directly support initiatives to expand their participation and empowerment as critical constituencies (page 17). USAID should continue to support GOJ and Jordanian civil society efforts to expand citizen participation (especially for women and youth) … USAID will support organizations that are increasing opportunities for women, youth and other marginalized groups to participate more fully in social, economic and political life and building broader social support for gender equality and respect for human rights.

Source: CDCS, page 20.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR USAID PROGRAMMING

Overall, USAID DRG programs on gender equality and female empowerment lack evaluation and attention to GBV is scant. There is an urgent need to go beyond project anecdotes to better document negative and positive outcomes and impacts of project activities. As noted in the 2013 DRG strategy, the Jordanian Mission and its DRG partners should "report on what [they] are accomplishing, not what [they] are doing." The DRG strategy lays out clear steps to invest in results:[49]

- Pursue rigorous research and evaluations in support of an ambitious but carefully prioritized, agency-wide DRG learning agenda;
- Apply rigor in both quantitative and qualitative methods;
- Use systematic and rigorous impact evaluations of DRG programs whenever feasible;
- Develop cross-disciplinary studies to better understand the relationship between DRG and other development priorities;
- Strengthen relations with academic institutions, think tanks and other government organizations engaged in DRG-related research; and
- Develop better methods to synthesize, analyze, integrate and use the considerable DRG-related knowledge that is generated throughout USAID's many bureaus and field missions.

Similarly, project activities focusing on "youth" should disaggregate this population by sex, educational status, and age group to measure the extent to which males and females of different age groups and educational levels participate.

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[49] USAID Strategy on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance. 2013, page 34.

USAID should seek out opportunities to support efforts to implement the National Strategy for Women throughout the USAID programming portfolio.

Women's economic empowerment is inextricably linked to women's political empowerment. The WiP team urges the DRG team to see what synergies can be developed between DRG's implementing partners and Economic Growth team's implementing partners.

An important component of participating is the self-confidence and social support to do so. While USAID has rightly focused on building the capacity of women to run for elected office, efforts to mentor boys and girls can help build a cadre of youth who might run for office one day and can actively challenge social norms about women's competency and the universality of human rights. For more women to run for political office, a "pipeline" of capable young gender-aware activists — male and female — must be nurtured. Interviewees repeatedly noted the need for more work with women and men at the grassroots level and at an earlier age to have a more transformative impact on attitudes and confidence levels. Many informants noted that the focus on youth needs to go beyond students at the university level, where GBV and gender-based discrimination among students is pervasive, to support after-school projects (since it is so difficult to work with the Ministry of Education in schools) for younger boys and girls through efforts that resemble 4-H, Scouting and Girl Guide civic education, environmental awareness and science and innovation projects that will help boys and girls grow into adults who think differently about gender roles and norms. Working with youth could provide additional opportunities to work with the Education and the Science, Technology, Innovation and Partnership (STIP) teams within the Mission.

Al-Hayat Center should be commended for including an indicator on gender mainstreaming in its report on the budget, measuring whether or not MPs discussed gender issues in their speeches. In addition, they noted that in their weekly reports on Parliament, they do make substantive recommendations on policy issues and draft legislation. This report could include a periodic (e.g., monthly or quarterly) update that includes gender analysis of legislation and provides recommendations of how legislation could be made more gender-sensitive. This may require some additional technical expertise within al-Hayat or support from external think tanks or NGOs.

USAID should consider the extent to which it could support an activity/mechanism to promote public support in the form of monetary or in-kind contributions to male and female political candidates who promote gender equality, among other issues, in their public platform (similar to issues campaign funding in the U.S.).

Jordan was chosen as a case study for this project due to the emphasis on women's political empowerment within the Mission's CEPPS program there. These activities have clearly had a positive impact on their participants, as the team heard repeatedly from interviewees. IRI's training at the local level has helped build the confidence of women who, even though they had not won, were eager to run again. While it is hard to draw a causal link, NDI's work with women in Parliament has no doubt contributed to their performance there, and all consider the formation of the women's caucus an important accomplishment. The team felt there was space to deepen some of these efforts; for example, by developing longer-term mentoring programs that work with women starting at a younger age, are not necessarily tied to the electoral period and are expanded to address broader barriers to women's participation, such as economic freedoms and attitudes around gender norms. The team encourages USAID to ask partners to more overtly address the relational aspects of gender inequality and to ensure

attention to gender and women's empowerment is not isolated within the women-focused components of programs.[50] The team also suggests seeking out additional points of intersection with programs that address economic empowerment and civic participation. The IREX project is designed in part to support further integration of gender across the USAID portfolio and will facilitate some of these efforts. DRG partners may also benefit from internal gender audits and additional gender analyses of their ongoing project efforts to facilitate integration of innovative approaches to address gender gaps in civic participation, awareness and support for women and girls' legal rights and attitudes toward women's leadership.

The University Fellows Program supported by NDI seems to be highly successful at building some female MPs' capacity to respond to constituents, use social media, etc. However, female MPs would also benefit from having fellows with more professional experience and specialized legal/political/budgetary expertise.

At the local level, do more work to create not just technical training opportunities, but also long-term mentoring programs that *measurably* increase self-efficacy and confidence among women and girls. For example, several interviewees independently mentioned the need for more concentrated support in developing negotiation and persuasive communication skills. Women said they have to convince family and tribal members to allow them to run, then have to try to win votes from people who might not be inclined to support them. They also could use more skills on how to change minds and win support at the household and larger community levels.

One gap identified through interviews was the need for a tool to analyze the gender implications of draft legislation. This is something that could be undertaken with technical assistance by an implementing partner collaborating with the JNCW or with the Women's Caucus.

Projects that engage only women reinforce the idea that achieving gender equality is the responsibility of women and risk perpetuating the view that males have little to gain from greater gender equality. None of USAID's partners are working directly with men and boys to address gender norms and attitudes that affect both men and women. No interviewees said they could think of any donor-funded activities that engaged men on issues of gender equality. This is a programming area with great potential that is critical for achieving the Jordanian Mission's goals. For example, local men could be invited to meet with women MPs to discuss what they support in Parliament, why they are working to change discriminatory laws/policies and how their life experiences influenced their political engagement. Male MPs should also be invited to meet with women at the community level. In addition, working with men and boys on issues of rights and justice that are relevant to their own experience could be an entry point to discussing rights and empowerment of both women and men. Finally, engaging the partners and families of women who are interested in running for office could build support systems for men who are already supportive of women's increased participation in public and political life.

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[50] Chant, S., & Sweetman, C. (2012). Fixing women or fixing the world? 'Smart economics,' efficiency approaches, and gender equality in development, *Gender & Development*, 20:3, 517-529, DOI: 10.1080/13552074.2012.731812

ANNEX 1. LIST OF THOSE INTERVIEWED

Lamis Nasser, Consultant and Researcher, Human Forum for Women's Rights

Orabi Al-Rantawi, General Director, Al Quds Center for Political Studies

Hermann Thiel, Country Director, International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)

Katia F. Madanat, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Coordinator, International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)

Nuha Ma'ayta, President, General Federation of Jordanian Women

Jeffrey Lilley, Country Director, International Republican Institute (IRI)

Mohammad Al-Lahham, Monitoring and Evaluation Assistant, International Republican Institute (IRI)

Layal Fayez Essoh, Senior Assistant Program Officer, Citizens' Engagement, International Republican Institute

Mahasen Al-Elam, President, Arab Women Media Center

Luna Sabbah, Advocate, Arabic Center for Human Rights Studies

Luban Dawany, Attorney-at-Law, Mizan for Law

Eva Abu Halaweh, Executive Manager, Mizan for Law

May Abu Al-Samen, Senator, Jordanian National Forum for Women

Jonah Cekuolis, Deputy Chief of Party – Jordan, National Democratic Institute

Suzie Abdou, Program Manager, National Democratic Institute

Dr. Amer Bani Amer, Founder and Director, Hayat Center for Civil Society Development

Ayoub Namour, Program Manager, Hayat Center for Civil Society Development

Ola Jundi, Program Associate, UN Women

Haider Rasheed, Project Coordinator, UN Women

Laura Demetris, Deputy Head, Arab Partnership Program

Noor Razzaz, Senior Political Officer, British Embassy, Amman

Samra Al Shahwan, Senior Legal Consultant

ABA Rule of Law Initiative

Maha E. Shomali, Country Director, ABA Rule of Law Initiative

Reem Goussous, Senior Manager, Al Jidara

Asma Khader. Commissioner, Independent Election Commission

Dima Al-Karadsheh, Research and Training Consultant, Jordan Center for Social Research

Dr. Abeer Dababneh, Director, Center for Women's Studies, University of Jordan

Dr. Musa Shteiwi, Director, Center for Strategic Study, University of Jordan

Judge Ihsan Barakat, Arab Women's Legal Network

Mahasen Al Imam, Arab Women Media Center

Dr. Salma Al Nims SG, Newly Appointed Chair, Jordanian National Council for Women

Ms. Julia Demichelis, Chief of Party, IREX

Hind Al Fayez, Member of Parliament

Dr. Amal Sabbagh, Former Member of Parliament

Focus Groups

El Karak June 9 2014

1. 11 a.m. -1 p.m. Women who ran for municipal elections and lost.
1.30 p.m. – 3 p.m. Members of IRI's citizens committees.
Place: Princess Basma Center for Development – Contact person Mr. Ali Al So'ub
079 903 23 69 /03 – 23 55

2. 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.p. For You Charitable Association: Youth Committee (not funded by USAID)

Northern Shuneh June 10 2014

1. 11 a.m. – 12.45 p.m. Women who ran for municipal elections and lost.
Place: Princess Basma Center for Development
Contact person: Ms. Faeda Awamrah - 077 666 90 83

Irbid

1. 2 p.m. – 3.30 p.m. FG members of IRI's citizens committees
Place: Al Maurouth Al Sha`abi Association / Irbid governorate
Contact person: Ms. Maha Mrashdeh - 077 582 89 68

ANNEX 2. FOCUS GROUP GUIDES

A. Focus Group Discussion Guide: Citizen Committee Members

First, welcome all the participants and tell them that we are here to learn from them about their experience being involved in the "citizens' committees." We want to learn from your experience so that we can support future efforts of other people to mobilize their communities to makes positive changes.

Introduce ourselves.

1. Please tell us your name and tell us a little about why you decided to get involved in the Citizens' Committee.
2. Who supported your effort to get involved?
3. PROBE: *If a participant does not mention her family,* ASK: Did your family support you?
4. If YES, ask: How did they support you?
5. If NO, ask: Why didn't they support you?
6. What kind of training did you receive? From which organizations? How was the training useful? What more training do you feel you need?
7. What kinds of activities do you do on the Citizens' Committee? How has your community responded? What successes do you think you have had?
8. What changes do you hope to make now and in the long term by being involved in the Citizens' Committee?
9. What advice would you give to other people thinking of getting involved in the Citizens' Committee?

B. Focus Group Discussion Guide: Municipal Council Candidates

First, welcome all the participants and tell them that we are here to learn from them about their experience running as candidates for municipal council. This is not an easy thing to do and we want to learn from your experience so that we can support future efforts of women to run for political positions.

Introduce ourselves.

1. Please tell us your name and tell us a little about why you decided to run for municipal council.
2. Who supported your effort to run for the council?
3. What kind of support did each of these people/groups give you — for example, financial support, encouragement, help with campaigning?
4. PROBE: *If a participant does not mention her family,* ASK: Did your family support you?
5. If YES, ask: How did they support you?
6. If NO, ask: Why didn't they support you?
7. Who was <u>not </u>supportive of your effort? Why not?
8. *If not mentioned ask:* Did you receive training from any organizations? If YES, ask: What kind of training? How was the training useful? What more training do you feel you needed?
9. Do you think you might run again?
10. If NO, ask: Why not?
11. If YES, ask: What support or training would you like that you didn't get when you ran in 2013?
12. What difference do you think women can make by being on city council?