

Administrative Reform and Local Development in Jordan

Event: Training Workshop

Date, Place: May 8-9 2012, Balqa Governorate Hall, Balqa, Jordan

KAS Amman Office, Visions Center for Strategic and Development Studies, Ministry of Interior Affairs – Department of Local Development

Tuesday, May 8th, 2012

Welcome Speeches

Dr. Khaled Al Awamleh

Chairman
Visions Center for Strategic and
Development Studies
Amman-Jordan

Dr. Martin Beck

Resident Representative
Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung
Amman Office
Amman-Jordan

HE Dr. Raed Al Adwan

Head Local Development
Department
Ministry of Interior Affairs
Amman-Jordan

HE Mr. Ghaleb Al Zoubi

Minister
Ministry of Interior Affairs
Amman-Jordan

Role of Local Development Department in Supporting Sustainable Development

Dr. Raed Al Edwan

Head of Local Development
Department
Ministry of Interior Affairs
Amman-Jordan

Using Planning and Administrative Reform Indicators in Local Development

HE Mr. Fathi Nsour

Head of General Statistics Department
Amman- Jordan

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

Jordan's Experience in Local Development Initiatives

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Eng. Shahateh Abu Hdeib

Previous Minister
Municipal Affairs
Amman-Jordan

May 8-9, 2012

Role of Media in Local Development

WARREN ALTOUNIAN
MARIA ZANDT

Mr. Bashar Al Huneiti

Journalist
Jordan News Agency
Amman - Jordan

www.kas.de/amman

Wednesday, May 9th, 2012

The Relation Between Local Development and Social Development

HE Mr. Mohammad Khasawneh

General Secretary
Ministry of Social Development
Amman-Jordan

Good Governance and Management of Local Development

Ms. Ahlam El Naser

Consultant and Trainer
Amman- Jordan

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**WARREN ALTOUNIAN
MARIA ZANDT**

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Administrative reform has been a theme of KAS Amman's work throughout Jordan. Building on many strong relationships with trainers, decision makers and activists in Jordan, KAS Amman sought to enrich dialogue in the Balqa Governorate, outside of the capital. As part of a series of decentralization workshops with the Vision Center, KAS Amman supported a two-day governance workshop at the Balqa Governorate Hall in Balqa, Jordan.

Welcome Speeches

***Dr. Khaled Awamleh** opened the conference, stating its objective to identify ways to achieve social change.*

Improving development requires the engagement of citizens and students in particular. To combat weak education, statistical studies must be conducted by a capable educated class.

***Dr. Martin Beck** spoke on the themes of the two-day workshop.*

The promotion of civic participation by local communities and councils will generate reform initiatives in public policy, local development, and decentralization, and their efforts should be recognized. But this is also an opportunity to embrace creative approaches and methods towards political reform. Traditional political structures and the status quo are sometimes a hindrance to political development in Jordan. Through the empowerment of municipalities, adoption of administrative reform and implementation of good governance, the characteristics of the Jordanian political landscape will be a model for the region in years to come.

***HE Dr. Raed Al Adwan** discussed the Ministry of Interior's (MoI) goals for development and security in Jordan.*

The concept of security is in line with regional and international development. Achieving security, which includes social welfare and quality of life, requires the restructuring of government departments.

There is a need for equitable distribution of development gains, inspired by the spirit of citizenship. This can be attained through not only economic development, but cultural and social as well.

Role of Local Development Department in Supporting Sustainable Development

***Dr. Raed Al Edwan** outlined the strategy of the Ministry of Interior: local development, local administration, and security.*

The MoI works on programs financed by the EU and regional and national partners, such as German development agencies that work with different governorates. The Ministry of Interior issues reports on capital expenditure and manuals that determine the needs of citizens. Furthermore, the MoI coordinates with the Department of Statistics to use data to sync information between institutions.

Using Planning and Administrative Reform Indicators in Local Development

***HE Mr. Fathi Nsour** discussed local development indicators and their relation to administration reform.*

Administration is a pillar of reform. It can be measured by economic, health, social, and educational dimensions; many of which are interrelated. Using quantitative and qualitative research methods, the efficacy of reforms or implementation methodology can be improved. The requirements of administrative reform and their impact on these dimensions must be in line with change; otherwise it questions whether intentions of reform are rhetorical words or something capable of being done.

***The discussion session** addressed several issues.*

One participant stated that centralization is a choking point for the country; therefore other governorates should receive focus and funding. Another participant questioned

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whether the proposed reforms are real or just wordplay.

The question of benefits for women was raised: Since Jordan is the only stable country in the region, investors should target governorates like Salt to promote women's involvement.

Jordan's Experience in Local Development Initiatives

Engineer Shahtaeh Abu Hdeib spoke on local development and the role of municipalities.

Jordan lacks decentralization; when good ideas are presented on decentralization, they are rarely implemented. There is a gap between ideas and practice. Most municipalities are not providing the simplest of services, their equipment is outdated, and are unable to generate enough revenue to pay their employees. But municipal councils share the responsibility for this shortfall in development. If Jordan adopted the method of linking private and public sector, as suggested by the Ministry of Interior, the quality of outcomes would increase. In 2007, there were two laws on decentralization and municipalities; but the initiatives fell through and now the country has to start over. Although master plans set out to solve the problem of centralization, the process of implementation is critical to their success.

Role of Media in Local Development

Bashar Al Huneiti discussed the role of media in local development.

The media need specific characteristics of freedom to service the people and constituents in the country. At present, there is a small degree of freedom in Arab communities. Jordan is one of the few countries in the region that has allowed investigative journalism; however, this freedom is dismissed by the scepticism and fear the media has of authoritative bodies. Therefore the media do not direct enough attention to the serious matters of the

country. Media are now focused on sensationalism and impulsive stories of political ongoing without depth or context. The result of this is a lack of trust by the public. As long as the media are not independent and free, they will never have the public's trust.

In the discussion session, the topics were wide-ranging.

One participant asked what could be done to stop haphazard construction projects and unplanned development. A panellist responded, agreeing that if there was a sound plan, projects would be cheaper and more efficient. Another participant said on the role of municipalities, that they are not providing enough services.

A participant commented that some parts of the media act like a marketing body, congratulating the government for everything it does; while other parts of the media focus on the needs of the people. It is important for citizens to feel that journalists are on their side. Another participant criticized the media for not following up on projects, saying that political reform should be complimentary, which includes the media.

The Relation between Local Development and Social Development

HE Mr. Mohammad Khasawaneh's allowed for an open forum to answer questions.

One participant asked whether or not the Ministry of Social Development intends to take a real role in development, instead of simply registering organizations that do development work. Mr. Khasawaneh responded saying that there are 2,500 organizations that require oversight; the Ministry provides forums on training, bookkeeping, and advising. If there are organizations that are ineffective and waste money, then there are procedures to dissolve organizations that do not attain their goals.

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One participant said there is fear of implementing foreign agendas by using outside help, citing the example of the row between the Egyptian government and many foreign NGOs in the country. Ms. Ahlam Al Nasser refuted the assertion, saying that foreign funding was only 17% for social programs in 2011, and that exaggerating the situation is not helpful.

successful change will be difficult to attain. The two-day workshop was a successful forum for the presenters and participants to discuss issues that the Balqa Governorate faces, along with the whole of Jordan. KAS Amman will continue its effort enabling dialogue between citizens, activists, and decision makers.

One participant questioned the reports of abuse by charity organizations. Mr. Khasawaneh responded, affirming that there are cases of violations, but when they are discovered, aid is suspended. He went on to say that many foreign organizations support the capacity of the country.

Good Governance and Management of Local Development

Ahlam Al Nasser began by asking a series of questions about what problems the country faced.

She concluded the brief session, stating that the issues raised by participants are all related to the human element. Individuals are responsible for the implementation or failure of good governance and development. When Jordan has an effective civil society, it can achieve good governance; a ground up approach must be adopted.

Nepotism and "wasta" (the Arabic word for having influence) are still major problems, and affect the Kingdom negatively. Fairness is about applying the law to all. Standards of good governance must be across the spectrum. Every governorate should consider its interconnectivity by setting performance indicators according to their capacity. This potential should be reflected in the budget and enforced by good leadership.

Conclusion

Many problems that Jordan faces in its reform process are recurring. Without addressing issues of freedom of press, nepotism, corruption, and planning,