



USAID YOUTHPOWER ACTIVITY

LEARNING STUDY

Submission Date:
USAID Contract Number:
Contract/Agreement Period:
COR Name:
Submitted by:

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
CLA	Collaboration, Learning and Adaptation
COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
DO	Development Objective
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FY	Fiscal Year
GOJ	Government of Jordan
IEC	Independent Elections Commission
JOHUD	The Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development
KII	Key Informant Interview
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOSD	Ministry of Social Development
MOY	Ministry of Youth
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PAVAL	Problem-solving, advocacy, volunteerism, awareness raising, and learning and training
PfG	Partners for Good
PWD	Person with Disability
PYD	Positive Youth Development
RFA	Request for Application
SoW	Scope of Work
TL	Transformational Learning
TtF	Train the Facilitators
ToT	Training of Trainers
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAN	Volunteer Ambassadors Network
YAC	Youth Advisory Council
YNP	Youth Network Portal

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On March 26, 2017, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded the YouthPower activity, a five-year youth-led activity engaging families, communities, and government entities to empower youth to reach their full potential using Positive Youth Development (PYD). YouthPower contributes to USAID's Development Objective #3: Social sector quality improved.

Approaching the end of the Activity, the YouthPower team sought a deeper understanding of:

- How the Activity's interventions address the participants' priorities;
- What the opportunities to advance these priorities were, especially in terms of removing barriers to entry through reformed policies;
- What lessons learned about ensuring participating youth are accountable to, and representative of, other youth and their communities as a whole;
- How the community (government, family, religious leaders, etc.) was engaged in the interventions; and
- How to combat restrictive social or cultural norms.

In addition, this learning study aimed to gauge the effectiveness of the Activity through awareness raising about available community assets for positive youth engagement, available opportunities including: enrolling in courses and trainings; participating in community engagement projects; socializing with peers and new friends from various backgrounds; and participating in community interventions.

Further, this study examined the contributions of YouthPower to USAID's Development Objective 3 and identified lessons learned to help inform future youth interventions. The results of this study can ultimately be used to enhance youth leadership in Jordan, which in turn, enhances Jordan's economic prosperity and governance.

YouthPower was unique in its approach, as it did not only engage youth, but also the broader community and civil society. Therefore, the Learning Study team utilized a mixed-methodology approach to data collection and analysis, including primary and secondary quantitative and qualitative data. The study commenced with an extensive desk review of YouthPower documents as the primary identification of trends and initial findings for this study. Subsequently, the team utilized a youth survey, key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group interviews and small group discussions to supplement findings.

The key findings showed that YouthPower had an essential impact on more than 10,573 youth that were part of the Activity in terms of enhancing youth confidence, ability to achieve their goals, and positively changing their behavior and attitudes. Subsequently, the study showed that youth participants had a positive impact on other youth within their communities and other community members through advocating for community engagement initiatives, sharing knowledge, and talking about the interventions with their friends and family. This motivated other youth and community members to engage with YouthPower interventions and encouraged them to build connections with their communities in service of them.

Furthermore, during the study it was proven that overall YouthPower's interventions are adaptable, and able to respond to the needs and interests of youth. It was also indicated that project interventions greatly benefited the participating youth through creating a safe space for learning and exchanging

experiences with their peers. It also allowed youth to engage in the labor market and with their communities, providing an opportunity to gain more skills.

The analysis showed that the most frequently requested learning clubs' intervention themes by youth across the Activity were gender and social inclusion, problem-solving, advocacy, volunteerism, awareness-raising, learning and training (PAVAL), environment and green solutions, job preparedness and social entrepreneurship, and local policy design.

The results of the KIs with youth, parents, community members, and YouthPower staff emphasized that the community mapping approach that was implemented with youth participants to map 60 communities in 12 governorates in Jordan enhanced youth agency, self-efficacy, and prepared youth to develop and lead community initiatives. The mapping exercise strengthened community engagement by ensuring that the initiatives actually met the needs of the whole community. This approach provided community leaders, government representatives, and parents with the opportunity to share their opinions, provide feedback and express their needs so they felt that they were part of the Activity, and that their voices were important, giving them the motivation to support more youth interventions.

In regard to its larger public impact, USAID's YouthPower activity not only serves the community, but also directly benefits the youth themselves through initiatives like conducting maintenance for school buildings, health clinics, mosques and community parks. Moreover, the study reported that to sustain the Activity's impact, a two-fold sustainability methodology was developed for youth-led initiatives, including: 1) the community level, establishing sustainable relations between youth, leaders, and stakeholders in their communities; and 2) the youth-led initiative level, supporting youth in designing a sustainable initiative.

During the small group discussion with a representative sample of youth, it was indicated that the Activity was suitable and beneficial for all youth from different nationalities, gender, background and abilities. The Activity was able to overcome and address cultural and logistical barriers (such as transportation, lack of support from the community, shame and fear of working in mixed-gender groups) highlighted by males, females, minority youth, and youth with disabilities.

YouthPower has successfully implemented interventions raising youth awareness on gender and social inclusion issues. The Activity also included parents in its interventions, ensuring their awareness and supportiveness towards their children's participation. It was reported by youth that were in the minority group discussion that the Activity environment was very welcoming and the diversity of attendees allowed different participants to share experiences, transferring their knowledge and allowing them to build new friendships and become more engaged and active in their communities.

During data collection, youth with disabilities stated that they also faced some barriers during the interventions, where their families were initially afraid that the activity could not accommodate the needs of their children. Further, the youth were worried that they would not find a friendly and welcoming environment that was accepting of their disabilities. Another barrier that was mentioned by one of the participants was that in some interventions there weren't appropriate translations available for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, transportation for disabled participants, and some trainings were conducted in rooms that were not equipped to accommodate wheelchairs and other assistive devices.

To overcome the challenges that faced youth with disabilities, the Activity allowed them to bring a companion to help them during the session, hired sign-language translators, made the training rooms wheel-chair accessible, raised awareness during the interventions around the importance of social inclusion, and made sure youth with disabilities had the chance to participate in various interventions.

On the other hand, minority group youth with other nationalities (such as those from Iraq) mentioned that they faced barriers during the interventions which they felt were not taken into consideration and this gave the impression that mostly Jordanian and Syrian youths needs were taken into consideration during project development. To overcome these barriers, the Activity raised awareness during the interventions around the importance of social inclusion, respecting each other, and building relationships among youth in the same community through teamwork, enhanced confidence and attitude. These efforts gave all participants the opportunity to work together in the learning clubs, community mapping and youth-led initiatives.

This study contains many suggestions and recommendations mentioned by youth, Government of Jordan (GoJ) representatives, parents, and different community members, which USAID can take into consideration while designing upcoming youth-centered interventions. Those recommendations focus on engaging more parents and community members in the interventions, providing more opportunities for initiatives led by female youth, supporting female entrepreneurs in establishing their own businesses, and developing gender-related advocacy campaigns. Furthermore, youth recommended providing capacity building training on debate skills, delivering more training of trainer (ToT) sessions, conducting extra labor market preparedness courses, and focusing on providing more in-kind grant opportunities for youth.

Also, more opportunities were mentioned regarding building further partnerships with other organizations, extending the learning clubs to offer more practical subjects that will allow youth to engage more with the labor market, creating a business incubator that can support entrepreneurs engaged under in-kind grants to sustain their ideas, and improve the sustainability plan with local partners to support the continuation of interventions even after the YouthPower activity ends.

Some limitations faced during the Learning Study process included widespread self-imposed COVID-19 restrictions, limiting data collection and face-to-face interviews. For example, the Mayor of Ajloun would not allow focus group discussions without each participant showing proof of a negative PCR test taken 24 hours before, making compliance difficult. Additionally, as the Activity was nearing completion while the Learning Study was being carried out, many staff from YouthPower, its partners, and associated community-based organizations (CBOs) had already left their positions, making information collection difficult. Also, efforts to reach out to youth participants were challenging, as many youth changed their contact information or were unavailable due to academic and work engagements. Yet, despite these challenges, the team was able to collect, analyze and consolidate the needed information to complete the Learning Study.

2. LEARNING STUDY PURPOSE

2.1 OVERVIEW

Youth and early adulthood are critical phases in human development and studies have reframed previous understanding of the “teenage” brain to show that this phase lays the foundation for core personality

traits and is identified as the most energetic and creative time in life. It is during this period of creativity and change that youth require strong social networks and systems to support positive development and choices; and it is within this developmental context youth are navigating a critical stage in their psychological, physical, and intellectual development.

Jordan has one of the youngest populations in the world, with 63 percent of its population under the age of 30.¹ YouthPower recognizes the critical needs of youth in Jordan by tapping into their ambition, potential, and engagement. YouthPower supports youth in Jordan as they transition into adulthood, equipping them with the necessary skills, mindset, support, and opportunities to lead their economy and society.

The primary goal of USAID's YouthPower was to develop youth engagement and dialogue in their communities. The YouthPower team hypothesized that engaging at-risk youth² to map community services would increase youth awareness of existing opportunities, identify gaps in community services, create opportunities to engage their local communities, and advance youth readiness to enter the workforce. To engage youth in knowledge-based decision-making, the Activity design included the following components: (1) youth engagement and training, (2) community services mapping, and (3) the youth innovation fund.

Over the course of the Activity, 60 communities were engaged in 12 governorates of Jordan to achieve one main goal: Improved access to opportunities, well-being, and civic engagement for youth. This goal was achieved by increasing the capacity of youth to actively participate in their communities, analyzing and mapping existing avenues for positive youth development, and engaging youth in local development interventions. Further, the youth network portal Shabab.jo and the Facebook group enabled youth to engage with each other on a regular basis through a network framed in positive youth development, and created communication between youth and a wider audience (e.g., policymakers).

At-risk communities were identified and selected using the following criteria:

- a) School dropout rate equal to or higher than 0.4 percent;
- b) Poverty as defined by 25 percent or more of the population living below the poverty line; and/or
- c) High concentration of Syrian refugees as identified by UNHCR.

These criteria generally resulted in youth participants who had low performance in school, lived in conditions of poverty, and/or were a Syrian refugee. Youth with disabilities and female youth were also considered as priorities for participant selection.

YouthPower aimed at deploying a collaborative approach to empower youth and enable them to act as engaged citizens and productive members of society with the agency to advocate for themselves, and shape services designed to prepare them to enter higher education, vocational training, and the workforce.

¹ UNICEF Jordan, Youth Programme, accessed January 8th, 2022.

<https://www.unicef.org/jordan/youth#:~:text=Jordan%20has%20one%20of%20the,under%20the%20age%20of%2030.&text=In%20Jordan%2C%20100%2C000%20young%20people,15%2D30%20years%20are%20unemployed>

² Youth from different nationalities, genders, socio-economic backgrounds and abilities—including females, minority youth, and youth with disabilities.

2.2 LEARNING STUDY PURPOSE

This Learning Study was conducted to generate evidence, consolidate learning, and gain a better understanding of any future youth-centered opportunities for USAID in Jordan. The findings of this study identified the lessons learned from YouthPower to better inform future youth interventions. This, in turn, will contribute to enhancing the agency and leadership of Jordan's youth and contribute to Jordan's overall economic prosperity and successful governance. This study will support USAID to build on the lessons learned from the Activity in two ways:

1. Understand how YouthPower advanced youth priorities, initiated a deeper grasp of the activity's context and its impact beyond affected individuals, and how it engaged with various communities. In addition, factors supporting sustainability after the activity ends will be identified, along with lessons learned and best practices.
2. Develop conclusions and recommendations to inform future activity design in youth and related sectors, in line with USAID's Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) Results Framework and Development Objectives (DOs). The findings will also contribute to identifying effective youth interventions, which can be supported by local communities, youth-led organizations, and local NGOs.

3. ACTIVITY BACKGROUND

YouthPower successfully engaged 10,573 youth in local development interventions and 10,525 youth in soft skills/life skills courses in the targeted governorates. The Activity provided transformational learning (TL) sessions designed to change how youth approach critical thinking, gender and social inclusion sessions. For example, as a part of TL sessions, youth discussed the characteristics of a critical thinker, defined the concepts of conflict and negotiation, explained the role of win-win negotiations in daily life, and practiced in-room asset mapping. Additionally, these youth were enrolled in Training the Facilitators (TtF) workshops that provided youth facilitators with the necessary experience to reflect on their own agency and their role in the community.

The map below represents the number of youth engaged in the Activity, disaggregated by location and sex:



USAID YouthPower Activity Targeted Beneficiaries

USAID's YouthPower Activity has targeted a total of 10,573 youth beneficiaries during the life of project. This included 6,505 female beneficiaries (62%) and 4,068 male beneficiaries (38%). The following map depicts the density of beneficiaries reached per governorate, while the chart shows beneficiaries disaggregated by sex.

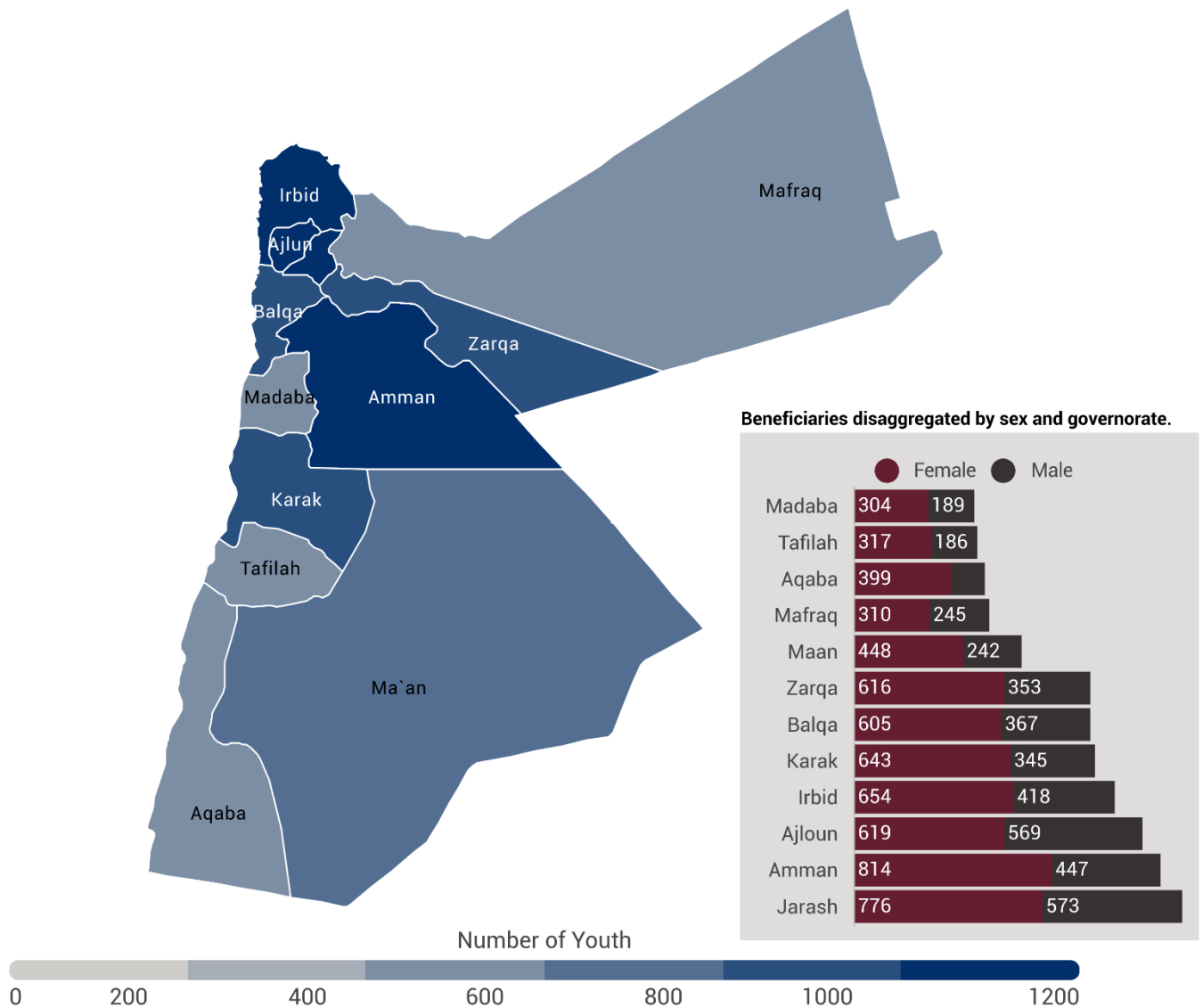


Figure I: Number of youth who participated in YouthPower disaggregated by location and sex.

Moreover, participant youth independently designed, led, and monitored 344 community initiatives. Since participant youth typically have limited to no experience in engaging their communities, YouthPower created a methodology and toolkit that both teaches youth about the basics of community engagement, and guides them in planning and implementing innovative interventions and solutions. The methodology and tools were designed to assist youth in addressing priority areas for engagement and

convey information in a manner that was both understandable to youth and to the broader community, while being methodologically sound. The figure below summarizes YouthPower’s main achievements up until Quarter 1 of FY 2022:

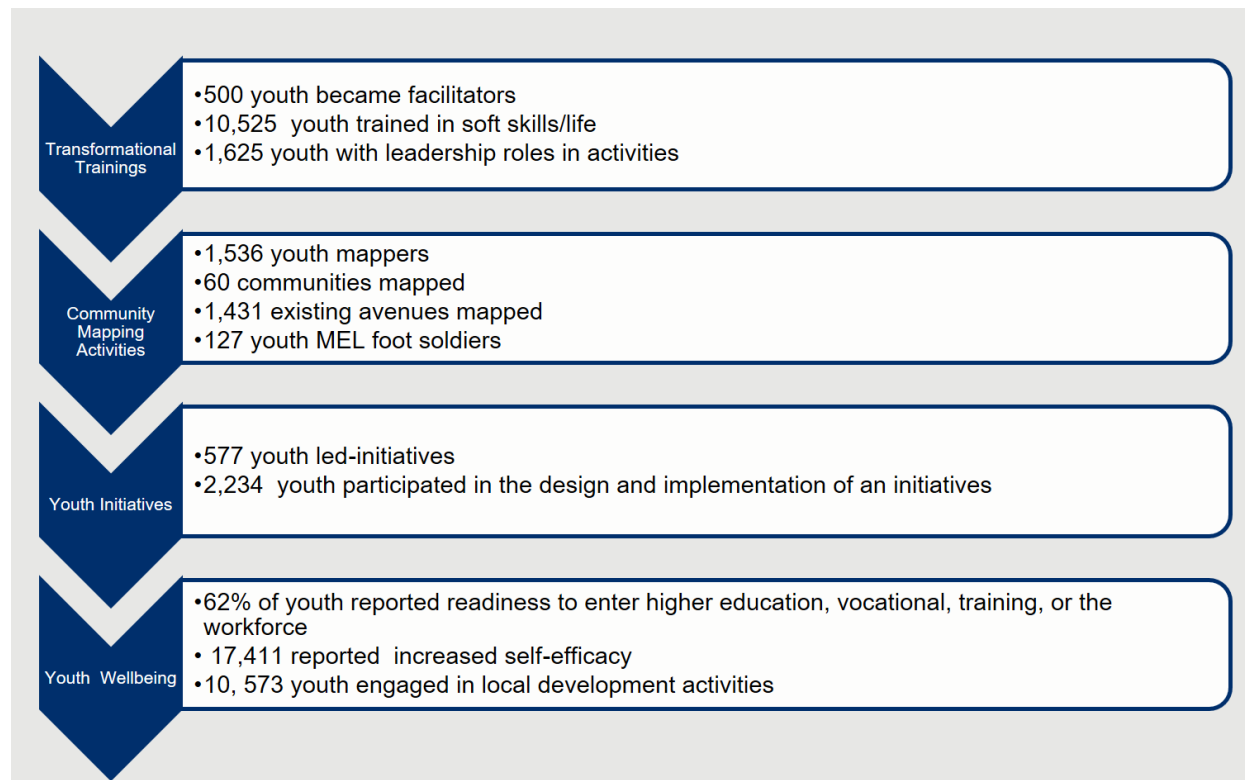


Figure 2: YouthPower’s main achievements up until Quarter 3 of FY 2021.

Over the past four years, YouthPower was able to create and expand 180 new opportunities to positively engage youth in their communities through in-kind grants, internship programs, a youth advisory council, and youth-led initiatives. This resulted in 10,573 direct youth engaged in local developments interventions and has allowed 17,411 direct and indirect youth beneficiaries to report an increase in their self-efficacy and 62 percent of targeted at-risk youth to report that they are better prepared to enter higher education, vocational training, and/or the workforce³.

Given YouthPower’s achievements, it is worth studying the impact and lessons learned from all the mentioned actors and stakeholders (such as youth, parents, community leaders, GOJ representatives and YouthPower staff) to gather the information and elaborate on the specific study areas that would help USAID to better develop future programming.

4. LEARNING STUDY QUESTIONS, METHODS AND LIMITATIONS

4.1 LEARNING STUDY QUESTIONS

This Learning Study sought to answer the following questions:

³ Source: USAID YouthPower Self-Efficacy Report, 2021.

Question 1: What did we learn about youth priorities? (Analysis of in-kind grants, youth-led initiatives, success stories, learning clubs, etc.)

Question 2: How did YouthPower advance youth priorities? (What is the bigger picture story of YouthPower in terms of its impact beyond the individual people it affected?) What are other opportunities to advance these priorities, especially in terms of policy reforms to remove barriers?

Question 3: What did we learn about how to ensure that youth are accountable to, and representative of, other youth and their communities, not just for their own projects? What are other opportunities to do so?

Question 4: What did we learn about how to engage the community (government, family, religious leaders, etc.) and how to combat restrictive social and cultural norms? What are other opportunities to do so?

4.2 METHODS

To best address the objectives of the Learning Study, a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods were used by the team to collect relevant data. The Learning Study started with an extensive desk review of Activity documents as the primary identification of trends and initial findings for this study. Subsequently, the team utilized a quantitative youth survey, qualitative KIIs, and qualitative group interviews/small group discussions to supplement findings or address any gaps in data. An overview of the tools is presented below.⁴

Desk Review. A wide range of existing data and evidence related to the Activity were available and reviewed to gain a thorough understanding of the activity, including its goals and objectives, the interventions implemented, and results achieved. The existing data was incorporated into the analysis of the data collected during the Learning Study. The existing evidence and data included⁵:

- Activity monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) framework;
- Activity logic model;
- Activity data collection tools;
- Activity progress reports;
- Community baseline and midline reports; and
- Youth self-assessment baseline and midline reports.

Furthermore, raw data from the community baseline and midline assessments, as well as youth self-assessment baseline and end line evaluations, were available. Those datasets included:

- Basic demographic data (i.e., sex, age, nationality, and location);
- Levels of awareness of available opportunities, well-being, and civic engagement status;
- Changes in awareness and use of existing interventions and opportunities;
- Perceptions of improved available services for youth; and
- Perceptions of an improved enabling environment for positive youth engagement.

⁴ All the mentioned data collection instruments used to collect data for the Learning Study are included in Annex 4: Data Collection Tools.

⁵ All the mentioned documents and sources are included in Annex 3: Data Sources.

Quantitative. An online youth survey was developed and administered to youth who participated in the Activity’s interventions. The survey aimed at collecting data regarding the interventions that youth were enrolled in, the impact of each intervention on their skills, knowledge and engagement in the community, the support of the community members, and municipalities’ support.

- Quantitative analysis of the data was applied directly to the data collected through the online survey. The study team used Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, Microsoft Power-BI and Microsoft Excel to filter the results by cross-tabulating sub-groups, and then analyzed the resulting data to draw conclusions.

Qualitative. Based on the desk review results, it was crucial to complement the analysis with qualitative data to provide a deeper analysis to better tell the story. Data collection approaches included KII with youth, parents, community leaders, GOJ representatives, USAID Jordan staff, and YouthPower staff. Group discussions were conducted with youth with disabilities, minority youth, gender specific groups, youth initiatives teams, in-kind grants recipients, community mapping teams and the Volunteer Ambassadors Network (VAN). Details in the table below:

Type	Number of respondents	Female	Male
KII with Youth	1,235	800	435
KII with Parents & community leaders	27	16	11
KII GOJ representatives	13	1	12
KII USAID YouthPower staff	9	6	3
KII USAID Jordan Staff	1	1	0
Group discussions: Youth with disabilities	24	10	14
Group discussions: Youth minorities	23	7	16
Group discussions: Male only	25	0	25
Group discussions: Female only	27	27	0
Group discussions: Youth Initiatives teams	15	11	4
Group discussions: Youth In-kind recipients	16	11	5
Group discussions: Youth VANers	17	11	6
Group discussions: Youth Community Mappers	26	14	12

The qualitative methods aimed at identifying the thematic areas that were prioritized by the youth, reviewing the youth-led initiatives and the grants (small and in-kind), understanding how YouthPower adapted programming to support youth priorities and identifying YouthPower’s influence on the larger community. In addition, the interviews and group interviews sought to identify opportunities where youth were able to engage in policy reform and their subsequent influence on policy implementation. The interviews were also helpful in illuminating youth outreach experience in their communities, identifying YouthPower support to youth and community initiatives, and categorizing permissive and restrictive social and cultural mores, and YouthPower’s strategies used to overcome such obstacles.

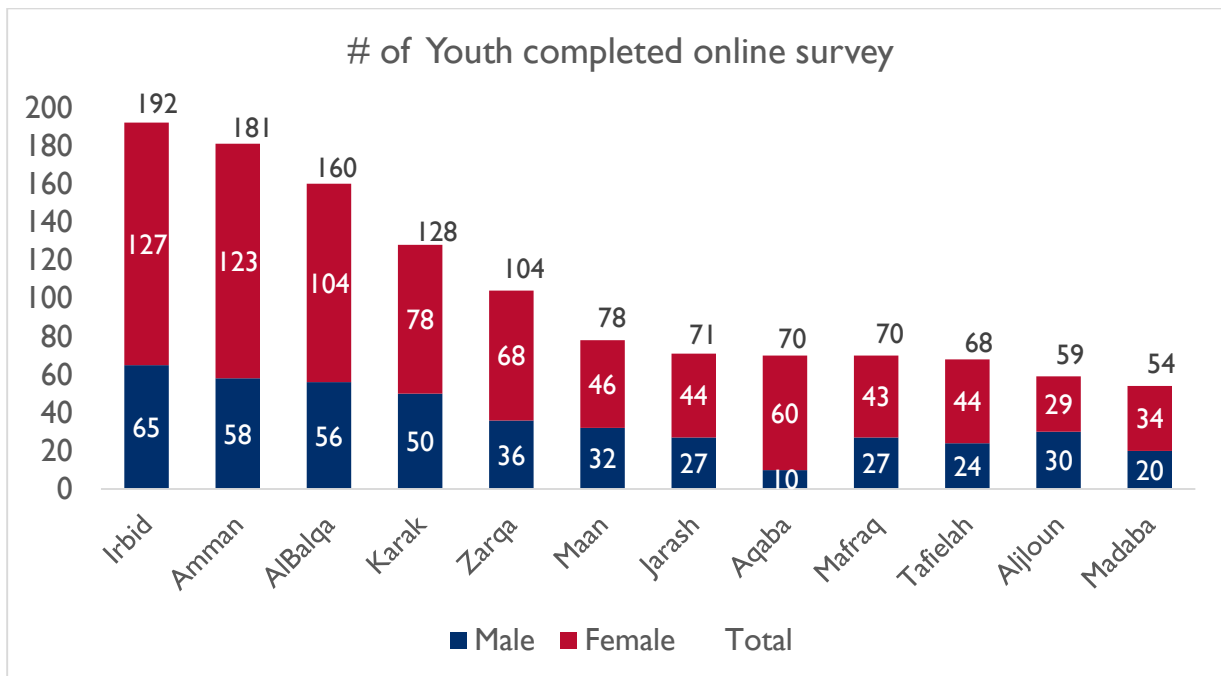
Qualitative analysis methods used included:

- **Text analysis:** The participants’ qualitative answers were gathered, processed, and interpreted to allow the study team to quickly obtain relevant insights from the collected data and then complement the findings from the desk review.
- **Content analysis:** This tool was used to determine the presence of certain words, themes, or concepts within the given qualitative data which allowed the team to analyze the presence, meanings and relationships of such certain words, themes, or concepts.
- **Triangulation:** Different data collection instruments were carried out to provide a wide variety of findings from various respondents resulting in different perceptions and points of view. These diverse findings examined the relationships that illustrated the findings from the other methods of data analysis.

4.3 SAMPLING APPROACHES

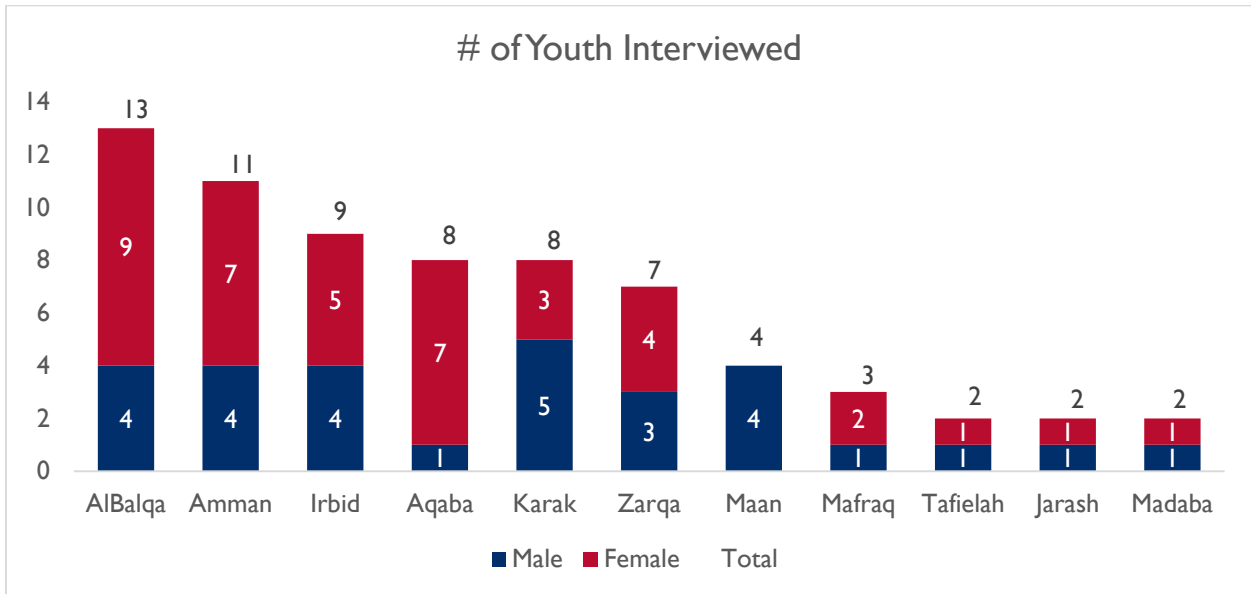
The following points outline the sampling approaches that were used based on respondent type and data collection approach.

- An online survey was sent to all of the Activity’s youth participants. There was no sampling number required, as this survey targeted the entire population of youth that YouthPower has contact information for. Additionally, the study team requested data collectors conducting interviews to fill out the online survey with respondents at the end of their interviews. The goal of this survey was to validate the findings of desk review assumptions of permissive and non-permissive communities. In total 1,235 youth (800 females and 435 males) were surveyed using the online survey from the 12 governorates, as follows:

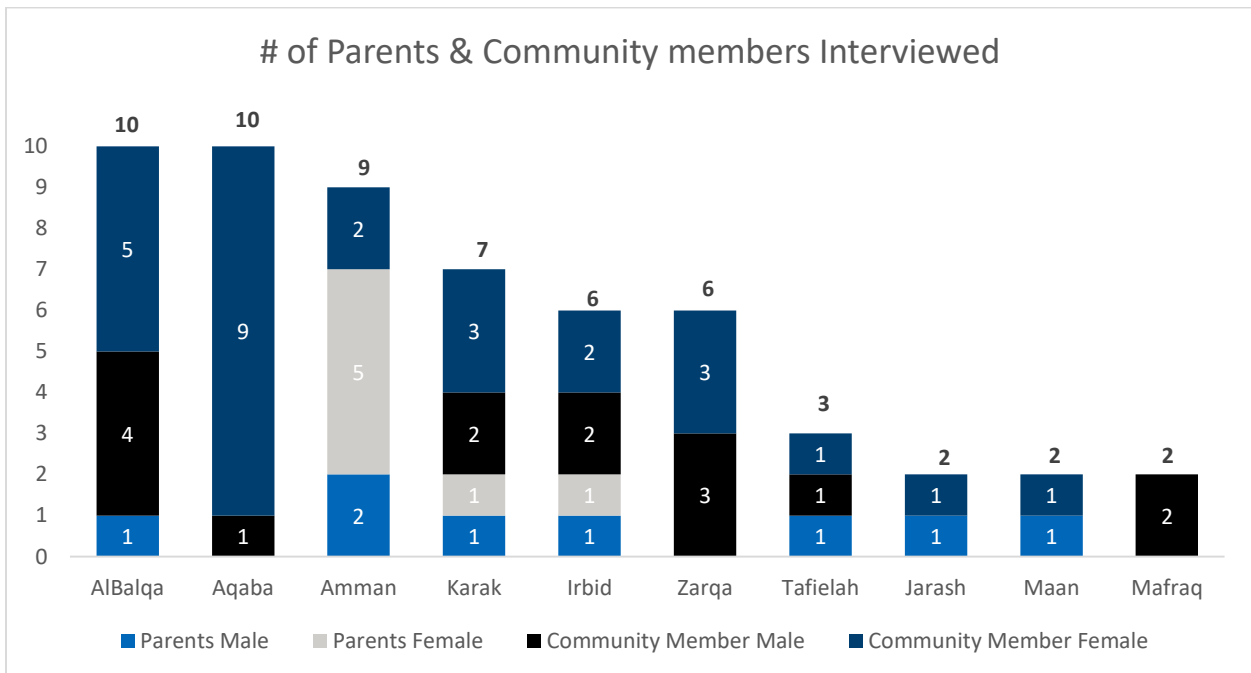


- The study team conducted KIIs with youth identified through a stratified sampling. The list of youth was divided into governorates and a random sample was drawn in each governorate, ensuring representation from each governorate (due to COVID-19 restrictions, the team was not able to conduct KIIs in Ajloun governorate). All youth interviewed were given the

opportunity to complete the online youth survey. In total, 69 KIIs with youth were conducted, with 40 females and 29 males, in 11 governorates, as displayed in the figure below.



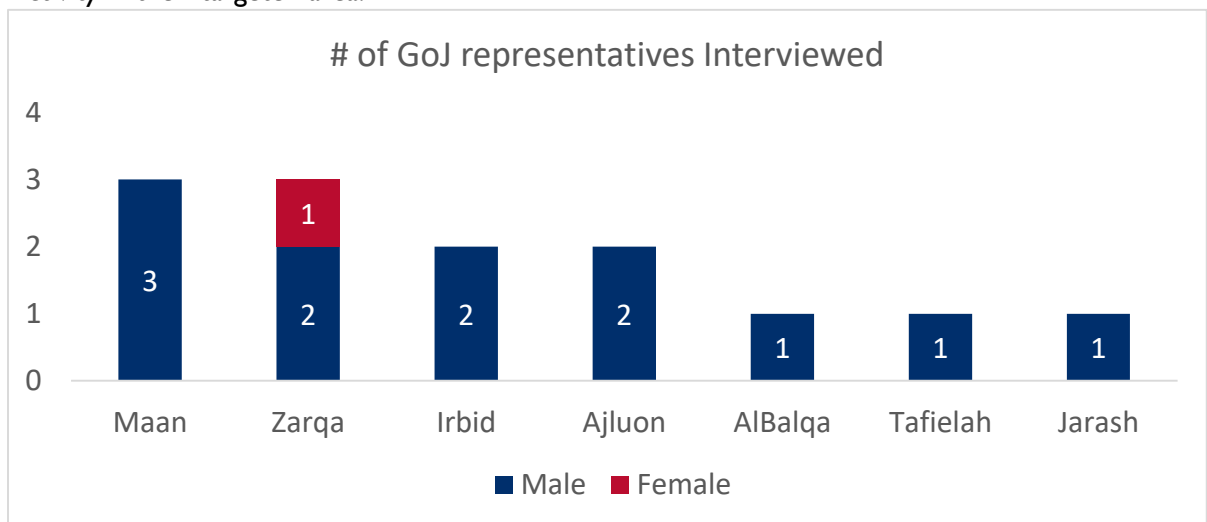
- Individual KIIs were conducted with parents, community leaders and community members in Amman, Irbid, Mafraq, Maan, Tafieleh, Al Balqa, Karak, Aqaba, Zarqa and Jerash governorates. The team collected data from 57 respondents (42 community members and 15 parents), as reflected in the figure below. Interviewed community leaders were identified through the “snowball approach,” based on feedback from participating youth and staff.



- The study team held “Pause and Reflect” sessions with nine YouthPower staff (six females and three males). This gave the study team an opportunity to explore different successes and challenges that were faced by the staff and technical teams, YouthPower’s impact on

participating youth, the larger community from the technical staff's point of view, and to identify lessons learned.

- The study team interviewed the USAID Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) to get a clear picture of how YouthPower interventions evolved over the life of the Activity, the reason behind the adaptations that happened during the Activity, the influence that YouthPower had on policy reform to remove barriers for youth, and any lessons learned.
- The team conducted KIIs with 13 representatives from seven different governorates (Irbid, Ajloun, Maan, Jerash, Al Balqa, Tafieleh and Zarqa), per the figure below. Those interviews included members of the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Youth, community-based organizations, and municipalities' representatives that were engaged directly or indirectly with youth participants during the interventions. The interviews aimed at identifying those municipalities' point of view regarding YouthPower interventions and initiatives and pinpointing what specific interventions these municipalities took part in during the implementation of the Activity in their targeted area.



- The team held group interviews with youth initiative teams, community mapping teams and in-kind grant recipients. Those group interviews aimed at identifying the impact of those interventions on the skills and knowledge of the youth, how they used the gained skills, the impact of the interventions on the larger community and on other youth, how those interventions were supported by the community and if there are any other opportunities that could be implemented in the future to support the sustainability of the interventions. In total, 65 youth took part in the group interviews.
- Small group discussions took place with: youth with disabilities, minority youth (including youth from other countries like Iraq, Syria, etc.), one female-only group, one male-only group, and members of the VAN (also referred to as VANers in this study) to collect data on the interventions that they requested, barriers that they faced during their participation, as well as an evaluation of the social and cultural norms and restrictions they faced as well. In total, 19 youth with disabilities, 18 youth from minority groups, nine VANers, seven male youth, and 12 female youth participated in those group interviews.

Type of Small Group	Males	Females	Total
Youth with disability	12	7	19

Minority youth	10	8	18
Youth Volunteers Ambassadors Network	6	3	9
Female-only	0	12	12
Male-only	7	0	7
Total	35	30	65

4.4 LIMITATIONS

- The COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions in some areas limited the data collection team and the face-to-face data collection methods. For example, the survey data was collected through sending emails instead of face-to-face interaction, and in other areas the study team could not conduct the group discussions face-to-face as it would require obtaining a PCR test from each participant, which limited the reach.
- As the Activity was nearing completion at the time of the Learning Study, many YouthPower staff, partners' staff, and community organization staff had already left their positions, which caused some challenges in collecting specific information about the planning and implementation phase of the Activity.
- It was hard to reach out to many youth participants as a large number of youth changed their contact information or were busy in their jobs or schools.

5. FINDINGS

5.1 STUDY QUESTION I: What did we learn about youth priorities?

5.1.1 Introduction

Towards the end of the Activity, YouthPower study team attempted to determine the thematic areas that youth prioritized during the implementation phase of the Activity by looking at which themes were frequently requested by youth engaged in the interventions. This assessment showed how YouthPower grew and included additional interventions in response to demand generated by youth engaged under the project.

To gather the needed information, the study team led a desk review for all the Activity documents, interviewed and surveyed youth, and also interviewed YouthPower technical staff to determine which themes were implemented most frequently across communities and across the Activity's components. The team mapped the evolution of priority themes across the span of implementation and which themes youth prioritized as the interventions grew.

5.1.2 Thematic Areas Prioritized by Youth

The findings of the analysis showed that the most valued interventions that took place in the Activity were youth-led initiatives, community mapping exercises, and learning clubs that were related to livelihood preparedness such as filmmaking and food production.

- During the Pause and Reflect sessions, nine YouthPower staff said that the community mapping exercises were valuable, as they gave youth the opportunity to explore their communities and to identify their needs.
- During the KIIs with 69 youth participants (40 female and 29 male), youth said that they built on the community mapping through implementing interventions that addressed identified challenges in the community. For example, during the community mapping in Salt, the youth found that their greatest challenges were the lack of spaces for youth to gather, and lack of opportunities to receive guidance. The community analysis indicated a need for all types of guidance, local radio, psychological counseling, mentorship, religious guidance, and scouting. Therefore, the youth designed an initiative that would support youth through providing them with career guidance that qualifies them to enter the labor market.
- During the interviews with 69 youth, it was found that there were some differences between youth priorities and interests according to their location, for example, in Irbid and Al Balqa the most requested themes were gender and inclusion, photography and cultural heritage. However, in Aqaba youth interests focused on awareness raising regarding self-respect and inclusion, women's rights, and project management. Moreover, in Karak the most popular learning club themes according to the youth interviewed were ambassadors' network, volunteering and project management and in Amman, gender and inclusion, filmmaking and photography, and knowledge transfer.
- Throughout the small group interviews with youth with disabilities, 11 out of 19 members mentioned that they were interested in participating in the knowledge transfer course and social inclusion intervention.
- Eighteen youth from minority groups were included in a small group discussion from Amman, Aqaba, Madaba, Mafraq, Irbid and Karak. Those participants prioritized the interventions that were related to the community mapping exercises, knowledge transfer workshops, learning clubs, and youth-initiatives.

5.1.3 Themes Implemented Most Frequently Across Communities and Activity Components

In the practicum activities the themes were mostly focused on:

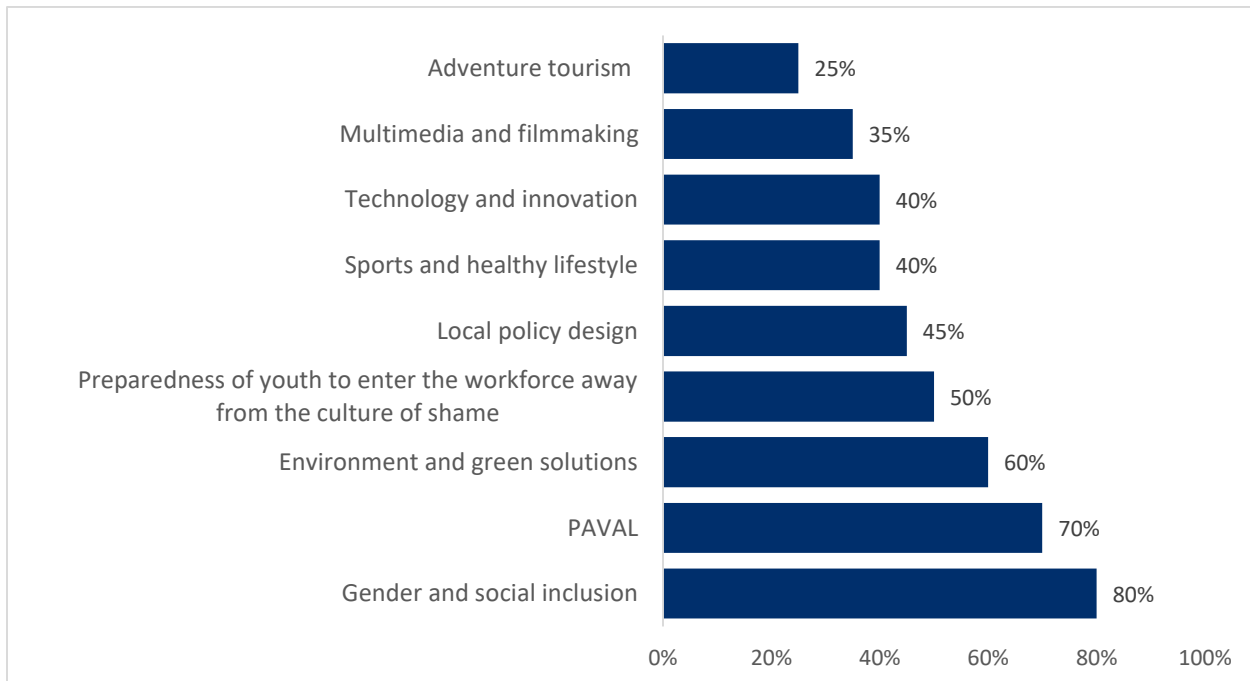
- In Jerash, Ajloun and Marka were focused on gender and social inclusion, self-esteem and circles of responsibility, cleaning, decorating, and planting courtyards at six mosques and raising awareness regarding safe driving.
- In Rojom Al Shami, Al Gharbi, Ramtha, Mo'ath Bin Jabal, Al Jizeh, Talbieh camp for Palestinian refugees in Al Jizeh, Bader, Um Al Bsatién, Aqaba, Hashemiya, Al Reesheh, Salhiah and Nayfeh, included: 1) Creating positive environment in schools such as cleaning campaigns, painting the walls, promoting awareness against bullying, recycling, and planting trees, and 2) Highlighting the positives in the local hospitals and health centers and contributing to further developments in these community assets. Also, youth priorities were to promote awareness of social inclusion, environment and combating desertification, and 3D paintings.

In the Training the Facilitators sessions the themes were mostly focused on:

- Agency, critical thinking, decision-making, problem analysis and solving, conflict resolution, community asset mapping and youth social activism, in addition to facilitation skills, perceptual learning styles, cone of knowledge, transformational versus instrumental learning theories, and participants' behavioral patterns.

The themes that youth prioritize in the Learning Clubs intervention focused on:

- 1) gender and social inclusion; 2) PAVAL (Problem-solving, Advocacy, Volunteerism, Awareness-raising, Learning and training; 3) environment and green solutions; 4) preparedness of youth to enter the workforce away from the culture of shame; 5) local policy design (e.g. youth efforts with local policymakers, the MOY and other governmental entities); 6) sports and healthy lifestyle; 7) technology and innovation (e.g., 3D printing, interactive maps, robotics); 7) multimedia and filmmaking; and 8) adventure tourism.



In the youth-led initiatives the themes were mostly related to:

- Livelihood opportunities and labor market preparedness, environment and green solutions (recycling, hydroponic and agriculture), filmmaking and multimedia related initiatives.

In the in-kind grants the themes were mostly related to:

- STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), social entrepreneurship, positive school environment, environment and green solutions, sports and healthy lifestyle, local tourism and heritage, excellence in municipal and community development, and local policy development. These grants were implemented in Irbid, Ajloun, Amman, Zarqa, Tafilah, Maan, Karak, Jerash and Madaba.

5.1.4 How the Interventions Benefited Youth and Responded to their Demands

The learning clubs benefited the youth through creating a safe space for learning and exchanging experiences with their peers. It also allowed youth to gain new skills that will help prepare them to engage with the labor market and with their communities, increase their self-confidence, and enhance their team-work skills and commitment. These views were made clear by:

- Six out of nine YouthPower staff expressing positive benefits of the intervention; and

- 45 out of 69 youth in the KIs also stating that the learning clubs had these benefits.

The in-kind grants gave youth the opportunity to brainstorm their needs, express them, and then turn them into action plans and proposals. Additionally, it helped them in becoming entrepreneurs within the labor market, and gaining the knowledge and experience which supported them in increasing their self-esteem, leadership skills, and self-confidence.

- Five out of nine YouthPower staff stated these benefits, while the rest of the staff mentioned that the in-kind grants were also beneficial for the community itself where it introduced new ideas to the market and would help in the sustainability of the YouthPower Activity.
- 45 out of 69 youth mentioned during the KIs that the in-kind grants empowered youth to think about their dreams and to implement those ideas, resulting in income generation, which in-turn covered some of the community's needs and motivated youth to be hard workers.

The Activity connected youth with other peers and with their communities, gave them the opportunity to turn their ideas into reality through initiatives, and increased their confidence by believing that they could positively impact their communities.

80% (988 out of 1235) reported that USAID YouthPower activity enabled them to understand their role in the community. The majority of those were female participants from Irbid and Amman. On the other hand, youth who disagreed were mostly males from Irbid.

81% (1000 out of 1235) reported that USAID YouthPower activity enabled them to build their own knowledge and skills. The majority of those were female participants from Al Balqa and Amman. On the other hand, youth who disagreed were mostly males from Irbid.

82% (1012 out of 1235) reported USAID YouthPower activity helped them in understanding the needs of their community. The majority of those were female participants from Al Balqa and Irbid. On the other hand, youth who disagreed were mostly males from Irbid and Amman.

5.1.5 Evolution of Priority Themes

In fiscal year (FY) 2019 youth showed interest in receiving more training on how to:

- 1) Transfer the knowledge to other youth in their communities;
- 2) Advance the TL training curricula and interventions, and
- 3) Design and implement practicum activities and youth-community engagement initiatives to promote awareness and knowledge on gender and social inclusion utilizing a human-rights approach to overcome related stereotyping and negative social norms.

In FY 2020 and FY 2021, these interventions' themes covered:

- 1) Gender training delivered during the TL interventions;

- 2) Digital learning interventions on gender and social inclusion, including youth who were leading initiatives under the innovation fund, and the Gender and Social Inclusion Learning Clubs;
- 3) The national campaign entitled 16 Days against Gender Based Violence; and
- 4) National campaign entitled Understand Us in Our Language to advocate for the inclusion of youth with hearing disabilities.

During the interview with the COR, the interviewee stated that during the first year of the Activity, the interventions were mostly evolving around targeting at-risk youth and reaching the most vulnerable. Subsequently, during the second year of the Activity, the interventions started to be more demand-driven, based on the youth-identified priorities. For example, the creation of learning clubs to address the different interests of the youth, where the learning clubs focused on youth agency and how to build their capacity in soft and practical skills. In addition, the establishment of the VAN was also based on the need of the youth to connect with decision makers and to express their opinions in policy reframing.

5.1.6 Conclusion

The study concludes that youth preferred a mixed basket of priorities while emphasizing skills leading to economic benefits. The highest priority theme was gender and inclusion followed by PAVAL then environment and green solution. Subsequently, youth prioritized preparedness for labor market and local policy design.

The study finds that the start-up approach consisting of mapping needs of youth and continual consultation with youth contributed to the program delivering to the needs of youth. Youth clubs as a platform of service delivery provided a space for youth to express and to participate in program activities. In-kind grants are seen as an efficient way to support the youth to realize their dreams. The program to a great extent was able to address the needs of disabled and minority youth

It was shown that the Activity interventions benefited the youth through creating safe spaces for learning and exchanging experiences with their peers. It also allowed youth to engage in the labor market and with their community and provided an opportunity to gain more skills such as leadership skills, communication skills and interpersonal skills. Furthermore, those interventions helped them build their capacity, gain experience, engage with the community, increase their self-confidence, and enhance their team-work skills and commitment.

5.2 STUDY QUESTION 2: How did YouthPower advance youth priorities?

5.2.1 Introduction

To examine how the YouthPower interventions supported themes and interventions that youth prioritized during the life of the Activity, the team talked to different stakeholders, identifying the adaptations to programming and expanding the different interventions offered to better support youth in their implementation of priority themes. Therefore, the team interviewed youth participants, representatives from the GOJ, parents and community members and also surveyed youth participants to gather information from various perspectives.

In addition, the team explored how YouthPower directly supported youth participants and their ability to implement the interventions that aligned with their priorities. Also, the team assessed whether YouthPower had direct or indirect effects on the larger community, and how community leaders and other stakeholders supported the youth in transforming youth-led initiatives into community-led initiatives. At the end, the study team evaluated how youth worked to change policy through their work.

5.2.2 YouthPower Support to Themes/Interventions Prioritized by Youth

YouthPower was overall very responsive to the needs and interests of youth and to the context of each community throughout the life of the Activity:

- During the second year, the youth's interest regarding gender and social inclusion became clear. In response, the Activity: 1) established a gender and social inclusion community of practice; 2) advanced the related curricula under Training the Facilitators and TL interventions, and 3) adopted gender and social inclusion as a cross cutting theme under the practicum activities and the youth community engagement initiatives.
- According to YouthPower staff, youth were in need of a safe space to learn and express themselves. Therefore, they started by conducting multiple FGD sessions with youth beneficiaries to explore the themes that they were interested in and which skills they would like to learn. Based on these FGDs, the youth came up with a number of themes, that were strategically grouped into nine main areas:
 - 1) technology and digital innovation;
 - 2) filmmaking and digital media;
 - 3) environment and green solutions;
 - 4) sports and healthy lifestyle;
 - 5) gender inclusion;
 - 6) social inclusion;
 - 7) entrepreneurship and preparedness to join the workforce;
 - 8) local tourism and heritage; and
 - 9) youth-oriented local policy development.

The process of exploring the themes through discussions and then coming up with groups for those themes created a virtual and physical space for youth to build their skills, get engaged more with the community, understand their surroundings and assets, achieve their agency, and implement youth initiatives.

Given that a low percentage of female youth were engaged in income generating interventions within their communities, YouthPower encouraged female youth to be more available and motivated to lead practicum activities. Female youth found such participation as an opportunity to develop knowledge, skills and experience in exploring their communities and the Positive Youth Development (PYD) approach.

- During FY 2020, YouthPower went through a careful review of their concept notes, resulting in the Youth-Community Engagement Initiatives design workshops to assess the type of support required by youth to finalize their initiatives and begin implementation. YouthPower provided support, insights and feedback to youth that were part of the initiative teams through:
 - 1) engaging them in TL interventions that were related to the specific initiative;
 - 2) engaging other youth as volunteers during implementation;
 - 3) linking the specific initiatives to related Learning Clubs to ensure sustainability;
 - 4) engage youth trainers in ToT interventions for leading the initiatives on TL subject matter, the PAVAL toolkit, M&E, and project management to ensure structured approaches during implementation; and

- 5) encouraged youth to explore social entrepreneurship within their initiatives as a means to generate income for the youth involved in the initiative and others while responding to a social challenge.

5.2.3 Programming Adaptations to Better Support Interventions Aligned with Youth Priorities

In order to ensure more male and female youth were engaged and registered across diverse partner communities, YouthPower engagement team adapted and developed tools to increase the number of vulnerable male and female youth engaged in the Activity. Specifically, the team:

- 1) Organized creative interventions during the communal and outreach meetings such as Dabkeh (a traditional group dance) as a side event during the communal meeting. Youth volunteers planned, prepared, and performed the Dabkeh, which attracted other youth to participate.
- 2) Arranged soccer tournaments for male youth. Before and after the games, YouthPower volunteers introduced the Activity to youth attendees, shared their experiences, and encouraged youth to join. As a result, more than 50 youth (all male) subsequently registered to join YouthPower interventions.
- 3) Developed and launched the Volunteers Ambassadors Network. YouthPower developed VAN based upon the belief that messages are more credible when delivered by a peer. VAN supported the community outreach and youth engagement team in identifying and recruiting vulnerable youth to participate in Activity interventions.

To respond to youth's need to engage with the community through events, YouthPower added topics that were more relevant to the training objectives, such as problem analysis, writing problem statements, channels of dialogue with decision makers, writing letters to officials and sustainability initiatives. Furthermore, more interactive exercises were added in addition to the use of additional training tools and ice breaking sessions.

The findings of this study's online youth survey showed that 73.8 percent (911 out of 1,235) of responding youth reported that the new training topics added to the learning clubs increased their ability to interact with the community.

During FY 2020, one important adaptation that took place during the Activity was the establishment of the VAN core groups in Irbid, Jerash, Ajloun, Mafraq, Karak, Tafiela, Maan, and Al-Aqaba as a new activity of the Activity. The VAN nationwide, was a network of youth influencers who:

- 1) Supported Activity outreach and engagement efforts in existing and new communities;
- 2) Promoted Activity interventions among youth, encouraging them to join;
- 3) Served as sustainability ambassadors of the Activity during the implementation of interventions and beyond;
- 4) Led local policy dialogue with local government and decision makers, proposing developments to associated regulations and interventions from youth perspective; and
- 5) Led implementation of learning interventions and community-based campaigning launched under national partnerships with the Ministry of Youth (MOY) and the Independent Elections Commission (IEC).

In FY 2020, YouthPower staff dedicated their time to review and revise learning curricula that was utilized under the transformational learning and innovation fund interventions. Following that, the Activity organized specialized Train the Youth Trainers (ToT) interventions and trained 1,000 youth to become trainers on the subject matter. To this end, YouthPower started utilizing this pool of youth trainers as co-trainers and/or master trainers across the Activity's interventions. YouthPower provided

them with stipends (JOD 20 per day, maximum eight days a month). Those trainers contributed to:

- Change in the youth’s attitude, and behavior, from being beneficiaries targeted by the Activity, to leaders with clear roles and responsibilities in developing learning curricula, tools, and implementation of interventions; and
- Presenting youth to the Ministry of Youth (MOY) as decision makers on the design of youth interventions particularly the Youth Virtual Center, the activation of youth centers as hubs to host the Learning Clubs, and as owners of youth-led initiatives to implement the National Youth Strategy.

As a response to the global COVID-19 outbreak, and the March 2020 nationwide curfew in Jordan, YouthPower developed a crisis management plan, implemented under the programmatic campaign USAID YouthPower Going Digital.

- To this end, the team launched all interventions digitally through YouthPower’s closed Facebook group, and supported through WhatsApp groups and Zoom video conferencing, with telephone calls made to youth in communities where there was no internet available. Also, specifically to meet the needs of youth with disabilities, the Activity used blended learning approaches that included digital and community-based interventions, and training for these youth when communities lacked accessible facilities that host youth with disabilities, such as:
 - 1) TL interventions for youth with hearing disabilities;
 - 2) “Preparedness to enter the workforce of handcrafts” training for youth with disabilities; and
 - 3) Psychosocial support for youth with disabilities. YouthPower realized that youth had a positive experience as a result of the digital transformation campaign, and it was equally effective and engaging.

In turn, youth posted on the closed Facebook group about how much they valued this experience, and how empowered they felt just by being able to access the digital learning materials any time they want.

- One more opportunity that was important to youth during the “Going Digital” campaign, was when a group of participants that were part of the learning clubs expressed that they have skills in using Geographic Information System (GIS) platforms. Therefore, YouthPower created regular knowledge transfer sessions where youth educated and supported their peers on how to create maps and use online maps to develop their skills throughout the digital community mapping exercise using their unique knowledge bases. Youth have expressed how this type of exchange has proven to be successful and helpful, considering it even more effective than some other professional training.

During the close interaction with youth who were awarded with the in-kind grants, YouthPower staff observed that a small group of the youth were facing issues such as abuse, harassment, depression, broken family ties, aggression, and high anxiety that negatively impact their psychosocial well-being, which negatively impacted their performance during initiative implementation and other youth services.

- Therefore, YouthPower staff created a Mind Power grant that delivered psychosocial and well-being support to at-risk youth without access to psychosocial resources through developing an online self-help toolkit that provided youth with guidance, self-awareness, and self-help coping strategies. Similarly, the Activity trained youth as coaches through a Training of Trainers intervention and mentored them to conduct community-based support groups with the goal of helping other youth in their communities to deal with psychosocial challenges.

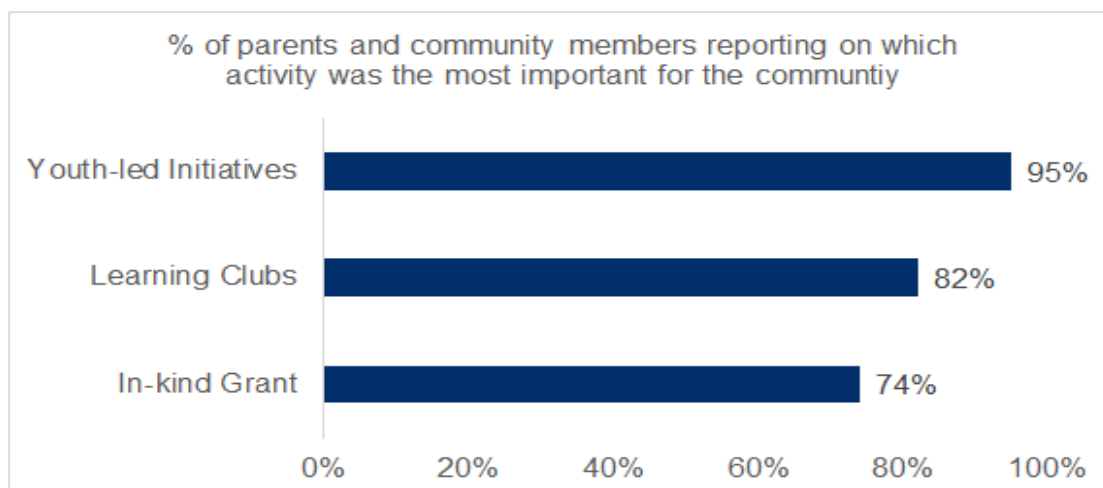
5.2.4 Effects of YouthPower's Support to the Larger Community

It was proven that the youth-initiatives aimed to serve the community more than being of direct benefit to those youth themselves. Also, the community was very supportive during the planning and the implementation phase of these initiatives.

- Five YouthPower staff mentioned that most of the youth-initiatives aimed to serve the community more than being of direct benefit to those youth themselves. Examples provided by the respondents included conducting maintenance for school buildings, health clinics and community parks. Moreover, they emphasized that youth also raised awareness around gender and inclusion issues that focused more on challenges faced by the community rather than them personally. Furthermore, YouthPower staff gave more examples for initiatives, such as establishing a library in different locations such as Amman and Maan, and environmental and green related initiatives such as recycling initiative, maintenance for community parks and maintenance of school buildings.
- During the KII with community members, parents and GoJ representatives, the interviewees mentioned that as a result of the benefits that they saw because of those initiatives, they became more supportive, gave their trust to the youth and started listening to their opinions.
- From the youth's point of view, they agreed that the community including parents, community leaders and religious leaders were positively engaged in almost all the initiatives, either in the design phase or the implementation phase. Youth mentioned that they saw incredible support from those stakeholders which made them believe more in their ideas and encouraged them to deal with the barriers that they faced.

The community that surrounded the youth participants noticed the benefits of the Activity on the youth and were extremely happy. Fifteen parents agreed that they saw massive differences in their children as a result of their participation in YouthPower's interventions. They said that their sons and daughters became more responsible, independent, committed and courageous. Furthermore, parents stated that their children gained positive skills in discussing and expressing their feelings, decisions and opinions which positively affected their relationship with their families and community in general. Beyond the individual level, parents stated during the interviews that they became prouder and trusted their children more than ever, and the community members said during the interviews that they started noticing youth's needs and listening to their opinions. One interviewee from Amman said that youth transitioned from being silent community members to decision makers due to their participation in the Activity.

In summary, the impact of YouthPower Activity beyond the individual level was shown during data collection from different stakeholders and participants when the Activity served the community as much as being of direct benefit to the youth themselves, where it had impacted more than 10,573 youth. Further, those youth greatly influenced their parents, peers and other community members. Moreover, the Activity's youth-led initiatives served the community by conducting maintenance for school buildings and health clinics, establishing a library in different locations such as Amman and Maan, as well as environmental and green initiatives such as recycling and maintenance for community parks.



5.2.5 Community Support to Youth in Transforming Youth-Led Initiatives into Community-Led Initiatives

The community had a huge role in supporting youth during the youth-led initiatives planning and implementation.

- According to eight YouthPower staff, the Activity adapted its interventions to meet youth priorities through conducting community mapping for each community and then writing up and distributing a report that explained each area with its specific challenges and available services. All the initiatives that were implemented were based on a design workshop that was led by youth and the workshop shed light on community needs. For example, in Muthallath El-Ardhah, Al Balqa, youth identified important challenges that arose during the mapping exercise in regard to transportation, stray animals, and road safety. As for the health section, the youth found that the availability of specialist doctors and equipment was a major problem. In addition, numerous barriers were identified to inclusion such as local policies, individual perceptions, infrastructure, and most importantly, community awareness. Therefore, an initiative design workshop training took place to plan for an awareness campaign to combat drugs and smoking, shed light on the shortage of medical personnel and equipment in the hospital in the region, and find appropriate solutions and create dialogue with decision makers about the transportation challenges in the region with the aim of finding a solution.
- During the online survey with 1,235 youth, the youth reported on the community engagement in the implementation phase of youth-led initiatives,
 - 72.5 percent (895) reported that the community's response to youth initiatives was positive
 - 74.7 percent (926) said that the community supported the initiatives led by youth
- During KIs with 13 representatives from seven different municipalities in Irbid, Ajloun, Maan, Jerash, Al Balqa, Tafieleh and Zarqa, they said that In Irbid and Ajloun, the government provided a physical space for many interventions that were conducted; it reviewed and gave feedback on the youth-led initiatives and provided approvals on many proposed interventions. In Maan, YouthPower used one of the governmental schools to establish a resource room for youth and the municipality supported the Activity in getting approvals and implementing interventions. In Zarqa, Tafieleh, Jerash and Al Balqa, the municipalities provided logistical support and physical space for YouthPower interventions to serve the youth in the community. All the 13 interviewees mentioned that the government was very supportive in facilitating all the required

approvals and accommodating many interventions for the Activity because it felt the need and the benefit of those interventions on the youth in the community.

- In Maan, three governmental representatives highlighted that during the adaptation of many interventions to meet the needs of youth, they were very supportive in also adapting their facilities and providing resources such as a physical space to be employed for interventions. In Ajloun, the interviewee reported that the municipality was ready to accommodate any required alternatives during the COVID-19 situation and restrictions so as to continue the implementation of the activity. The other eight representatives mentioned that they took part in directing youth toward conducting the most feasible and appropriate initiatives to meet their community needs and to enhance youth's understanding and capabilities.

In FY 2020, YouthPower organized a number of youth-community engagement initiative design workshops across target communities including Salt, Muthallath El-Ardhah, Dair Alla, Ain Al-Basha, Shoonah, Janoobiyah, Shoonah Jadideh (Sokneh), Wadi El-Hoor and Swaimah. YouthPower observed that the majority of ideas presented, and the priorities identified by youth in the workshops were limited to community engagement and volunteerism interventions (e.g. planting trees, rehabilitating the health center, drawing murals at schools, cleaning campaigns, and meetings with policymakers). To this end, YouthPower designed and implemented the following approach:



Figure 3: YouthPower's community engagement approach.

From the 13 interviews with GOJ representatives from seven governorates, the findings showed that these representatives thought that the best approaches in support of youth implementing and taking part in youth-led community initiatives were:

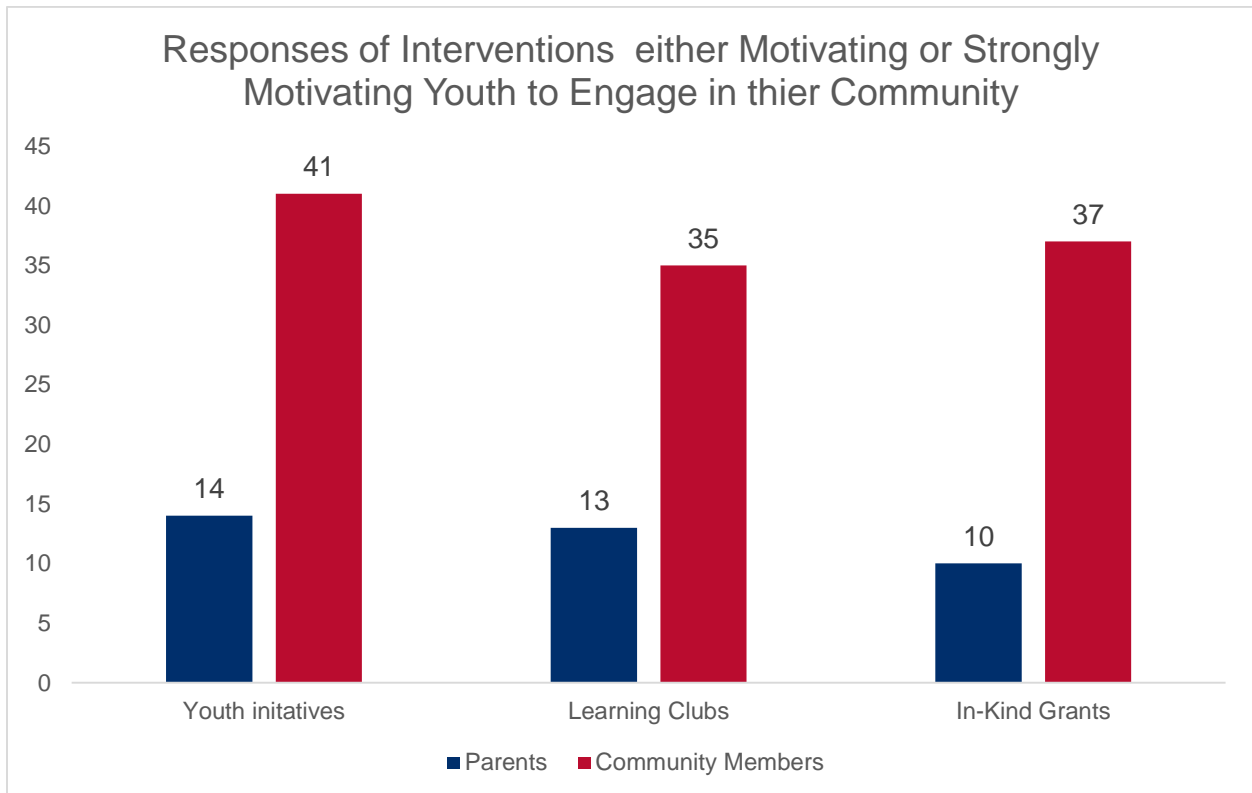
- 1) Ensuring that youth view themselves as capable members that can make positive change in the community;
- 2) Giving those youth the chance to politically participate in the decision-making process;
- 3) Providing a safe space for them to express their opinions;
- 4) Providing constructive criticism regarding their initiative's ideas and proposals; and

- 5) Offering capacity building training courses for youth to develop their decision-making, communication, and presentation skills.

In addition, the three GOJ representatives interviewed from Ajloun, Maan and Zarqa said that Jordan is taking a new path for supporting youth through lowering the age for members to run for parliamentary elections, giving youth an opportunity to participate in parliamentary fellowship interventions and allowing them to be active members in the decision-making process.

Four staff of the YouthPower Activity said that the adaptation in the in-kind small grants gave youth the opportunity to present their ideas and utilize their learning in building their small businesses. Furthermore, engaging community leaders and YouthPower staff to review and give feedback on the initiatives gave the youth a wider and broader perspective on their ideas which was an essential adaptation to the Activity. It was also mentioned by three of YouthPower staff that the internship intervention was very useful for youth as this gave them an opportunity to employ their new skills and to prepare themselves for the real labor market. All these interventions and adaptations gave youth a real chance to engage with their communities. This, in turn, provided them with a better understanding of their society and with a real chance to express their opinions and needs.

- In the youth online survey, 71.6 percent (884 out of 1,235) said that the different grants provided improved youth community engagement through the youth initiatives and 68.7 percent (852 out of 1,235) reported that the In-kind grants helped youth to expand their initiatives into their communities. The figure below depicts the number of parents and community members that stated the following interventions either motivated or strongly motivated youth to engage with their community.



5.2.6 Advancing Priorities for Policy Reform to Remove Barriers

The GOJ interviewees thought that some policies limited and prevented youth from implementing and developing initiatives. These included a lack of financial support, some governmental challenges and restriction on youth initiatives (such as the long approvals process and lack of trust from the government representatives), lack of support from decision makers and authority figures, lack of support from MOY in providing supervision and follow-up on youth initiatives, and restriction on youth loans which requested many guarantees like real estate and financial resources which youth can't provide.

- From youth's point of view, 60 percent (741 of 1,235) surveyed said that some of the policies on the national level serve to prevent youth from being change-leaders.
- Some governmental representatives highlighted that many community members and leaders still couldn't trust youth which resulted in not giving them the chance to be in decision-making and leadership positions, and forcing any youth to resign from his/her job if they want to be a potential parliamentary candidate.

In terms of the initiatives that the GOJ representatives were aware of that proposed changes to youth-related policies, six respondents (46 percent) did not know of any initiative. However, one interviewee from Ajloun said that YouthPower included many initiatives that trained and prepared youth who were attempting to change their community's perception towards youth. Another participant from Ajloun mentioned that there was a youth-led initiative named "My Decision" which is trying to propose and recommend changes in youth-related policies. In Jerash, the interviewee highlighted a few initiatives that he felt were making a difference, such as Jerash Tourist Trails, which supported youth from both genders to enter the labor market and to engage with different stakeholders.

The second initiative that was mentioned by this interviewee was digital trading/shopping which supported the whole community as it gave the sellers a platform to market and sell their produce to broader communities and for the buyers to easily purchase their needed products and Sports and Health for Youth, an initiative that helped in shaping young people's characters and building teamwork. Moreover, the interviewees mentioned other community initiatives like street art and awareness-raising sessions.

The VANers developed initiatives to advance local policies that were sensitive to youth priorities, and to awareness-raising and problem-solving initiatives in the sectors of tourism, education, vocational education, and vocational employment. To that end, YouthPower supported youth to kick off seven youth-led initiatives. Also, in FY 2020, YouthPower helped and engaged VANers in meetings with decision-makers, policymakers, officials, and influencers from the government and municipalities.

- USAID YouthPower has addressed VANers priorities for being part of policymaking and decisions through conducting several training courses that focused on in-depth introduction on policy papers with the objective of presenting policy papers to local stakeholders and decision-makers and advocating for required sustainable changes. The training includes presentation skills, communication skills, a road map of the VANers interventions, as well as local policy themes and the partnerships with the MOY.
- VANers under the supervision of YouthPower developed 12 policy papers to address the needs and issues impacting them and their communities. The policy papers developed by the VANers of Jerash, Ajloun, Madaba, Tafiela, and Aqaba tackled the tourism sector and opportunities within it to increase job opportunities for youth. The VANers of Irbid, Karak, and Mafraq developed policy papers focused on vocational training and explored the need for a new strategy and vision to better equip the youth with the required skills for the current labor market. The VANers of Maan and Balqa used their policy papers to address public transportation and the implications of not having reliable public transportation on the lives of Jordanians in those communities. Finally, the VANers of Amman wrote policy papers on public

transportation for school students, while the VANers of Zarqa focused on introducing new businesses within the Zarqa municipal boundaries.

- YouthPower supported the VANers and youth to establish six youth units within Ajloun, Talal, Borma, and Kofranjeh. Establishing these units advanced the role of youth in developing and reviewing related local policies, by-laws, and regulations from a youth perspective, and enabled them to dialogue with policymakers on related additions, changes, and/or requirements related to youth. In addition, establishing the Youth Units within the municipalities' organizational structure promoted the sustainability of youth engagement under the Youth Social Innovation Support Program theme of Excellence in Municipal and Community Development.

YouthPower staff said there were a number of changes in policies as a result of requests from youth and this increased their self-belief and activated their role in their community. For example, as a result of the 16 days campaign in 2020, the Family protection and Juveniles Department in 2021 worked with the gender champions on creating specialized learning curricula around Gender Based Violence and will be followed by a ToT.

Other opportunities for youth policy reform that enabled youth to better influence policies to support youth and their communities included employment policies, education policies that enhance types of unconventional learning such as online learning and outdoor learning, the connection and collaboration between the MoE and MoL, youth career counseling and business startups. In addition, other ideas for potential opportunities included establishing a monthly meeting between youth and decision makers in the municipalities to make the connection between each group more systematic, as well as starting a committee with designated positions for youth to be part of the policy-reform/creation.

5.2.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis showed that YouthPower adaptations were flexible in responding to the needs and interests of youth in terms of adding topics to the different interventions and deleting other topics depending on how the context changed and how youth's priorities change as well. More adaptations such as the establishment of the VAN core groups in Irbid, Jerash, Ajloun, Mafraq, Karak, Tafila, Maan, and Aqaba were more on the whole Activity approach.

In regard to the larger impact of the Activity, the youth-led initiatives served the community as much as being of direct benefit to those youth themselves. In addition, the municipalities and community leaders supported initiatives across all the governorates by providing a physical space for many interventions. Municipalities reviewed and gave feedback on the youth-led initiatives and provided approvals for many proposed interventions such as in Irbid and Ajloun, the government provided a physical space for transformation learning courses and learning clubs that were conducted.

Communities reviewed and gave feedback on youth-led initiatives and provided approvals for the implementation of these initiatives. YouthPower supported the VANers and youth to establish six Youth Units that advanced the role of youth in developing and reviewing related local policies, by-laws, and regulations from a youth perspective, enabling them to dialogue with policymakers. In addition, establishing the Youth Units within the municipalities' organizational structure promoted the sustainability of youth engagement under the Youth Social Innovation Support Program theme of Excellence in Municipal and Community Development.

5.3 STUDY QUESTION 3: What did we learn about how to ensure that youth are accountable to and representative of other youth and their communities?

5.3.1 Introduction

The study team worked on assessing how YouthPower approaches focus on working with youth to determine whether, and how, priority themes and interventions were aligned with other members of their communities, including youth. Additionally, the team examined whether there were specific interventions or approaches implemented by YouthPower (including in-kind grants and youth-led initiatives) that helped to highlight the priorities of the community and helped guide youth participants in which interventions or priorities to pursue.

5.3.2 USAID YouthPower Interventions that Highlighted Community Priorities

- 1- USAID YouthPower adapted a community mapping approach with youth participants as part of preparing for youth to develop and lead community initiatives.
 - Youth used the mapping tools to interview community members and ask them about a wide range of services in different sectors (employment, health, education, facilities, sports interventions, family services, online resources and services, governmental services, and other). The goal was to determine the availability of the service, its importance, and the level of satisfaction of youth clients. The most important aspect of the community mapping exercise was to direct youth to the challenges and issues that the communities were facing so they could address them through their youth-led initiatives, Activity interventions and in-kind grants.
- 2- Because participant youth generally have no experience engaging with their communities, YouthPower created a methodology and toolkit that both teaches the youth about the basics of community engagement and guides them in articulating and planning interventions/solutions to the priority concepts they have recognized which was called PAVAL.
 - The methodology and tools were designed to assist the youth in capturing those concepts they see as priorities for engagement and articulating them in ways that are both understandable to youth and the broader community. In essence, PAVAL was a workspace for youth to effectively and creatively envision how and with whom they can engage their community. The PAVAL tool was adapted in Irbid, Al Balqa, Zarqa, Karak, Mafraq, Jerash, Ajloun, Amman and Madaba as a training toolkit.
- 3- To facilitate youth engagement with their communities, YouthPower released grants that provided youth with management and administrative support to equip youth with the skills they need to effectively implement their planned initiatives through providing coaching and mentoring along with a number of trainings that supported youth learning.
- 4- YouthPower established the Youth Advisory Council (YAC) which aimed at providing a platform that represented the voices of youth in the strategies, decision-making, and implementation of the USAID YouthPower Activity.
 - YAC also intended to increase leadership roles for youth, and the visibility of YouthPower in local communities such as Irbid, Amman, Jerash and in other governorates in Jordan. During the lifetime of the Activity, YAC members led the in-kind small grant applications RFA/proposal review, providing feedback, and attending capacity building training, as well as representing YouthPower in high-level forums and meetings.

- 5- YouthPower supported the VANers and youth to establish Youth Units within related municipalities such as units in Ajloun, Talal, Borma, and Kofranjeh as a collaborative effort between the VANers and the municipalities. Establishing these units advanced the role of youth in developing and reviewing related local policies, by-laws, and regulations from a youth perspective. This enabled them to dialogue with policymakers on related additions, changes, and/or requirements. In addition, establishing the Youth Units within the municipalities' organizational structure promoted the sustainability of youth engagement under the Youth Social Innovation Support Program theme of Excellence in Municipal and Community Development.

The establishment of the Youth Social Innovation Support program supported youth in learning experiences, skills development, and opportunities to practice their acquired skills in a safe enabling environment. In addition to mentoring, these grantees worked with youth to establish sustainable and innovative social initiatives, entrepreneurial hubs, and engaged youth in community-based initiatives that aimed to achieve sustainable development. In FY 2021, YouthPower signed eight standard grant agreements along eight themes (i.e., STEM, social entrepreneurship, positive school environment, environment and green solutions, sports and healthy lifestyle, local tourism and heritage, excellence in municipal and community development, and local policy development).

For example, the King Hussein Foundation received one grant to advance innovative and sustainable civic engagement of youth and empower them to act as engaged partners and productive citizens who can make a difference in their lives and communities. The Jubilee Center for Excellence in Education and the Community Development Institute of the King Hussein Foundation engaged 75 youth (19- to 29-years-old) with CBOs and online channels to apply the knowledge they gained in the STEM program to establish innovative social and entrepreneurial sustainable initiatives. The initiatives resulting from this grant responded to social challenges, needs and interests, thus advancing youth as influencers of positive change to benefit their peers and community. Moreover, the engaged youth designed initiatives that promoted knowledge on STEM across target communities; advanced youth's skills and knowledge base on robotics, Virtual Reality (VR), and Artificial Intelligence (AI); created dialogue among youth and experts on future career prospects in the STEM sector; and advocated for advanced approaches by the Government of Jordan.

5.3.3 How Priority Themes and Interventions were Aligned with Community Members' Priorities, Including Youth.

The finding showed that the community mapping for available services, challenges, and needs in each community, allowed YouthPower and youth to listen to and ask other youth about their needs and interests, where they were able to address specific needs in their communities. During the individual KIs with parents and community members, nine parents and 30 community members highlighted that because youth conducted community mapping, the interventions that took place were aligned with the community needs. The initiatives design also allowed the youth to implement initiatives that served the community need:

Nine parents and 30 community members said that youth went through a design workshop for each initiative and then discussed their ideas and proposals, took advice and feedback from different stakeholders in the same community to ensure that they were on the right track, and then considered all the factors and the needs in that area. During the pause and reflect sessions, YouthPower staff agreed that all the initiatives were related to the community because those initiatives resulted from the design workshops that were implemented by the innovation fund, where youth designed their initiatives based on the results of the findings of the community asset mapping activity and based on the knowledge that was gained from the thematic learning clubs.

Based on the findings in Maan community mapping, it was found that Maan lacked advocacy for the tourist areas in the city. Thus, an initiative took place in collaboration with the filmmaking clubs, whereby the initiative team designed three tourist dossiers including a history of the site, its topography and geology, as well as culture, traditions, and food. During April, the first tour was launched which aimed to test the proposed trails. The initiative team prepared the tourist dossier for the initiative that was also uploaded on a Facebook page; the three tourist paths were promoted via social media and thus helped to organize tourism trips.

Fifty-five out of 69 youth said they had strategic approaches where they used social media platforms to express their ideas and opinions, and to hear other youth's ideas. They also shared the idea of the youth initiative with their neighbors and friends, and invited them to take part in the Activity interventions

During the online survey conducted with youth participants, 60 percent (741 of 1,235) said that other youth who were not enrolled with YouthPower, participated in the youth initiatives. In the youth Klls, they mentioned that in Irbid, during the COVID-19 pandemic, youth changed their interventions to focus on hygiene kit distribution and awareness raising, and when the agriculture work season started, youth conducted an initiative that would support and raise awareness regarding the importance of this season and the labor opportunities available during this time.

5.3.4 The Impact of Participating in YouthPower Interventions on the Participants and the Community

In general, the USAID YouthPower Activity had a positive impact on youth participants, other youth in the community and the whole community.

- During pause and reflect sessions with YouthPower staff, one interviewee mentioned that when the Activity started, the communities were not aware about the Activity and about the impact the youth can have on their local communities. This underestimation was clear in the community views towards youth role in leading and creating impact and changing behaviors in their communities. After concluding year one of the implementation, community members and community leaders were more aware of youth's role in the community, and this was clear at the level of engagement of community leaders and adults in the Activity interventions. For example, after seeing the real impact of the Activity's participants on the community, one CBO in Jerash offered its rooms for youth interventions without any charges.
- Fifty-five out of 69 youth during the Klls said that during their participation in the Activity, they were always advocating, sharing their knowledge, listening to other youth's needs, and talking about Activity interventions with their friends. This motivated other youth to engage with YouthPower and encouraged them to be more creative in building new relationships with their surroundings.
- From the youth initiative team, in-kind grants recipients, community mapping teams and VANers focus groups discussions, 60 youth participants from Amman, Ajloun, Irbid, Zarqa, Mafraq, Karak and Jerash said that their participation gave them knowledge and skills, helping them understand their surroundings, raising their awareness around existing challenges, and enhancing their capacity and confidence. As a result, they became active members in their communities and started creating interventions, and building relationships with different stakeholders and members.
- All 15 parents, 42 community members and 69 youth interviewed explained that youth who participated in the initiatives had a positive impact on other youth in their communities. Because they saw that youth their age were capable of serving the community and implementing initiatives covering the needs of their communities, it inspired them to do the same.

5.3.5 Sustainability of Youth-Led Interventions

The USAID YouthPower Activity developed a sustainability methodology for youth-led initiatives that considers two levels:

- **Community level:** to establish sustainable relations between youth, leaders, and stakeholders in their communities; and
- **Youth-led initiative level:** to support youth to be able to design a sustainable initiative.

The methodology focused on what to sustain. For example: relationships; collaborations, initiatives and ideas; youth engagement; capacity and skills; and government support. Further, the methodology listed different options of sustainability such as: 1) scale-up; 2) replications; 3) policy advocacy; 4) dialogue (PAVAL); 5) online efforts; 6) hosting in one organization; and 7) communities of practice.

YouthPower also developed criteria for youth-led initiatives that could be scaled-up within communities nationwide and linked to YouthPower Learning Clubs. Grantees supported youth through performing a full review of all initiatives developed by those youth. The review focused on the interventions proposed by youth with an effort to align the interventions with the Learning Clubs and the USAID work plan, and to identify sustainability elements focused on community development, youth agency and youth social entrepreneurship. During those review processes, YouthPower identified clusters of initiatives and the efforts needed to enhance the peer-to-peer knowledge exchange and transfer.

5.3.6 Conclusions

In summary, the results of the analysis emphasized that the community mapping approach that was implemented with youth participants to map 60 communities in 12 governorates in Jordan enhanced youth agency, self-efficacy, and prepared youth to develop and lead community initiatives. The mapping exercise strengthened community engagement by ensuring that the initiatives actually met the needs of the whole community. Moreover, the findings showed that youth who participated in the initiatives had a positive impact on other youth in the community because they saw that youth their age could serve the community and could implement initiatives that cover real community needs. This made them believe that they could do the same.

The USAID YouthPower activity developed a sustainability methodology for youth-led initiatives that considers two levels, firstly the community level: to establish sustainable relations between youth, leaders, and stakeholders in their communities; and secondly the Youth-led initiative level: to support youth to be able to design a sustainable initiative.

5.4 STUDY QUESTION 4: What did we learn about how to engage the community?

5.4.1 Introduction

The study team explored how YouthPower initiatives helped guide youth in engaging their community to participate in priority themes and interventions. The study also looked at what approaches were used by youth that may have encouraged additional community engagement and which approaches worked with different stakeholder types (e.g., how best to engage municipality staff, religious leaders and parents). In addition, the team looked at whether different levels of community engagement supported greater benefits to the community. Finally, the Learning Study was interested in evaluating the social and cultural norms and restrictions that youth faced by specific genders, youth with disabilities, and youth minority groups during the Activity and how USAID YouthPower interventions helped them to combat and overcome those challenges so as to encourage greater and more diverse participation.

The study also explores other opportunities that youth wished to have in their communities that would encourage them to engage with their communities and provide them with more skills and knowledge.

5.4.2 Levels of Community Engagement—Direct and Indirect

The data showed that the community engagement was high during the community mapping exercise and in the youth-led initiatives through giving their opinions, expressing their needs, and helping in the implementation phase which made them motivated to take part in more interventions during the Activity:

- In the KIs with parents and community members, nine out of 15 parents (60 percent) and 30 out of 42 (71 percent) community members highlighted that because youth conducted community mapping for the available services, challenges and needs in each community, they were able to address specific needs in their communities. During the community mapping exercise, youth collected information from community members, community leaders, governmental representatives, and parents so they could have a clearer idea about the needs and gaps in the community. Therefore, those stakeholders felt that they took part in giving their opinions and expressing their needs.
- In the youth online survey:
 - 74.6 percent (921 out of 1,235) reported that youth initiatives were supported by community members (e.g., community leaders, parents, religious leaders).
 - 88.3 percent (1,090 out of 1,235) mentioned that knowledge, skills, and attitudes gained through youth interventions made it easier for youth to network with governmental staff, including municipality staff.
 - 87.2 percent (1,077 out of 1,235) said that youth were able to engage other youth to participate in their initiatives.
- Seven out of nine YouthPower staff mentioned that as a result of the benefits that the community members, leaders and authority figures saw because of those initiatives, they became more supportive, gave their trust to the youth and started listening to their opinions. In addition, 62 youth out of 69 (90 percent) interviewed youth during the KIs agreed that the community (including parents, community leaders and religious leaders) was positively engaged in almost all the initiatives either in the design phase or the implementation phase. Those youth also mentioned that they saw incredible support from those stakeholders which made youth believe more in their ideas and encouraged them to deal with the barriers that they faced.

For example, in Shooneh Jadideh and Al Balqa, data was collected from four institutions and youth completed 205 community questionnaires. The survey findings particularly rated youth outlets as lacking where 90 percent (185) of the sample rated entertainment as bad or non-existent, and 83 percent (170) rated organized interventions as bad or non-existent. Similar issues were seen with opportunities to receive guidance and support such as mentorship and psychological counselling. Public school issues were consistent with the rest of Jordan, with unanimous agreement that the school environment did not provide for the needs of students, with equipment, hygiene and bullying rated as problematic by over 70 percent (144) of respondents. The two highest rated barriers to education were lack of assistance to persons with learning difficulties and transportation. In the mental health sector, the services rated as most lacking were mental health services (158 of 205 respondents, or 77 percent, labeled it as a major

problem), followed by availability of specialized doctors (154 of 205 respondents or 75 percent, label it as a major problem). In terms of inequality among persons with disabilities, refugees and people from other nationalities, over 40 percent (82 of 205) of the sample rated persons with disabilities, refugees, and persons with other nationalities as people who rarely ever get equal opportunities. The reasons most selected for lack of inclusion were lack of community awareness (161 of 205, or 78.5 percent), followed by infrastructure (103 of 205, or 51 percent) and individual perceptions and biases (94 of 205, or 46 percent). Public services rated most poorly were transportation and promotion of tourism services; over 80 percent of the sample labelled these as problematic or non-existent. The lack of institutional data in Shooneh Jadideh reflects an isolated community which lacks institutional opportunities. Three of the four institutions identified in Shooneh Jadideh were governmental and one is a charity (Two governmental schools, one municipality, and one CBO).

5.4.3 Benefits of YouthPower interventions on Youth Participants, Other Youth in the Community and The Larger Community

YouthPower's interventions were very beneficial and useful for the youth in the community; it enhanced their confidence, skills and knowledge significantly.

- Throughout the interviews with 15 parents and 42 community members, 95 percent (54 out of 57) of interviewees reported that YouthPower's interventions were very beneficial and useful for the youth in the community; they described the interventions as very motivating, raised youth's awareness and were able to direct their energy and skills to the right place. They also said that YouthPower helped youth gain different experiences, strengthened their relationship with the community and increased their sense of responsibility. However, 5 percent (3 out of 57) said that YouthPower activity needed to focus more on labor market preparedness and engage more youth with job opportunities.
- Thirteen parents and 34 community members in the interviews expressed that the knowledge and skills gained by youth as a result of their participation in the learning clubs had a huge impact on them in terms of enhancing their confidence, their ability to achieve their goals, and positively changed their behavior and attitude. In addition, the interviewees said that the youth that participated in the learning clubs also had a positive impact on the community through proposing and implementing many ideas and initiatives that served the community. Youth became more involved with other youth in the community and transferred the knowledge to them.
- Seven males and 12 females who participated in two gender specific small group discussions indicated that they would definitely recommend the Activity to other youth because it positively impacted their personality and enhanced their confidence, gave them new ideas, that it was a fun experience and also provided them with new ways to discuss different subjects with other people.
- Furthermore, during surveying 1,235 youth through an online survey, the following responses were reported regarding the benefits of each activity on youth:

Learning clubs	Youth-led initiatives	In-kind grants
<p>72% (889 out of 1235) of the youth indicated that their participation in the learning clubs improved their knowledge</p> <p>64% (790 out of 1235) said that their participation in the learning clubs improved their skills</p> <p>60% (741 out of 1235) highlighted that their participation in the learning clubs enhanced their experience</p> <p>45% (556 out of 1235) reported that the learning clubs developed their positive attitude</p> <p>33% (408 out of 1235) stated that the learning clubs fulfilled their personal needs, provided opportunities for other youth, and sustained the import of their initiatives</p>	<p>66.5% (821 out of 1235) participants reported that the youth-led initiatives improved their knowledge</p> <p>62% (766 out of 1235) said that the youth-led initiatives enhanced their skills and experience</p> <p>45% (556 out of 1235) stated that the youth-led initiatives improved their attitude and outreach to other youth</p> <p>35% (432 out of 1235) reported that the youth-led initiatives fulfilled their personal needs, provided opportunities for other youth, and sustained the impact of their initiatives</p>	<p>50% (617 out of 1235) reported that the in-kind grants improved their knowledge</p> <p>46% (568 out of 1235) said that the in-kind grants enhanced their skills and experience</p> <p>44% (543 out of 1235) reported that the in-kind grants improved their attitude</p> <p>38% (470 out of 1235) reported that the in-kind grants fulfilled their personal needs</p> <p>34% (420 out of 1235) reported that the in-kind grants improved their outreach to other youth.</p> <p>35% (432 out of 1235) said that the in-kind grants provided opportunities for other youth and sustained the impact of their initiatives</p>

The Activity was not only beneficial to youth, it also had an impact on other community members:

- Eight out of 57 (14 percent) interviewees, in the parents and community members individual KIs, said that the youth that participated in the Learning Clubs had also a positive impact on the community through proposing and implementing ideas and initiatives that served the community. The youth became more involved with other youth in the community and transferred their knowledge to them through advocating, sharing their knowledge, and talking about the interventions with their friends. This motivated other youth and community members to engage with YouthPower interventions and encouraged them to be more creative in building new relationships with their surroundings.

5.4.4 Approaches that Worked Best—Lessons Learned

The most successful ways that youth engaged with the community in the Activity interventions were sharing the knowledge that they gained from the Activity, engaging the community in several interventions, and using social media to advocate for the Activity.

- Seven of the ten (70 percent) YouthPower staff members said that the most successful ways that youth used to engage communities in the Activity interventions, was sharing the knowledge that they gained from the Activity whenever there was an opportunity, using word of mouth and digital platforms such as Facebook pages—including decision-makers and authority figures in the discussions regarding in-kind grants and youth-initiatives, and during events youth invited community members through phone calls, face-to-face interaction and social media platforms
- According to 56 out of 69 (81 percent) youth mentioned during the KIs, that municipality and governmental authorities were motivated to support them in various interventions because authorities saw the benefits resulting from the youth’s interventions—like how participant youth started to be more active in civil society, meeting with ministries, gaining confidence in sharing their opinions, and how they were encouraged to collaborate in making decisions in their communities. The authorities felt that the youth cared about their communities and were

interested in their feedback and opinions, and understood the youth’s passion for their work and readiness of the YouthPower staff to serve the community.

- Seven of the nine YouthPower staff stated that during the Activity, staff responded to each community’s needs and norms, and because of that, youth were able to better engage. For example, when conducting a learning session that included only female participants, the Activity provided female facilitators. Also, taking into consideration social norms in the Al Jafer community, when the Activity established youth safe spaces, two spaces were established instead of one: one for males and another for females. In terms of participants’ age, the interventions were tailored to fit the targeted group depending on their age range (10–29 years old).
- All 12 female participants interviewed in the gender-specific small group discussion from Irbid, Maan, Madaba, Tafieled, Karak and Zarqa said that including parents in the interventions was very helpful in terms of increasing the trust between parents and their children, enhancing the relationship and giving the parents a new view toward the youth in the community. Those interventions helped in raising the parents’ awareness around the power of youth and the capabilities of them.

5.4.5 Initiatives to Combat Restrictive Social and Cultural Norms

Participants from different groups expressed that they faced social and cultural barriers during their participation in the Activity. Female participants faced challenges related to the “culture of shame” and having males in some interventions.

- Around 33 percent (four out of 12) of females that participated in the small group discussions reported that they faced some challenges from the community when they first started engaging with the Activity. This was due to the “culture of shame” where the community and parents in general prohibit females from participating in any social activity or event because of their gender, because they believe that females should not be allowed to engage with males and shouldn’t be active in society.
- Eight out of 12 female interviewees said that their parents and community were very supportive. Moreover, 42 percent (five out of 12) of females in the small group discussions highlighted that in their communities, it was not acceptable for males and females to work together in one activity and there were many restrictions especially on females to prevent them from participating in any event or activity that included males.
- 50 percent (six out of 12) of females in the gender-specific small group discussions said that they faced a challenge from males not agreeing on giving the lead in some initiatives to females because of their gender.

To overcome the challenges related to social and cultural norms, YouthPower implemented learning clubs that specifically talked about social and cultural inclusion, the community mapping exercise, initiative design workshops, awareness raising sessions, and many other events or interventions that required both genders to work together professionally. From the female participants' perspective, those interventions helped them to be less worried about the idea of having both male and female participants in the same intervention—and gave them the chance to build a healthy and professional relationship with the opposite gender, other age groups, and youth with different abilities. Further, the interviewees

mentioned that they still face some challenges where some community members think that females are not supposed to participate or lead interventions due to the cultural barriers.

Male participants also faced challenges during their participation, such as:

- Six out of seven (86 percent) male participants in the gender-specific small group discussions said there were barriers that prevented male youth from participating in YouthPower interventions as well. Those barriers were:
 - 1) Not having free time because some youth were employed and they couldn't take time away from work;
 - 2) Lack of transportation; and
 - 3) Believing that society wouldn't be supportive of their efforts, under-estimating their ideas and initiatives.
- Five males in the gender-specific group discussion mentioned that in some communities like Amman and Irbid, it was acceptable to have males and females participating in the same activity, but other communities in Jordan like Maan and Al Balqa it wasn't acceptable.

All seven male participants felt that when the community saw the benefits of the Activity on youths' behavior, attitudes, and the initiatives that dealt with their challenges, they changed their minds and started appreciating youths' ability to positively impact the community. In addition, the Activity provided transportation for youth, making it easier for them to access interventions. Finally, when both genders started working professionally together, and after the implementation of the awareness raising sessions regarding gender inclusion, such concerns began to shrink from their perspective. As a result, youth realized that each participant has their own skills and could help each other to implement the activity more effectively.

Youth with disabilities expressed many barriers that they faced, such as the perception of the community, the preparedness of the facilities to accommodate their equipment, and support from their families.

- Ten out 19 (53 percent) youth with disabilities stated that they also faced some barriers during the Activity when at first their families were afraid and not sure that the Activity could accommodate the needs of their children.
- Another barrier that was mentioned by one of the participants was that in some interventions there weren't appropriate translations available for people with hearing disabilities, and some trainings were conducted in rooms that were not equipped to accommodate wheelchairs and other disability equipment.
- Around 80 percent (15 out of 19) of participants in this group stated that their parents and community members were very supportive and encouraging during their participation in the Activity. However, 20 percent (4 out of the 19) said that community members perceived them as incapable and did not support their participation.

To overcome the challenges that faced youth with disabilities, the Activity allowed them to bring a companion to help them during the session, raised awareness during the interventions around the

importance of social inclusion, and gave youth with disabilities the chance to participate in various interventions. Moreover, youth with disabilities said that the community still needs more awareness raising interventions that can help them to accept and include more people with disabilities in different community interventions.

Minority youth participants discussed barriers that they faced during the Activity as well, such as transportation and discrimination, and an impression that the interventions were designed mostly for Jordanian youth..

- During the small group discussions with 18 minority youth, participants discussed barriers that they faced during the Activity, such as transportation, feeling that the interventions mostly targeted Jordanian and Syrian youth, and that there were other nationalities such as Iraqi that were somehow not considered in the interventions. They also felt at the beginning there was discrimination from the Jordanian youth towards other nationalities.

However, during the Activity, YouthPower secured transportation for all the participants to be able to attend all the interventions, conducted awareness raising interventions among youth regarding respecting each other, built relationships among youth in the same community through teamwork, and enhanced self-confidence and positive attitude. These adaptations helped minority youth to overcome some challenges. However, they mentioned that they still feel that some opportunities are still only available for Jordanian youth, and that some community members still discriminate depending on their nationality.

Six out of seven (86 percent) females from the minority group during the focus group discussion mentioned that they still faced some challenges in the Activity. In Madaba for example, two females stated that when it came to interventions being implemented in other governorates or an overnight trip, they faced challenges from within their families to the point that their parents wouldn't allow them to participate. Furthermore, other challenges include lack of support from some community members in the initiatives or in the community engagement interventions.

Around 20 youth participants in the interviews and in the small group discussions reported that YouthPower interventions raised their awareness around social and cultural norms by including youth with disabilities in the Activity interventions and giving them the opportunity to express themselves, building respect and good relationships among all the participants. In addition, the inclusion of the opposite gender, government, religious leaders and other community members provided the chance to exchange experiences, opinions, and knowledge which made a huge difference in youth's perspectives.

5.4.6 Other Opportunities for Community Engagement, and Gender and Social Inclusion

Many suggestions for future activities were mentioned for USAID's consideration, such as providing more opportunities for initiatives led by female youth, providing capacity building training on debate skills, conducting extra labor market preparedness courses, and focusing on providing more in-kind grant opportunities for youth. Also, more opportunities were requested regarding building further partnerships with other organizations, extending the Learning Clubs to offer more practical subjects that will allow youth to engage more with the labor market, and creating a business incubator to support entrepreneurs engaged under the Activity's in-kind grants to sustain their ideas.

- During the small group discussions, four out of 12 females stated that it would be a great opportunity if in the future, more parents and community members could be included in courses and workshops where these courses can be facilitated or co-facilitated by youth.
- Other opportunities were mentioned by seven females during the focus group discussions such as providing more opportunities for initiatives led by female youth, support for female entrepreneurs to establish their own business and developing gender related advocacy campaigns that can raise more gender awareness.
- Five out of seven (71 percent) male and eight out of 12 (67 percent) female participants during the gender specific small group discussions, in addition to Sixty-four out of 65 (98 percent) youth participants from the other group interviews with youth initiative team, in-kind grants recipients, community mapping teams and VANers also highlighted what would encourage them to continue to participate actively in their communities (Irbid, Maan, Madaba, Tafieled, Karak and Zarqa) including: 1) opportunities to build further partnerships with other organizations; 2) extending the Learning Clubs to offer more practical subjects allowing youth to engage more with the labor market; 3) creating a business incubator to support entrepreneurs engaged by in-kind grants to sustain their ideas, and 4) improving the sustainability plan with local partners to support the interventions even after the Activity ends.
- Five out of seven (71 percent) male and eight out of 12 (67 percent) female participants reported that all these ideas and actions would need financial funding, advocacy from community leaders and decision-makers, conferences and events including parents, physical space from any local organization and more human resources from the community.

During the focus group discussions, 12 out of 18 (67 percent) youth from minority groups recommended some further actions that the Activity could take to enhance their interventions, including 1) training youth on debate skills, 2) providing more ToT sessions, 3) conducting extra labor market preparedness courses, 4) more supervision of trainers, and 5) focusing on providing more in-kind grant opportunities to youth.

To better meet youth with disabilities' needs, it was recommended by 11 out of 19 (58 percent) youth with disabilities to: 1) include more youth from this group in the interventions, 2) consider them more for in-kind grants and youth-initiatives, 3) implement more events and awareness raising campaigns around the importance of social inclusion, and 4) promote change in society's perception towards youth with disabilities.

5.4.7 Conclusions

In summary, the community mapping exercises that were conducted motivated community members to support more YouthPower interventions. It was clear from the findings that the interventions were very beneficial and useful for the youth where it helped them to gain different experiences, strengthened their relationship with the community, and increased their sense of responsibility.

Additionally, the youth identified many successful ways that were used to engage the community in youth interventions, such as sharing the knowledge that they gained from the Activity using word of mouth and digital platforms such as Facebook pages. In addition, including parents in the interventions was helpful in terms of increasing the trust and engagement between parents and their children.

The findings identified many initiatives that were implemented to overcome challenges facing different types of participants. YouthPower implemented interventions that advocated for social and gender inclusion (which helped male and female participants) such as implementing Learning Clubs that specifically talked about social and culture inclusion, community mapping exercises, initiative design workshops, and awareness raising sessions.

6. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, through this Learning Study it was apparent through youth and stakeholders' participation that the Activity's interventions positively impacted youth, parents, and their communities. The Learning Study was able to achieve its objectives and generated evidence, consolidated learnings and gained a better understanding of the impact of the Activity's youth interventions in Jordan.

The themes that youth prioritized were gender and social inclusion, PAVAL, preparedness of youth to enter the workforce without cultural barriers, environment and green solutions, multimedia and filmmaking, technology and innovation (e.g., 3D printing, interactive maps, robotics), sports and healthy lifestyle, local policy design, and tourism. The most frequent intervention themes that were requested by youth were sports and health, local tourism and heritage, environment and green solutions, job preparedness and social entrepreneurship.

The analysis highlighted the benefits of youth interventions through creating safe spaces for learning and exchanging experiences with their peers. It also allowed youth to engage in the labor market and with their communities. Further, it provided an opportunity to gain more skills such as leadership, communication and interpersonal skills. Those interventions helped them in building their capacity, gaining experience, engaging with the community, increasing their confidence, enhancing their team-work skills and commitment.

YouthPower staff were flexible in responding to the needs and interests of youth. In each phase of the Activity, the team was ready to adapt depending on the context, shift in needs expressed by the youth and communities, and any change in the barriers that arose. In regard to the larger impact of all youth interventions, the youth-led initiatives served the community as much as being of direct benefit to those youth themselves. In addition, the municipalities and community leaders supported initiatives across all the governorates by providing resources, feedback, and approvals for the needed interventions.

The community mapping exercises that surveyed the available services, challenges, and needs in each community were able to address very specific and real needs. This approach gave community leaders, government representatives and parents the opportunity to give their opinions, feedback, and to express their needs, so they felt that their voices were valued and they were part of the solution. This gave them the motivation to support more interventions.

Given the success that was achieved during the activity, YouthPower staff and participants realized that the sustainability of the interventions was an essential key to having a longer-term and a more maintainable impact on youth and the community. Therefore, it is recommended to build upon the developed sustainability methodology for youth-led initiatives, that considers two levels: 1) the community level, to establish sustainable relations between youth, leaders, and stakeholders in their communities; and 2) at the youth-led initiative level, to support the youth's ability to design a sustainable initiative.

Finally, during the data collection, many suggestions for future interventions that can be taken into consideration to inform future youth interventions were mentioned. These recommendations can support USAID during the identification of effective youth interventions, which can be supported by local communities, youth-led organizations, and local NGOs.

Youth suggested to include more parents and community members in courses and workshops where these courses can be facilitated or co-facilitated by youth, to provide more opportunities for initiatives that can be led by female youth, to support female entrepreneurs to establish their own business and to develop gender-related advocacy campaigns, raising more awareness regarding the role of females in the labor market. Furthermore, youth also suggested capacity building training on debate skills, delivering more ToT sessions, conducting extra labor market preparedness courses, and focusing on providing more in-kind grant opportunities for youth.

Also, more opportunities for future intervention were mentioned regarding building further partnerships with other organizations, extending the learning clubs to offer more practical subjects that will allow youth to engage more with the labor market, creating a business Incubator that can support entrepreneurs that were engaged in the in-kind grants to sustain their ideas, and improving the sustainability plan with local partners that can support the youth interventions.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Focus interventions on livelihood opportunities and labor market preparedness, and environmental and green solutions.
- Capitalize on YouthPower Learning Clubs, ensuring their sustainability and growth.
- Sustain and grow the VAN to address the priority of policy reforms and removing challenges faced by youth.
- Continue youth-led initiatives that are based on community mapping interventions.
- Provide communities with awareness raising and resources allowing youth with disabilities to access different services, helping the community to accept and include more people with disabilities in different interventions and events.
- Include more joint parent-youth interventions by developing courses and sessions that include both parents and children to increase trust between both parties, enhancing youth self-confidence, and empowering them to positively engage with their communities. The interventions and training courses can be facilitated or co-facilitated by youth to be provided for community members and parents.
- Develop a mapping exercise for existing labor market preparedness interventions and link youth with them. Due to the extensive need and requests for labor market preparedness interventions that were mentioned by youth, parents, GOJ representatives and community members, it is recommended to develop and implement a mapping exercise of all existing interventions in different governorates to link youth with capacity building opportunities to build skills that are in demand in the marketplace. This capacity building helps youth gain access to apprenticeship or internship programs which can then help them in finding a suitable job.

- Establish local partnerships between government agencies, NGOs, community-based organizations and youth. For future activities it is recommended to establish partnerships with other international and local organizations that are in the community where they can adopt YouthPower strategies and interventions. Furthermore, equip local partners with the needed knowledge, skills and resources to support implementing interventions independently, ensuring sustainability and community engagement with the intervention.
- Increase the implementation of female-led interventions. During the data collection, female participants expressed that they would love to lead and advance their leadership skills through receiving more opportunities to lead initiatives, receiving support to become entrepreneurs and to establishing their own businesses and developing gender related advocacy campaigns raising more awareness regarding the role of females in the labor market.
- Utilize social media platforms for more interventions. Social media and online platforms have proven successful in advocating and promoting youth interventions. During the Learning Study it was stated that one of the most successful ways to reach out and engage youth and community members was through using digital platforms such as Facebook pages. Therefore, future activities should utilize those channels to expand their outreach to vulnerable youth and community members by implementing more targeted campaigns and interventions.
- Keep supporting youth with disabilities in facing their specific challenges and increasing community acceptance of disabled youth in interventions. The Activity allowed youth with a disability to bring a companion to help them during the sessions. The Activity also hired translators, made sure training rooms were accessible by youth with disabilities, raised awareness during the interventions around the importance of social inclusion and gave youth with disabilities the chance to participate in various interventions.
- Furthermore, for minority youth, YouthPower conducted awareness raising interventions among youth regarding respecting each other, building relationships among youth in the same community through teamwork interventions and enhanced self-confidence and attitude, all of which gave minority youth a way to overcome some barriers during their participation.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: LEARNING STUDY SCOPE OF WORK

ANNEX 2: LEARNING STUDY INCEPTION REPORT

ANNEX 3: INFORMATION SOURCES

ANNEX 4: DATA COLLECTION TOOLS