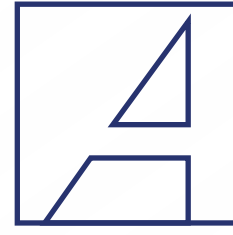




Equality Center For Civil Society Development



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Stiftung

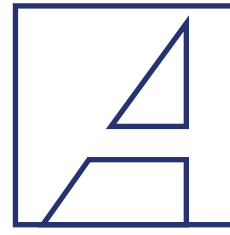
The Economic Empowerment of the Youth in the Light of the Syrian Refugee Influx



Amman 2015



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Preface

Jordan finds itself today in a situation that can be least described as an economic crisis. The situation of the Jordanian youth in particular is extraordinarily alarming, with unemployment rates jumping up to 30%. The issue boils down to several reasons, with the system of Jordan's education institutions and their mismatch with the labor market assuming a significant source of blame. The threat to education is further compounded by the negative perceptions that people have about vocations. Young Jordanians thrive for the careers of engineers, or doctors, for example, in pursuance of self-esteem in the society. In doing so, they often disregard what lies in their best interests and are headless of rational analyses, which show the reality of supply and demand in the labor market.

The limited Jordanian labor market is further strained by the Syrian refugee crisis. The influxes of often highly qualified individuals, who are willing to work for low wages, due to their critical situation often involving the absence of work permits, not only make the labor market more competitive but also heavily push the average wage downward.

The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Jordan Office believes that the Jordanian youth must be economically empowered to firstly attain higher standards of living and to secondly help the economy grow sustainably. To that end, experts have been gathered from different segments of the society to discuss possible contributions by the sectors in order to face this reality and offer solutions. The experts represented localities, the media, the private sector and the education sector and shared their input. Each representative proposed possible solutions to the pressing issue in a bid to pave the way to successful economic empowerment of Jordan's youth in the future.

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung is a political foundation promoting democracy, rule of the law and social market economy. It partners with other civil organizations, including Musawah Center for Civil Society Development.

I wish you an insightful reading and look forward to further interesting and fruitful discussions.

Dr. Otmar Oehring

Resident Representative

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Jordan Office

Introduction

Hope and ambition are dependent on will and determination. They are the main drivers of achievement and progress of societies. The youth are the main players for the present and future, for which reason this group has been at the center of our programs at Musawah Center for Civil Society Development. We believe that total development can happen if qualified and trained human resources are used in the process.

By putting in perspective networking and partnership with all different sectors to achieve the desired goals, this book “The Economic Empowerment in the Light of the Syrian Refugee Issue” was published in collaboration and partnership with Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Jordan Office to create a complementary relationship between all sectors in order to reflect their outputs on local communities and ensure collaboration and networking among various institutions, international or local, in order to achieve mutual goals. This significant book serves as a reference of recommendations, outputs and mechanisms that largely contribute to building partnerships among all sectors to implement economic programs. The ultimate aim of such programs should be to economically empower the youth and to encourage collective involvement in the achievements of their goals and development of their plans.

In this respect, the Equality Center for Civil Society Development would like to extend its sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Jordan Office for its support and collaboration that made this book possible. I would also like to thank all of the collaborators and participants from all sectors.

Suleiman Ali Al Khawaldeh

Director of Mossawah Center for Civil Society Development

Municipalities and their Desired Roles in Creating Economic Opportunities for the Youth

Dr. Hazim Qashou'

MP of the 17th Parliament

Former Minister of Municipal Affairs

The municipalities have normally been working under constraints of limited financial resources and capabilities coupled with administrative weakness that affected their role and weakened their services. They, nevertheless, have no other option but to overcome all of these obstacles in order to function and successfully play their desired roles in services and development. To that end, it is necessary to develop a new municipalities law based on local councils and decentralization.

Decentralization around the world has enabled advanced states to move from welfare to citizenship societies, which helped in the achievement of important social and political developments. Those societies have managed to improve their abilities by building off the potential of their populations. Gradually, yet, steadily, they moved towards the model of civil society and democracy, reaping the blessings of security and stability, two essential bricks for building a healthy society., which effectively engages all people throughout the process. We all hope that our Jordanian society, by following the insightful foundations laid down by His Majesty the King, to realize decentralization, in order to make Jordan an example that reflects the level of cultural, social and civil development that the people have attained.

The current living conditions in Jordan and the economic impact of the changes that affected the global markets require developing modern policies. Advanced methods are needed to cut off the burden on Jordanians and help them adapt to the current global economy changes. Such policies should help figuring out the suitable developmental frameworks that attend to territorial topography of the administrative divisions in a manner that bridges the gaps in the current developmental reality. This requires a careful analysis of the needs, requirements and capabilities and ensuring participation and mutual responsibility.

They should also enhance the pace of national development based on the policy of accumulative achievements and ensuring the full-range participation of the population in development decisions. They would also foster democracy through the objective performance of duties, in light of a variety of programs that would ensure the Jordanians' active participation in building a Jordanian model of democracy, citizenship, and good governance. The Jordanian society is capable of participating effectively in this process, thanks to a prevailing spirit of responsibility regarding its choices and priorities, particularly in terms of developmental services.

Investment in the work of the municipalities and shifting their orientation from service delivery to development would help alleviate the problems facing Jordanian citizens in their daily lives. It will equally help them face the difficult economic conditions including rising prices. This will help the citizens by adopting such means that would support those in need, and provide for the basic necessities and services through investing in all sectors depending of which sector needs most attention. This effort must be guided by developing comprehensive plans that account for the various development areas, and the frameworks and means of investment processes based on objective methodologies. The bearings will be fruitful for the Jordanian and the local communities, as those would benefit from the development gains. Needless to say, the systematic reform efforts aiming to achieve sustainable and comprehensive development need to move towards modernity in terms of development. This requires improving the local administration reform hypotheses in order to take a step towards local governance through improving the development work, using a participatory approach that does not alienate anybody from the process. This would in turn unfold into practical solutions to address the challenges facing the country and Jordanians alike. Thus, the local form of governance, which is based on the traditional practice of authority, must be replaced by a participatory sort of governance that adopts constructive interaction in order to encourage creativity that protects national achievements and realizes development and modernization in the various sectors and regions.

The developmental work of the municipalities is expected to depend on studies, comprehensive surveys, investments and the provision of plans and special programs. If they are wisely developed, those programs would make it easier to undertake developmental efforts in all aspects. Such efforts are expected to contribute to eradicating poverty and reducing unemployment through development, which should by no means ignore the available capabilities

or the necessity to invest in the potentials of the youth. The development-oriented municipalities work towards investing resources and capabilities in order to improve overall standards of living and increase public participation in development decision-making. They will also help to move the local community's potentials from the theory into applicable tools in all administrative frameworks, which enhance the sense of loyalty to the country while finding the best way to strengthen the development reform model in the region.

Moving municipal work towards the developmental phase is an essential step to modifying our economic and social perspectives. This vision gains momentum by adhering to transparency and participation, since it endeavors to enhance the sense of nationalism within developmental frameworks in the municipalities. It also fosters national identity and demonstrates the goals we are seeking to achieve through reform and modernization. These are important factors that would make it possible to take major strides in creating a participatory atmosphere, based on the belief that it is the national approach through which we are seeking to take our position among the countries that have the strength to lead and realize all-encompassing changes and reforms. This will reflect positively on all the Jordanians. It will also influence all national initiatives that contribute to improving the Jordanian model of a better life for its citizens. It will also bring out to the world a new development example built on the principles of development and enlightenment, and involvement of qualified Jordanians in the developmental efforts. This is evident in the objectives that the municipalities are trying to realize.

Those objectives are increasing the participation of Jordanians, fostering national identity, limiting migration from the governorates to the capital, and launching developmental projects in the governorates in a manner that would allow for the utilization of all available capabilities and resources. They also aim to ensure the direct participation of Jordanians in the development process in a democratic and responsible manner, and make better choices of the development projects that best respond to the needs of each area and the nature of the project. The development team will also need to assume the vital role of the responsible party of the project. This will eventually lead to enhancing decentralized administrative reforms. This project will also need to work on merging the demographic constituents within the new administrative geographic divisions, which will naturally enhance the principle of responsible citizenship within the developmental framework of the municipalities. The project will also give rise to development-based programs and initiatives

that will replace ideological theories by reform programs, which are not only more beneficial also more realistic.

The vision and objectives of the development-oriented municipalities program require necessary tools to create the suitable setting and circumstances that will eventually lead to the achievements of the goals and the development of a new municipalities law based on decentralization and local councils. The following issues should be taken into account:

- First** : Merge the administrative borders of the governorate with the development borders of the municipality.
- Second** : Complete the comprehensive plans necessary to demonstrate the convenient development framework.
- Third** : Create the necessary investment incentives to build a meaningful partnership between the private sector and the municipality.
- Fourth** : Engage professional associations and sports clubs as part of the developmental decision-making process.
- Fifth** : Ensure investment of the governorate fund through the development municipalities
- Sixth** : Adopt renewable energy and recycling projects as basic elements in the development process of the developmental municipality and facilitate these projects.
- Seventh**: Ensure the youth participation in the decision-making process in the early stages of improving the municipality's development work, in order to arrive at new ideas that help enhance its functionality.
- Eighth** : Develop an administrative structure and job descriptions for the positions in the development municipalities, taking into consideration services, the development phase, and local community outreach.
- Ninth** : Demonstrate the nature of the municipality as development-oriented and enhance this role on the national, cultural, and civilization levels, in addition to the production, service, and development aspects.
- Tenth** : Raise by 10% subsidies accruing from oil sales to municipal councils.

It might be useful to work on improving the municipalities law, so that it keeps pace with decentralization and allows for better service delivery, especially in terms of

infrastructure, which is a pressing necessity that requires creating space for effective private sector participation within the municipalities. This will help to ensure significant improvements and a real development in all governorates.

Due consideration should be given to the governorates to expand the production base in the Kingdom in general. They are the actual catalysts of development due to their ability to increase people's participation and productivity through creating production projects in cooperation with the relevant institutions. This which would, in effect, gear the potential of human resources, especially those of the youth, to the service of the country.

If a municipality plays a vital role in developing the new decentralization model, it will surely come up with a number of positive input necessary to present the new framework to the local community. Envisaged roles include, but are not limited to:

1. Developing productive investment projects to create jobs and enhance the national economy by adopting policies to promote private sector investments. This will help to develop the local community and localize the projects that provide services for the development area.
2. Developing strategic investment projects, especially in relation to recycling, which would ensure financial support for the municipalities and create job opportunities for the youth .
3. Determining the scope of work and administrative structures of the municipalities in order to create an atmosphere that would harbor functional municipalities.

The local community has also to work towards improving the relations with and among the youth, and directing their potentials towards productive projects at the localities and community levels.

The municipalities are faced by several obstacles that should be taken into consideration upon embarking on the decentralization project.

While some of the challenges are subjective, others are objective and should be resolved, such as:

1. Debt in the municipalities
2. Inflated labor rates in the municipalities

3. Carrying out the comprehensive plans

Some of the subjective challenges are:

- 1.** The forced migration of the Syrians, which created considerable burdens on some municipalities, especially Mafraq, Irbid, and Zarqa.
- 2.** Limited logistic resources, such as machinery and vehicles or other items necessary for development.
- 3.** The lack of investment projects that would increase the resources of the municipalities.

Therefore, the municipalities would be able within the framework of the new decentralization project to create productive investments that create job opportunities for the youth. This project would also be a landmark of a new stage in the quality of the municipal work in terms of increasing production and enhancing human resources as the main pillar of development.

The Role of the Media in Enhancing and Marketing Youth Economic Opportunities

HE Dr. Nabeel Al Shareef

CEO of Imdad Media Center

Former Minister of State for Media Affairs

The new status of the media emerged after the launch of the internet and its development within the American military circles in 1985, although the US Secretary of Defense started to think about it in the early sixties of the twentieth century.

The internet created a comprehensive revolution in the basic concepts of media and radically reshaped the principles on which media work is founded.

The media outlets have witnessed huge changes and transformations in recent years. The traditional definition of media as the existence of a message, a sender, and a receiver has become obsolete, since the receiver has become a sender at the same time, and the passive reception of news has transformed into a space of positive interaction.

One setback of the communication proliferation was a threatened professionalism in the media. Laypeople are increasingly taking up the tasks of a typical journalist or reporter leading to the rise of the so called “citizen journalist” or “citizen journalism”. Any person has the ability to send reports and share news and pictures on social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Wikipedia, and other platforms, made accessible thanks to the mobile phone technology. WikiLeaks also revolutionized the concept of information and document secrecy.

Any person has the ability these days to confer with large numbers of people and send them messages around the globe, and express their opinions and ideas on blogs and news sites.

This has prompted the traditional media to depend on “citizen journalists” to get first-hand news, especially in times of crises or in conflict zones. It is not uncommon at all anymore for a reputable newspaper such as the New York Times to depend on information provided by normal citizens or on the writings of some bloggers when writing its reports.

It goes without saying that media in recent years has become so influential to the degree that battles are being fought and won through social media. The new media has the following

distinctive features:

1. Instant accessibility: the ability to share and receive information instantaneously
2. Interactivity: the ability of the new media to interact with the user in a direct conversation.
3. Degamassification: This means that the message can be directed to a selected person or group, instead of sending it to masses of receivers as the case was in the past. This implies an advanced degree of manipulation in the communication system, where messages are transferred directly from the creator to the receiver.

Before discussing the role of the media, it is important to shed some light on the concept of economic empowerment.

Empowerment is a common term widely used in different areas and aspects, chosen by the UN as a basic concept in its development philosophy and adopted in the 1970s. Empowerment is used in various sciences and disciplines, such as economy, development studies, psychology, education, management, and communication.

Empowering the youth means adapting the economic, social, political, and cultural condition in the society in order to enhance the capabilities of the youth and empower them to achieve their full potentials. Empowerment also entails raising awareness among the youth of such conditions and their rights, in addition to improving their sense of ownership, leadership, and interest in developmental work related to the youth and society, in a manner that makes it more convenient and beneficial to the needs of the youth.

There are several circumstances that helped in framing empowerment as a significant issue. The following are some of the dimensions related to this concept:

Multi-dimensional social process: Empowerment is achieved on the political, economic, and social levels, and is not restricted to one level as such. It also depends on a process at the individual and social levels. Since it presupposes the empowering of the individual, it will eventually lead to an empowered society.

Change-oriented process: It aims at strengthening individuals with the assumption that this could be achieved through acquiring information related to them and the environment in which they live. It also tries to work with individuals and organizations in order to bring about the required change in the society.

Interactive: It is the result of interaction among individuals, which leads to social change. It aims at enabling individuals to realize change at the institutions that play a role in their lives and societies.

Developmental: It is a process that aims at increasing individuals' awareness of their potentials and encouraging them to develop such potentials so that they can be involved in the development process.

Based on those features, empowerment could be defined as a “social activity that aims at encouraging individuals, institutions, and societies to increase their control over their circumstances, improve their standards of living, and realize social justice.”

Another broader definition suggests that empowerment is a “multi-dimensional social process that helps people to be in control of their own lives. It is a power building process used by people in their own lives and in their communities.”

It is also defined as “a process of challenging our assumptions regarding the current situation and how it should be.”

Jordan is a youthful society, since people under the age 30 make up above 64% of the population. His Majesty the King has constantly stressed the importance of involving the youth in all aspects of life, believing in their indispensable role in the development and modernization process as “chevaliers of change” and key players in realizing the goals of the nation.

However, a quick glance on the situation of the youth in Jordan reveals the degree of frustration they feel. This is not surprising since unemployment rates have hit 17% among graduates and 30% among those in the age group 20-24.

More than 75,000 graduates seek jobs in a small economy that could create no more than 55,000 job opportunities annually. This is further complicated by the waves of migration from neighboring countries who start competing with Jordanians in the labor market, especially in the informal market. Young Jordanians generally do not prefer out-of-office careers, due to the weakness in professional training in Jordan, in addition to the negative attitude towards such work in the society, especially since the media outlets have failed to counter such stereotypes deeply rooted in the society.

The absence of policies on youth economic empowerment results in increasing unemployment and poverty rates, which leads to further economic and security challenges.

It is natural to believe in the importance of physical and human resources when building the society economically, politically, and socially, but it is the human resources that make the difference, since their absence makes it impossible to discover the physical resources and their utilization in the process of social, economic, and political development.

Human resources are needed to use natural and physical resources for the well-being of society. The effectiveness of employing such resources depends on how healthy, educated, and trained the human resources are in any given society. Human resources are the way to launch the other social, economic and political elements in society.

Poorly-trained and inactive human resources contribute to obstructing the development efforts in the society due to the burden they create. The natural and physical resources cease to be effective and useful as long as the human resources are weak and unprepared in terms of knowledge training on how to run these resources. This is best explained by comparing the situation with those in some countries which are not endowed with significant natural resources, such as Japan, Germany, Netherlands, and Norway, but enjoy qualified human resources. These countries dedicated much efforts and funds to train and educate the young population so that they become effective elements of full-scale development in their countries.

Empowering the youth is an economic imperative, since comprehensive development requires highly trained and qualified human resources acquainted with the principles of work and production and equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary in the modern work environment that is based on science and technology.

The problems of the youth are those of the society. Thus, empowering the youth is achieved through empowering the society at large. The limited participation of the youth in the development process is merely a symptom of the problem. The problem lies in the lack of development in the political institutions and the fragility of the decision-making bodies and the rule of law in the society. It is the absence of good governance in terms of authority, political practice, and decision-making processes.

Discussing the role of media in enhancing the economic empowerment of youth requires understanding the changes in the world of the media.

It is well known that there is a gap between the youth and the traditional media, and the number of young men and women reading print newspapers or following mainstream media has dropped significantly. On the other hand, increasing numbers of youth are keen on using social media such as Facebook and Twitter, receiving their information from there, in addition to following private radio networks and websites.

Realizing these changes in the nature of the receiver of media messages is necessary when talking about sending messages to the youth. There is no point of launching a program through the traditional official newspaper or on television while the youth are not interested in such news media outlets anymore. It is more sensible to suggest new ways of addressing the youth through the new media tools they are using.

Here are some guidelines on media messages to be highlighted when considering the role of media in enhancing youth economic empowerment:

1. Contributing to overcoming the difficulties faced by the youth in their job search.

This is a major issue. In addition to the limited job opportunities, the youth are not adequately qualified by the universities to participate effectively in the labor market. Our universities fail to prepare the students for the labor market. The concentration is on knowledge and information, without providing the students with any soft skills such as social communication, writing resumes, preparing for job interviews, to mention a few. Many young graduates lose excellent job opportunities due to their lack of such skills. Therefore, it is vital to bridge the gap between the universities and the labor market. It is recommended that students spend their last year of education as interns in the public and private sectors in order to acquire the necessary hands-on experience and skills so that they would absorb the shock created by the unabridged gap between world academy and the labor market.

The media could significantly help in reducing the difficulties that hinder the youth's participation in the labor market and empowering them economically.

2. Re-establishing the standing of vocational education.

One of the bottlenecks in the educational realm is the exaggerated focus on knowledge-based

education or theoretical knowledge instruction at the expense of vocational training.

For the sake of comparison, 70% of German students choose vocations and the rest opt for knowledge-based learning, which is the opposite in Jordan, where most students opt for academic specializations, even if not on demand in the market.

Undoubtedly, one of the reasons behind avoiding vocational education is the negative attitude towards the output of this model of education, despite the fact that our values and heritage recognize the importance of work, where work in our tradition is a form of worship and our values demand paying the workers immediately for their work. The youth nonetheless are influenced by such social attitudes that esteem professions in medicine or engineering without recognizing the importance and value of professionals working in carpentry or blacksmithing, for example. Some families go to great lengths by borrowing to send their children abroad to get degrees irrespective of the children's desires or the labor market's needs.

The media outlets could help to change this situation by demonstrating the usefulness of vocational training for the youths respectable source of income. The media should stress this kind of training is indispensable for society, and the jobs that are filled today by hundreds of thousands of foreign workers could be filled by young Jordanians who are waiting on the Civil Service Bureau's rosters.

Some countries like Japan, Singapore, and South Korea completely rely on the youth to work in the different vocations required by the labor market, while our youth choose specializations that are not on demand. So many jobs are available in the market, but they are filled by expats from different countries, most recently including Syrians.

Some people claim that the culture of "stigma" has faded away from our society, but the contrary is true. The limited number of young Jordanians working in gas stations does not mean that this culture has been eradicated, and it is incumbent upon us to recognize this problem and take the necessary steps to resolve it. No work can be stigmatized, and the only thing that is shameful is beggary.

It is mandatory to change the perspectives in relation to vocational training. While this is not enough to eradicate poverty and unemployment, it is absolutely important as a necessary step to find a solution and empower the young generation economically. In this respect, the media can

play a pivotal role.

3.The media could also contribute to the economic empowerment of the youth by asserting the concepts of entrepreneurship, creativity, and taking calculated risks in small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) instead of waiting endlessly for their dream job.

Many people dread attempting new experiences in launching a new enterprise, and it is better for others to hold on to a secure job and a fixed pay roll, but in fact small businesses could be a beginning of a successful financial and social life.

The media should vigorously clarify the benefits of youth launching small enterprises and highlight the issues of independence and the possibility of making a profit that exceeds fixed salaries.

Media outlets also bear the responsibility of discussing the success small enterprises and the issues that should be taken into account before any start-up, in addition to introducing the youth to the institutions and organizations that provide funding or loans for the projects to enable them to realize their dreams.

It is also important to share success stories of young men and women who decided to start their own independent professional enterprises and achieved success. Sharing these stories encourages the youth to overcome their fears and to take new chances in new enterprises, which would have a positive impact on the economic empowerment of the youth.

The rates of unemployment among the youth are alarming and have been increasing in recent months due to the number of Syrian refugees in Jordan. The Syrian refugees are competing with the young Jordanians to secure the limited job opportunities available,. They have managed to secure many of these jobs due to the unfortunate circumstances they are going through, as they are willing to work for wages lower than a Jordanian would normally ask for.

The media outlets do not have the means to solve all these problems, but they can contribute significantly to acquainting the youth with the available opportunities in the market and changing the negative attitudes that hinder youth empowerment.

The Role of the Private Sector in Enhancing Competitiveness among the Youth

Dr. Khalid Al-Wazani

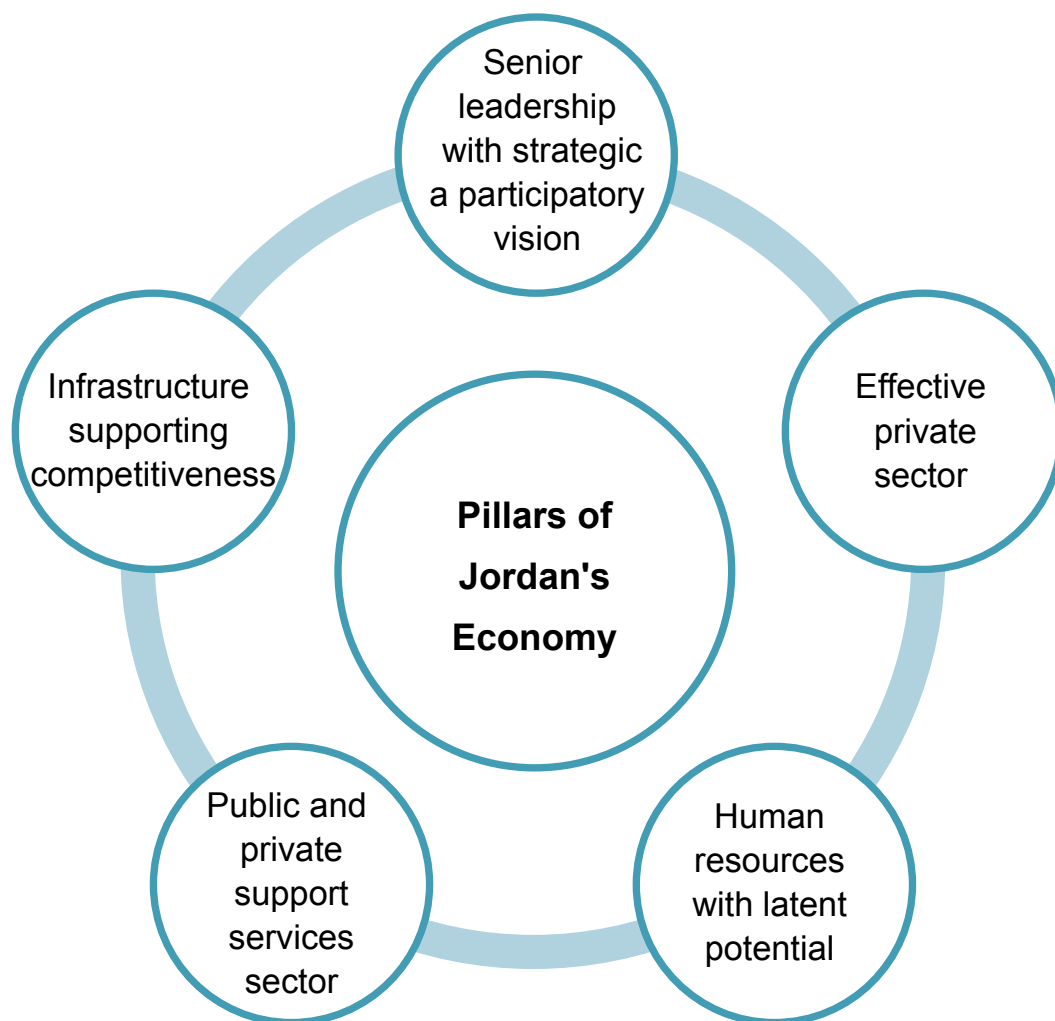
Chief Economist/Strategist-IssnaadConsulting

Jordan's Economy: Overview

The economy of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is known to be a small, open and mixed, facing certain economic, demographic and geographic constraints. It is a small country with a small population compared to those of neighboring countries, namely Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Syria.

A small economy is considered as a price taker in foreign trade, since it is a small market dealing with externally-determined prices in all of the commercial trades with other countries, including its main exports, such as phosphate and potassium. It is also a mixed economy in the sense of the private sector's contribution to the economic structure of the Kingdom since its establishment.

The private sector is represented by local, regional, and international companies, and they have had a significant role in the country since its creation in the 1920's. The following figure clearly shows the basic pillars of the Jordanian economy.



The basic catalyst of these pillars is the clear participatory vision of the country's top leadership. It has been stressed by His Majesty King Abdullah II in his speech from the throne and in his letter of designation to prime ministers, in addition to the five discussion papers by His Majesty King Abdullah. The latest of these papers was issued in September 2014, in which he reiterated the importance of adopting the principles of transparency, good governance and working effectively with the private sector and civil society institutions. The second is the important role of the private sector in Jordan, which comprises more than 58% of the national economy, whereas the public sector comprises almost 42%. This percentage is not congruent with the economic perspective of Jordan, since it endeavors to be a free market that guarantees the free movement of capital and individuals.

It is the only economy in the region that ensures increased levels of freedom in terms of capital mobility and balanced mobility conditions of labor. In this context, the importance of the predominantly young human resources is obvious, since more than 50% of the population is

younger than 20, and the people under 15 comprise 38% of the population.

The public and private service sector is a basic constituent of the national economy's structure, since it accounts for more than two thirds of the GDP in Jordan. The economy is supported by an advanced basic infrastructure, where electricity reaches almost 99.9% of households and 96% of all houses have access to water, while 100% of the main roads are paved. Moreover, the super structure in Jordan is quite advanced compared with those of other countries in the region and countries of similar economic conditions in the world, especially in terms of education.

The levels of literacy are among the best in the region and are above international rates for countries with the same income levels. The levels of technological connectivity are also high, reaching almost 60%, and the online communication among Jordanian families reaches almost 50%, which are among the highest rates in the region and in other counties with the same income levels as Jordan.

The main challenge facing Jordan though relates to the development of human resources and engaging the youth in the economic dynamics of the country. It is clear that Jordan is among those countries that suffer from unemployment among the youth, especially in the age group 20-24, where unemployment among this age bracket in Jordan reached 30% in 2014. However, this ratio is less than 27% in other countries in the region, and it is no more than 12.6% worldwide.

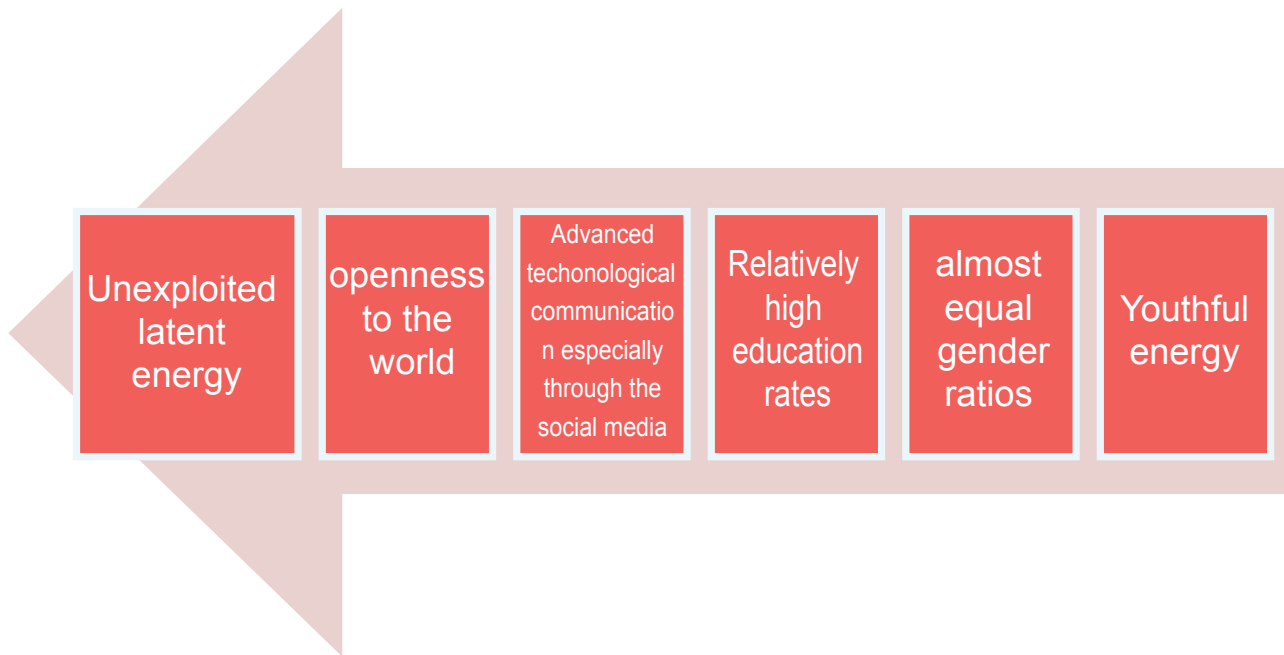
Table (1): Some economic and social indicators of development in Jordan

Indicator	Recent figures (2012-2013)
Population growth (%)	2.2
Distribution of population in the governorates	Amman 38.7, Irbid 17.8, Zarqa 14.9
Population under the age of 15 (%)	37.3
Population between 15 and 64 (%)	59.5
Average family size	5.4
Literacy rates for people aged 15 and above(%)	6.7
Households connected to electricity (%)	99.9
Households owning a computer or a laptop (%)	57.5
Households connected to the internet (%)	47.3
Households owning mobile/smart phones (%)	98.2
Households owning a television (%)	98.9

Table (2) some comparative economic and social indicators:

Indicator	2012-2013 Figures
GDP (billion JOD)	25.5 (growth rate 3%)
Population	7.5 million
Life expectancy at birth	
Males	71.6 years
Females	74.4 years
Illiteracy rates among people over 15	
Males	3.7% (compared to 15% in the region, and 4% in similar countries)
Females	10.1% (compared to 30% in the region and 9% in similar countries)
Unemployment rates in 2014	
Males	11.4%
Females	10.5%
Unemployment among youth 20-24	22%
Jordan	30%
MENA	26%
Worldwide	12.7%
Population in urban areas	
Jordan	83%
MENA	60%
Countries of similar GDP	61%

The following figure illustrates some facts about Jordanian youth:



The evidence indicates significant youthful energy for the age group below 24 who comprise more than 50% of the population with almost equal distribution between males and females. The figures also indicate high levels of education compared to those of other countries in the region and other countries of a similar GDP, where the percentage of educated people exceeds 93% of the youth in the Kingdom. The youth also depend on the social media, such as Facebook and Twitter. They enjoy full access to the world, since Jordan is among the top countries in terms of cyber freedom in the region. Nevertheless, the basic obstacle facing young men and women is the fact that their potentials are not exploited, given the high unemployment rates among the youth in Jordan, as indicated earlier.

Relevant statistics on women's participation in the Jordanian labor market reveal percentages lower than in other countries in the region and the world. The percentage of women's participation according to latest statistics in 2013 stood at 13.2%. It is the lowest in the region and in other countries of similar GDP, where the participation of women in the labor market is threefold of Jordan's, and in other MENA countries the rates are double those of Jordan, despite the fact that the education levels among women are the highest in the region compared with those in other countries of similar GDPs. For instance, in terms of university education, female students constitute over 51% of the students enrolled in Jordanian universities, the percentage getting higher to around 60% in universities such as Mu'tah University and the Hashemite University.

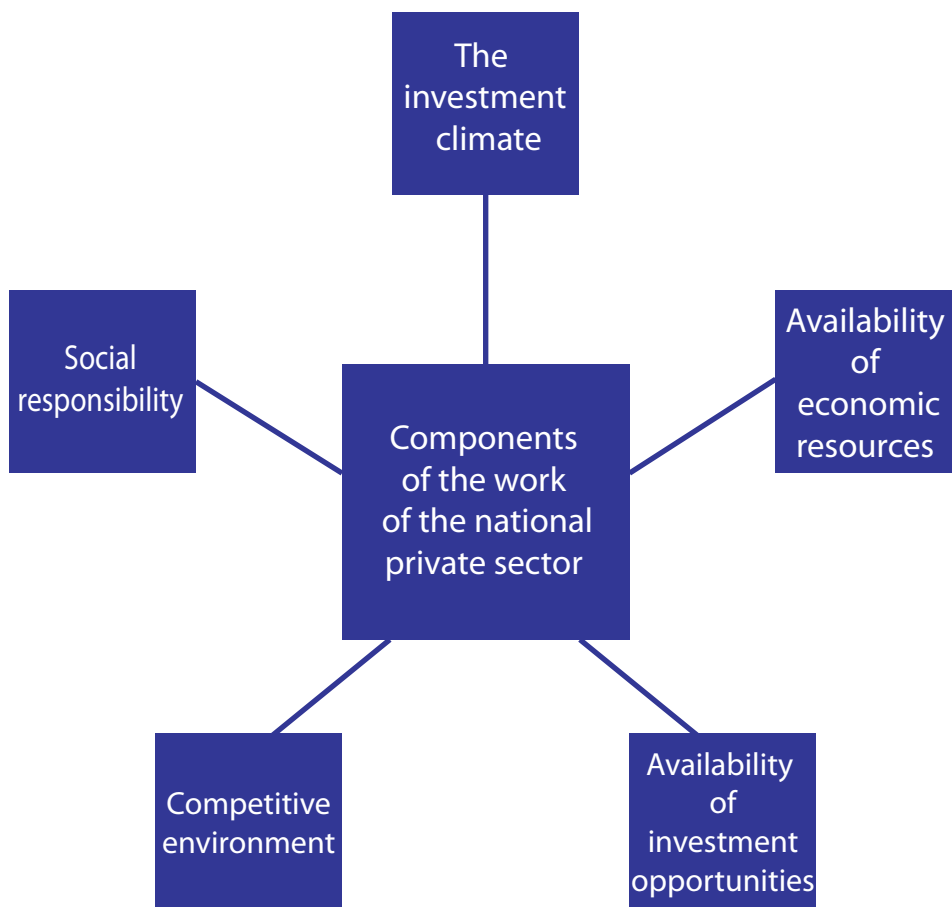
There are five significant challenges the Jordanian economy is currently facing. The first is financial after the public debt exceeded 85% of the GDP in 2014, and the public deficit in the government reached JD2.5 billion, accounting for almost 11% of the country's GDP. The second challenge relates to structural unemployment, concentrated heavily on the youth aged between 20 and 24 as explained earlier. The third relates to the investment sector due to the lack of a unified reference point for investment in the Kingdom and the decline in its international competitiveness reports status since 2008. The available figures indicate that the Syrian refugee crisis and the pressure it puts on the national economy, the infrastructure, and the labor market, is significant and has adversely affected the different social and economic aspects in Jordan.

The last main challenge is the distribution of the development allocations among the governorates and the utilization of the national economy's potential capabilities. It is important to note that dealing with such challenges requires full-scale engagement with the private sector and activating its role in enhancing the national economy in order to improve the revenues and create over 100,000 job opportunities annually. This would also enable the Kingdom to increase the scope of investments and to achieve balanced development in all governorates through investments; especially in SMEs, even micro enterprises. The following part outlines the role of the private sector in Jordan.

The Role of the Private Sector: The Realities and Potential

As Jordan is classified as a small mixed economy, it could be said that it operates with two wings, the private and the public sector. It is important for both wings to remain healthy in order for the economy to take off smoothly and the economic situation to remain stable to achieve the development goals in the Kingdom. The private sector in Jordan works with the public sector in terms of providing basic services in the national economy, especially in the areas of education, health, transportation, financial services, and tourism, in addition to areas related to security and protection. Industrial production is controlled solely by the private sector and it employs over 250,000 people, most of whom are Jordanians. In the agricultural sector, the private enterprises are the main players as well. Accordingly, the economic trends and undertaking national development projects require real cooperation between the public and private sectors. They should jointly draw up their strategic visions that strike a balance between the two sectors, with the government and

the private sector playing the regulatory and executive roles, respectively. The following figure shows the basic requirements that allow the private sector to undertake its responsibilities in a balanced manner within national economy.



The Private Sector and the Youth: Roles and Challenges

The investment climate builds off legislative stability and infrastructure, both needed to smooth out the work of the private sector. The next essential element for the success of the private sector is resources, including qualified and well-trained manpower. Next comes investment, which is needed because it gives the private sector an incentive to work in the various governorates, but this requires every single governorate to have a competitive environment and to work on getting its unique competitive edge.

There is no need to stress how the private sector's institutions are allocating some of their resources to social responsibility projects and developmental initiatives in all governorates. However, it is also a fact that such endeavors can only succeed if the two sectors diligently cooperate with each other. They need to agree on their mutual priorities and decide where the

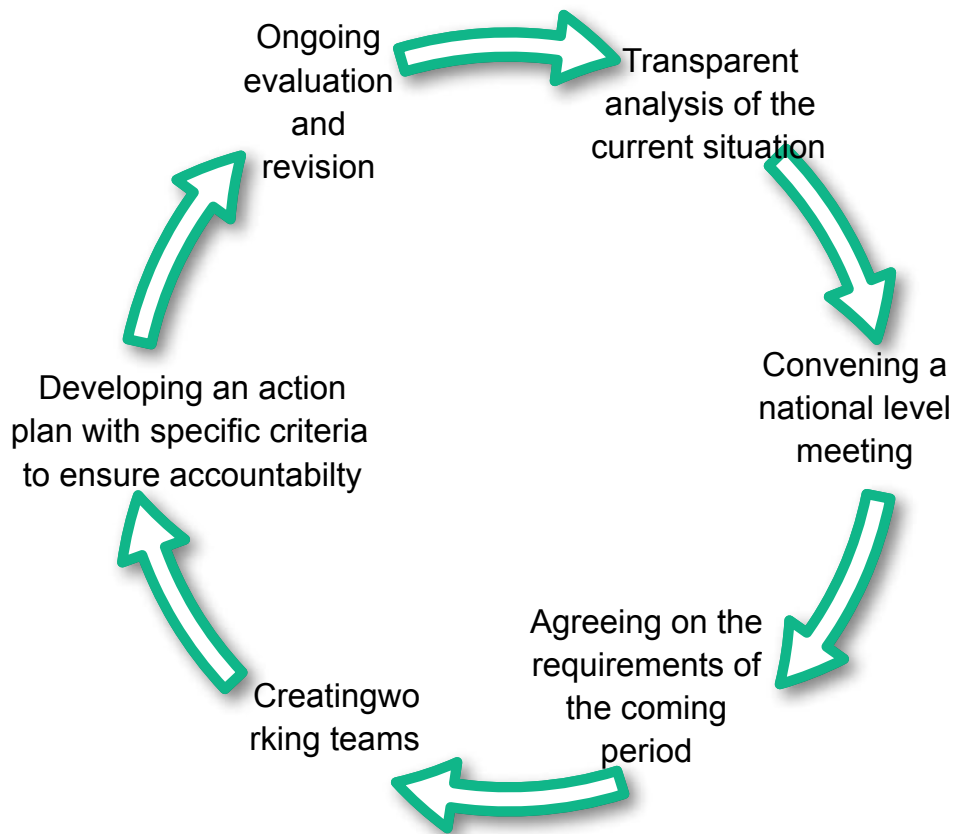
money should be spent to answer the developmental needs of each governorate.

The private sector plays a major role in the economic security of the Kingdom due to its contribution to food security, which it provides locally through industrial and agricultural economic activities or through product imports, accounting for almost 86% of the Kingdom's need of food.

The private sector also contributes to the fields of education, security, and health, through various investments in the education and health sectors. In terms of job opportunities, the private sector employs over 60% of manpower in Jordan, which will serve as a benchmark for the country to create the required 100,000 job opportunities every year.

The private sector contributes to the security and welfare of the society through the various social responsibility projects, in addition to investments in the service, trade, and industrial sectors in all the governorates of the Kingdom.

The following figure illustrates the work cycle necessary to develop a work plan and come up with a basic understanding of human resource competitiveness in Jordan and integrating the youth in the national economy. Several interrelated procedures are needed, including analyzing the status of the youth transparently and determining the strengths and weaknesses. A meeting on the national level should follow bringing together representatives of the public and private sectors to agree on the priorities and requirements for the empowerment of young men and women. Such a meeting must break out into several working teams, each addressing specific requirements, working policies, plans and performance criteria that assist throughout the monitoring and evaluation process. In the process, post-action reviews are a must to address any shortcoming or areas that need adjustment. The following figure illustrates this process:



However, there are still several challenges to the private sector's ability to assume its role:

- The instability in the region, especially the crises in Syria and Iraq
- The crisis of the Syrian refugees and its impacts on the Jordanian labor market
- Weak partnership between the public and private sectors
- Weak interaction with the youth and civil society organizations working on youth issues
- Lack of real interaction and dialogue with the education institutions on all levels

Those challenges weaken any space given to the private sector to support the youth and integrate them in the national economy. It is important to note that the deteriorating regional situation and the influxes of the Syrian refugees to Jordan are out of direct control. Yet, there are other aspects that require serious local efforts by the government and the public sector in order to help the private sector and facilitate its role in supporting the youth in the national economy.

Concluding Remarks

A number of points need to be highlighted and require the attention of decision makers in both the public and private sectors. These will help to determine the real requirements of integrating Jordan's youth in the national economy and improving competitiveness in the labor market, if adequate and suitable

training and skills are provided.

- The Higher Council for Human Resource Development (HCHRD) must have an active role in the strategic planning and competitiveness improvement process. It is expected to play a major role in training the youth and integrating them in the national economy.

HCHRD should be mandated to supervise relevant activities by all parties concerned with vocational training, education and higher education institutions, the Higher Council for the Youth, the Ministry of Labor, civil society organizations working with the youth, and the Jordan Investment Board. The reason is that those entities are responsible for planning for the current and future needs of employees, in light of the overall competitiveness indicators in Jordan's national economy.

- Jordan's economy has a traditional trend of relying on a mixed system, which is based on partnership between the public and private sectors, and which aims at the maximum utilization of human resources, especially young men and women.
- Real partnerships between the two sectors are the ideal way to determine the competitiveness of the national economy and the scope of utilizing human resources.
- The partnership between the public and private sectors remains weak despite the fact that it is indispensable for the articulation of a clear vision of Jordan's future economic landscape.
- There is a clear political will to support the youth and increase their participation in the national economy through balanced and comprehensive partnerships between the private and public sectors.
- The Jordanian economy has traditionally faced several challenges, but it has always proved resilient and created opportunities that best serve the nation despite the difficulties
- It is vital to instill the culture of creativity and entrepreneurship among Jordan's young men and women, to steer their efforts from finding a job to creating the jobs that best suit them.

Discussing the future of Jordan's economy and sustainable development requires a study of the competitiveness of the Jordanian economy and human resources in the various governorates. For this purpose, new policies are needed to reform the education process on all levels, especially training and vocational schooling.

Education Institutions and their Role in Matching up Educational Outputs with Labor Market Requirements

Dr. Reem Uqlah Abu Dalbough

MP of the 17th Parliament

No food is better to man than that which he earns through his manual work, Prophet Muhammad was reported to have said, recalling that “Prophet David ate only out of his earnings from his manual work.” In this part of the world, people hold dear the rulings of the Islamic creed. It makes sense to start with such a narrative about the blessings of engagement in a legitimate work. In fact, Prophet Muhammad’s wife, Aisha said none of the Prophet’s companions was jobless as they were always keen on getting any work to sustain themselves and their families. If any moral is to be deduced, it is that every person should work and any legitimate work will be descent.

Education and employment mismatch has become a prevalent phenomenon in the Arab World. The gap is getting wider worrying not only the people in charge of either of the sectors but also policy makers at the highest echelons of a country. Rising unemployment, limited production, weak competitiveness, and increased dependence on foreign labor are some of the effects of this gap.

The mismatch depletes training, education and youth resources, because it brings graduates to the dead-end of unemployment. It also afflicts employers, who can hardly find suitable persons with the required skills, so they resort to foreign workers to fill in their vacancies. All of this has, eventually, precluded job nationalization programs.

Further complications of the problem result in part from outdated curricula and obsolete training methods that fail to keep abreast of the changing development requirements and the labor market dynamics.

As a result, the international skill levels, which form a necessary indicator in the world of competitiveness and open markets, are not met. It also indicates a problem on the planning and administrative level, given the apparent divorce between institutional training and labor market requirements.

But, it is also a problem in social attitudes towards certain jobs. People place value on some professions and look down on others, a trend that makes some people opt for specializations they consider prestigious, even without motivation.

Discussing the issue of linking up education outputs with labor market requirements necessitates

solutions proposed by the education institutions. A starting point can be the elementary schools, where efforts should focus on ensuring a vocational dimension in the education process, so that students would have an opportunity to be creative and develop their skills in those areas. It is also important to equip schools with the necessary tools and utilities and improve vocational facilities there. This should continue through the following education levels, which would encourage students to make informed decisions regarding their specializations when they move on to tertiary education. In this respect, the efforts of the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) are commended in conducting and publishing a study on saturated specializations that are no longer on demand in the market due to the huge numbers of graduates.

That study was published on the registration web portals of the universities so that students are well informed before applying for admission to a given major. If prospective students make a wise choice, unemployment rates would certainly decrease and so will reliance on foreign workers. The current trend in choosing an educational path in Jordan indicates that 80% opt for the academic stream and 20% opt for vocational and technical specializations, which is opposite of what is required in reality, according to a statement by CSB's head Dr. Khalad Hmeisat, talking to Al Rai Daily on October 23, 2014.

Universities and colleges must understand the situation of the various governorates in Jordan. This would be the first step for those institutions to adjust their majors taught at and hence be current in serving national needs. They also need to enter into agreements with vocational training institutes and funding agencies to train students of the academic, non-vocational specializations. Such steps would help students acquire new skills they need, if they ever want to survive in the labor market after graduation .

In the context of higher education, it is convenient to stress of the importance of using the Arabian Gulf grants for technical training, by establishing colleges and technical training centers and supporting them.

Another problem stands out strongly. It is the absence of a "production base" needed to absorb students who could not afford university education so that they would have the opportunity to join community colleges and vocational training centers. Additionally, the youth in Jordan are not usually inclined to work as freelancers after graduating from community colleges or receiving support to start their own small enterprises.

This leads to an increase in unemployment rates among graduates of community colleges or vocational training centers. Moreover, the salaries offered to the graduates of such institutions are not enough to meet

the demands of stable and decent living standards. Accordingly, students do not usually prefer to join these colleges, and always endeavor to obtain a university degree.

People are naturally endowed with different skills and abilities, even though they may differ in their inclinations and interests. Therefore, the work of each person should be in line with his or her qualifications and capabilities.

This is the culture that needs to spread across communities on the official and social levels. It is more like an attitude necessary to raise awareness of the requirements and changes taking place around us.

Reviewing all the required specializations in the labor market locally and internationally, through an objective policy, would be a necessary step in the right direction. This process should be done periodically to assess the needs of the local community and the neighboring and foreign countries in order to provide the market with the required skills and qualifications. The policy will be used also for defining the status of national economy to adjust wages in light of inflation rates, whenever deemed necessary.

Unemployed Jordanians below 15, by gender and educational level (2014).

Education level	Gender		
	Total	Males	Females
Total	5511	3871	1640
Ratio	100.0	100.0	100.0
Illiterate	0.5	0.6	0.1
Less than secondary school	43.7	60.5	4.2
Secondary education	7.3	9.9	1.0
Intermediate Diploma	7.9	5.1	14.7
Bachelor's degree and above	40.6	23.9	80.0

Source: Jordan's Statistics Department (2014)

The problem with those figures and statistics is that they are unstable just as are the social transformations affecting the whole world in this era of internet and knowledge economy. Human resource development, has, as a result, become a global concern, because the world is fated to be dominated by people who have the knowledge. In this context, there is no way that peoples around the globe could be managed nor their performance could be improved if traditional teaching is still in use. It drives back home an important message: if the “lesson, lecture and teacher” will continue to be used, we will remain lagging behind amidst this current technological revolution that still needs to be well understood and coped with in our colleges and universities. There can be no productive and motivated social system without “social justice”. It is simply an axiom that only peoples of the civilized world would recognize.

The significance of developing human resources can only be recognized when the leaders and officials agree to develop a enact regulations and laws to direct the potentials of the youth to establish a comprehensive economic and knowledge based society.

The unemployment rates dropped during the third quarter of 2014, reaching 11.4% compared with 14% during the same period in 2013, according to official figures issued by the Statistics Department (DoS).

The SD also indicated that unemployment rates dropped during the first three quarters of 2014, reaching 11.7% compared with 13.1%, during the same period in 2013 (Al-Ghad Daily, 2014 November 1st). It also indicated that unemployment rates among men reached 9.2% during the third quarter of that year, compared to 22.0% among women. In terms of gender, unemployment clearly dropped among men by 1.2% and increased among women by 1.9% compared with the second quarter of 2014.

The results indicate that the unemployment rates were especially high among university graduates, reaching 17.9% compared with other educational levels. Those figures also indicate that 57.7% of the unemployed have completed their high school education, while 42.3% did not graduate from high school.

The unemployment rates varied according to education and gender, reaching 25.1% among male university graduates, compared with 85.6% among female university graduates.

In contract, the industrialized countries pay more attention to skillful manpower, who are well papered to work in factories and production units. In several European countries, in addition to Japan, Korea, China, India, and the USA, students are generally more interested in studying technical sciences, and they outnumber those who study academic subjects. The rates of disguised unemployment fall because factories and industrial companies are consistently capable of receiving more technical subject graduates.

Higher education in Jordan started with one or two universities, which initially aimed at training people in different specializations and providing companies and factories with skilled people. As days passed on, however, the universities had to yield to social pressures, and change that broad policy. The attention of universities to the nature of the education outputs started to fade out, depriving the country of an opportunity to accomplish a knowledge economy and an effective industrial model.

Bridging the gap requires us to reconsider the issue of linking up work with education, in light of the limited job opportunities on offer. Education does provide learners with the necessary skills that might be required in the market, but since not all graduates necessarily work in the same field of his study, he must look for other opportunities if he cannot find one in his own area of specialty.

But, doing the tangle requires a comprehensive field study which serves as a matchmaker between the required skills in the labor markets and those taught at universities.

Higher education institutions are encouraged to keep abreast of the developments by creating new specializations to adapt to the market changes and reduce the numbers of students admitted in traditional specializations no longer required in the labor market, based on field studies and observations.

Graduates and freshmen are also advised to reconsider linking studies with work. They need to adapt to changes in the labor market's opportunities and requirements that may pop up from time to time.

What they also need is to know how they can open for themselves new horizons to secure other jobs that may be related to their studies, in case they are redundant in their own specializations. Otherwise, university education will remain more or less like a gamble, making one's ability to get a job after graduation subject to chances.

The process of carefully matching the academic subjects with the job requirements in the market is considered one of the best solutions for a number of social and economic problems. This requires conducting a survey to understand the job trends in the market, and matching these opportunities with some specializations while crossing out others until one finds the best specialization required in the market.

The higher education system in the country should direct its efforts to realize the objectives of sustainable development in the country, guided by the true sense of loyalty to the country and the wisdom of its leadership.

This could be accomplished by developing study plans based on creative efforts and long-sighted visions, taking into account the potential of university students, professors and researchers, in addition to directing the scientific research to finding solutions for problems facing the industrial sector.

In his speech from the throne, in the opening of the second ordinary session of the 17th parliament, His Majesty King Abdullah said: *“As for ongoing efforts to fight poverty and unemployment, they include endorsing the National Employment Strategy to generate jobs for the youth and establishing the Governorates Development Fund, which requires increasing its allocations to widen the scope of support for SMEs and productive projects, as well as strengthening the social safety net protecting low-income groups by ensuring that subsidies are better directed to those who deserve them”*.

His Majesty also mentioned in his letter of designation to the prime minister that: *“The challenges that we are going through require paying great attention to the following major national issues, when they are being addressed in the government programme: [...] advancing the quality of services provided to citizens in various fields and with particular emphasis on health, education, training and employment, in a manner that meets the requirements of the labor market and guarantees the highest levels of equality and justice”*.

Last but not least, the importance of the reforms that Jordan recently undertook under the directives of His Majesty King Abdullah II must be reiterated, including reforms of education outputs by linking up educational institutions with market demands.

In a news article, Amman News website quoted Wikipedia saying: *“In July 2003, the Government of Jordan launched an ambitious program in the entire MENA region a 10 year multi-donor Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy Program (ErfKE) of which the World Bank provided US\$120 million.*

The goal of the program was to re-orient the education policies and programs in line with the needs of a knowledge based economy, improve the physical learning environment in most schools and promote early childhood education. This first phase of program is from 2003–2009, closing in June 2009.

The second phase of the ErfKE, which is aligned with IBRD and IFC Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) for the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, will be from 2009-2015. *The aim of this program is to strengthen and institutionalize the reforms introduced under ERfKE I, with a particular focus on school level implementation and teacher quality.*”

In this respect, I cannot stress enough the importance of cooperation and coordination among all educational institutions and government bodies in order to achieve the desired objectives of this project. Such efforts should go hand in hand with the efforts of the government and the Ministry of Labor through a national employment campaign.

It should put in force the national strategy for employment, training, and vocational/technical education. This comprehensive program will help creating several job opportunities for young men and women, through partnerships with the various companies and institutions throughout Jordan.

Economic Empowerment for the Jordanian Youth and the Crisis of Syria Refugees: Opportunities and Challenges

Dr. Sakher AlKhawasawneh

Lawyer and Press and Publication Specialist

Introduction

The influx of Syrian refugees to Jordan has created several social and economic problems that left a discernible impact on the different aspects of social, economic, and health life in Jordan. One of the most important effects is the increasing competition between the Syrian refugees and the Jordanian youth for job opportunities.

Secretary General of the Ministry of Labor, Hamada Abu Nijma, said in a statement to AFP that: "The number of Syrians participating in the Jordanian labor market has exceeded to 60,000, most of whom are unauthorized to work". He mentioned that this "huge number of Syrians has a negative impact, especially because this influx of labor is not controlled through residency visas or other official procedures". He added that "We understand their desperate need of jobs, but unfortunately they are taking opportunities in a manner that deprives Jordanians of job opportunities created for them in the first place."

Some studies also indicate that Jordan refugees seized almost 50,000 jobs, while the Refugee Research Center at Yarmouk University talks about 38,000 job opportunities since March 2011, which accounts for 40% of the job opportunities required every year for the Jordanians in Al Mafraq Governorate.

The presence of the Syrian workers as non-registered (daily) workers is easily noticed in the Kingdom.

The problem is that it is not easy to define their numbers nor to name the types of jobs they work in. It is, therefore, difficult to study the economic impact of losing these job opportunities to Syrians. It is also important to calculate the wages the Syrian workers gain, in order to determine the loss incurred by the country by not receiving fees for their work permits, medical check-ups, and the fees paid to them without any social security allocations.

It is also difficult to track down the violations committed against these workers, in terms of working for long hours for wages less than the legally mandated minimum limit and not enjoying the rights to days off or allowance for working on Fridays. They could also lose their rights in cases of unfair dismissal from work, along with other worker rights guaranteed by the Labor Law.

Several questions should arise in this context: What are the characteristics of the Syrian workers in Jordan? Why would employers prefer to hire Syrians? What is the impact of their participation in the labor market on the Jordanian worker? Are there any negative effects on the Syrian workers?

We need to answer these questions from a general perspective without delving into too much details. The hope is that by suggesting some answers, we can contribute to the economic empowerment of the youth in the national economy.

The Syrian workers are known to be skilled and highly professional, unlike their Jordanian counterparts, who have not received sufficient training. The presence of the Syrian workers helped in creating jobs that had not been available before, or were not as important and widespread, such as embroidery, sewing, sweet manufacturing, and the like. In all cases, the wages of those workers, despite their skills, remained lower than the average wage of Jordanian or other foreign workers.

Employers prefer to hire Syrians in order to ensure better services with less operational costs. They also increase production rates or improve production outputs by employing trained workers, regardless of their experience, without any costs related to training and qualification, and without bearing any obligation to pay the fees for work permits or paying out mandatory social security contributions.

The Syrian workers succeeded in creating new lines of production for employers. They also brought with them new crafts and jobs to the labor market in Jordan, which contributed directly or indirectly to increasing employer revenues and increased competitiveness in the market.

Despite the positive impact of the Syrian workers on the national economy in general, and the increased professionalism in several areas, some believe that Syrian refugees have taken job

opportunities originally created for Jordanians. They also blame Syrians for the dropout in wages. A study by Phoenix Center for Economic and Information Studies indicated that the impact of the influx of refugees on the labor market in Jordan is manifested in the “unfair competition with Jordanians over job opportunities”.

The large numbers of Syrian workers created an unfair competition with the Jordanians, along with other foreign workers, including Egyptians, though to varying degrees, depending on their areas of work. According to the study, other foreign workers were affected more than Jordanians in several sectors, especially the informal construction sector. This was clearly detected in the northern parts of Jordan and to a lesser extent in the central part of the country.

It also mentioned the negative impact on Jordanian workers, since many, according to the study, lost their jobs to the competing Syrians. The report indicates that similar effects were felt in jobs related to the restaurant and sweet production sector, since Syrian workers were particularly in control of such jobs in most of the governorates, especially in the northern and central regions.

The study also exposed the impact of the Syrian workers on decreasing average wages, according to supply and demand trends. Syrian workers are usually willing, considering their dire situation, to work for lower wages. What happened next was that employers found at hand lots of job-seekers willing to work for lower wages, with the result of either lowering the wages of their current employees or replace some of them with Syrians. The report indicates that the regulated sectors in medium and large enterprises were not affected by this, since a limited number of Syrians were able to enter this market, due to the fact that most of them do not obtain official work permits to work there.

On the other hand, while the influx of Syrians in the labor market might have negatively affected Jordanians, it is also worth while to discuss the risks associated with this kind of labor among the Syrians themselves as well, especially in relation to their rights as workers that are guaranteed by the international conventions.

Although Jordan is not a signatory country of the 1951 Agreement on Refugee Rights, it observes the general principles of the international human rights instruments, including the aforementioned agreement. Jordan is a signatory of the two international covenants, the International

Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. This strengthens Jordan's desire to observe the basic rights of refugees in light of these Covenants.

The study asserted that what applies to foreign workers in Jordan applies to the Syrian refugees. They must obtain work permits for the jobs they are allowed to work in, according to the applicable laws and regulations in Jordan.

As Syrians living in Jordan, whether refugees or not, they are subject to the local laws and regulations, and they enjoy all rights stipulated in the two international covenants of human rights, in cooperation with the United Nations Higher Commission for Refugees (UNHCR).

Here are some of the obstacles faced by Syrian workers in Jordan:

1. Deprivation of their rights as workers
2. Working overtime without compensation
3. Absence of a legal framework to protect their rights and compensate them in case of occupational accidents
4. Psychological factors related to fear of interacting with the competent authorities or filing complaints against their employers.

Solutions and Recommendations:

Addressing the challenges that limit the Jordanian youth's productivity and national economic participation require collaborative efforts of the public and private sectors, professional associations, the media and the youth themselves. The following are some suggestions:

- 1- Change the traditional career culture that prefers either a post in public service, matching their qualifications, or permanent jobs, and promote a new culture that encourages the acceptance of temporary contract work opportunities and part time or home based jobs, as well as encouraging philanthropy. Awareness should be raised of the impact of the current issue on their professional future and their skills development. This goal, however, cannot be achieved in a short period of time. We must, therefore, instill this culture in children through families and schools in cooperation with the media that can spread and raise public awareness on vocational work and craftsmanship, eliminate the negative stereotypes and replace the

“shame culture” with the culture of work and productivity.

- 2- Promote the culture of efficiency, professionalism and competitiveness at work. The idea is that work is maintained in our times if the highest levels of efficiency and professionalism are maintained, given the fierce competition on jobs. Achieving this goal requires working at the highest professional levels. No one should be allowed to practice such professions without a license subject to completion of the training requirements and exams.
- 3- Develop codes of conduct for the respective professions in Jordan.
- 4- Reinforce competitive opportunities among workers of the same profession for the sake of creativity.
- 5- Reinforce the concept of ongoing work improvement.
- 6- Improve work research skills among the youth since it is not enough to train them on skills demanded by the market. First, they must be trained on writing their résumés, attending interviews, accessing channels of job offers and discovering the real needs of the market.
- 7- The government must regulate professional and craftsmanship work by imposing relevant licensing conditions and raising the level of qualified and trained professional workers in order to attract the Jordanian youth.
- 8- Penalties stated in the Jordanian Labor Law regarding business owners who hire employees without work permits are insufficient and do not ensure prevention. According to those penalties, “an employer shall be punished by a fine not less than JO 200 and not more than JO 500 for every non-Jordanian in violation of this law. The amount of the penalty doubles in case of repeated offenses and may not be reduced to less than the minimum amount under any circumstances. The Minister is then empowered to order deportation of the worker who violates the law at the expense of the employer or the head of the respective firm. A deported non-Jordanian worker may not be recruited or hired before the lapse of at least three years following the deportation date.”

Therefore, those penalties have to be revisited in order to prevent the recruitment of any foreign worker without work permits.

- 9- Ongoing inspections have to be performed on industrial institutions and companies that recruit foreign workers to ensure that they abide by the percentage allocated by law, which may not exceed 50%.

- 10-** The government must take part in increasing the expenses of foreign workers' recruitment in order to make the recruitment of a Jordanian worker a better choice for employers.
- 11-** Regulate the Jordanian labor market and the employment of foreigners including those working in violation of the regulations. This is a basic step towards limiting the losses the country incurs due to these violations. The resources will be allocated to train the Jordanian youth to enable them to start up their own small enterprises through special governmental funding and support.
- 12-** Regulate the labor market and issue work permits for foreign workers, as a guarantee against exploiting them by their employers. This will provide them with stable jobs while increasing the opportunities of the young Jordanians in finding jobs.
- 13-** The government should facilitate the process of securing work permits for Syrians, in order for them to enjoy job security and to prevent their exploitation. This will spare the country losses that would be otherwise incurred.

The Role of Civil Society Organizations in Youth Economic Empowerment

Suleiman Ali Alkhawaldeh

CEO of Musawah for Civil Society Development

Introduction

The youth of Jordan comprise most of the population. No wonder, they are considered the main pillar of development in the country and its most valuable resource. It is incumbent on the institutions of society (governmental, private, and public bodies) to invest in the Jordanian youth to achieve comprehensive and sustainable development.

These institutions should consider ways through which the potential of the youth can be transformed into fruitful elements of production that would reflect positively on society in general, politically, culturally, and economically. However, if the society neglects the youth, leaving them without the necessary care, it will run the risk of facing development difficulties in the country. Marginalizing the youth and leaving them without empowerment and development might turn them into destructive elements in the present and future. The reform and development process cannot succeed without taking the issue of youth empowerment seriously by helping them realize their full potential and involving them in the decision-making process.

One of the main obstacles facing the youth currently is the lack of job opportunities due to the generally tough economic conditions and the shortage of capacities that would allow them to start their own businesses and enterprises.

Civil Society and its Role in Economically Empowering the Youth:

Civil society is comprised of political, economic, social, and cultural bodies that work in different fields and interests, in service of the local communities and in fulfillment of their needs. They are independent institutions, usually undertaking voluntary work as mediators between the citizens and the state in order to improve the living conditions and welfare according to a set of social values and principles.

The following figure illustrates the most important constituents of civil society:



The presence of an active and strong civil society in terms of institutionalization and social capital is very important in creating an environment that would help increase investments and provide job opportunities. It also helps to reduce corruption, which would mitigate the problems within the community and help to eradicate poverty and unemployment.

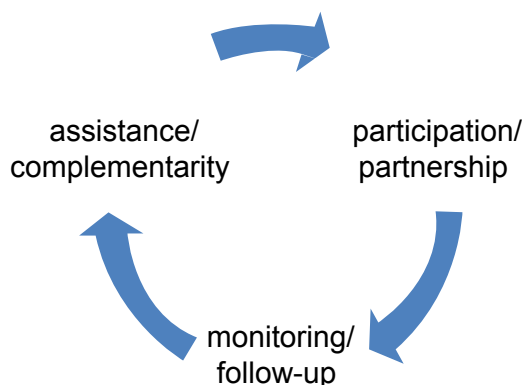
In light of the rapid population growth and the government's inability to realize the necessary developments in relation to human resources, the need increases for better civil society organizations (CSOs). There are several examples of civil society organizations that play an important role in development plans, urbanization policies, and other areas, such as protecting the environment and combating poverty.

When discussing the efforts of the governmental institutions in achieving their objectives

related to employment and social services, it is important to study the definitions of “partnership” and “networking” and to highlight the role of CSOs in development.

It is common to talk about three basic sectors in the development process: the first sector is the government. The second is the private sector, while the third is the CSOs.

The role of the CSOs is tied to partnerships, assistance, and monitoring of the activities of these sectors in order to achieve a state of integration in developmental work.



This partnership between the government and the civil society organizations is indispensable, and it has become one of the alternatives to achieving development and fighting poverty.

In order for this partnership to be effective, it is important to create a relationship of mutual trust and support and to develop an encouraging political and legal environment conducive for this kind of partnership. It is also necessary to create a political and social attitude that encourages and appreciates such institutions.

It is well known that CSOs try to empower some target groups in the society by encouraging them to be self-reliant and to pursue their goals.

They also try to change the nature of their work by adopting the principle of development instead of aid and assistance. Such a goal can be achieved by providing basic services and complementing the role of government institutions, in addition to improving the living conditions of the people and creating more jobs.

It could be argued that CSOs play a decisive role in several important issues in society. They could play a positive role in helping the government with several issues, such as supporting the

youth to face the challenges in the labor market and empowering them economically. In this way, CSOs shoulder the responsibility of dealing not only with the youth, but also with the government sector, private sector, education institutions, and the media in order to produce an integrated methodology that would really empowers the youth in local communities

It should be noted that some CSOs choose to specialize in one area of development, such as economy, where they endeavor to create jobs, help in developing human resources, or support the industrial sector. This is evident in the improvements those have recently made in promoting small sized enterprises and supporting them by playing these roles:

1.Educational role: Those institutions raise awareness among the beneficiaries on the importance of small enterprises, particularly in fighting unemployment and generating income. They also stress their importance of the private sector and the national economy in general.

2.Instructive role: They inter-connect the concerned parties in launching such projects with donors and interested bodies, such as universities, research centers, private companies, and consultancy centers that provide technical and economic support and advice and develop feasibility studies for such projects.

3.Intermediary role in financing: It is known that those institutions cannot support projects financially, but they can play an intermediary role by coordinating with donors and financing bodies (banks, international donors, governmental bodies, etc.) to finance the proposed projects after their economic feasibility is ascertained.

4.Using all the necessary means to promote these projects, such as the media, organizing workshops and specialized courses, and organizing field visits for some projects that are considered success stories.

In order for CSOs to undertake their roles, they can consult with some expert trainers in economy or administration, in addition to talking with academics and successful entrepreneurs. It is important to engage the youth in any workshop or training course, especially those who were deprived of continuing their education and male and female university graduates, especially those who studied administration, economy, engineering, or who have technical experience.

This will help to activate the role of the private sector in creating more jobs and receiving more trained people in the market, instead of depending on a job in the public sector, which already suffers from disguised unemployment that has become a real burden on the country.

It is important to discuss some of the programs and interventions that CSOs can undertake to achieve youth economic empowerment:

1. Change the negative attitude regarding crafts and other skilled jobs, and encourage the youth not to depend on public sector jobs.
2. Enhance competence and professionalism in the work environment in order to improve competitiveness.
3. Improve the job hunting skills among the youth.
4. Train the youth on the skills they will need in the market, especially training fresh graduates in cooperation with training institutions such as the Vocational Training Center in order to encourage work in vocational fields.
5. Support small enterprises by studying the needs of the Jordanian market and finance them by coordinating with the governmental institutions, the private sector, or international donors.
6. Invest in productive enterprises and create job opportunities for the youth.
7. Launch awareness raising campaigns in order to enhance cooperation and interaction among the governmental bodies, on the one hand, and other institutions and individuals in the community on the other, by providing the necessary information, especially on the core issues related to local communities.
8. Work closely with the executive and legislative bodies and discuss the important issues, especially in terms of developing new legislation or amending current legislation, as well as the strategic decisions related to foreign labor and regulating the labor market in Jordan.
9. Prepare studies and research on important social issues such as poverty and unemployment and suggest solutions and recommendations to solve them with the executive and legislative bodies.
10. Present and discuss the reports related to the supervisory role of the various bodies, in order to bridge any existing gaps in performance and to reinforce positive roles.
11. Ensure effective cooperation with the government and education institutions, the municipalities, the private sector and the media in order to develop a strategic plan to enhance the economic empowerment of youth and create an encouraging investment environment for the youth.
12. Make the information and data of such institutions accessible to decision-makers and legislators

in order to help in developing plans and programs to overcome the challenges related to youth economic empowerment.

Final Recommendations:

Networking is one of the most important tools to highlight the common features among the different sectors. It helps in developing a comprehensive shared vision for development and empowering the youth by working with the concerned sectors and creating the appropriate environment to enhance economic opportunities. Therefore, there are some requirements that should be taken into consideration by the CSOs and those come down to the following points:

1. Train the leaders and personnel working with CSOs in order to improve their performance according to clear plans and objectives.
2. Benefit from the experiences of other organizations and charities.
3. Develop a mechanism of communication and coordination among the CSOs and the concerned bodies, especially in the government and the private sector.
4. Improve interconnections with the donor institutions to support local projects that serve the local community.
5. Develop partnerships with the CSOs, especially those working in the same field, in order to avoid a conflict of interests and wasting time and resources.
6. Develop strategic development plans so that the executive programs and projects will be within a clear developmental vision, which would eventually achieve the desired results.
7. Cooperate effectively with the grassroots of organizations, encourage the participation of the youth and entrust them with leadership positions.
8. Develop a shared database in order to unify the efforts among the organizations and ensure a fair distribution of support, especially when targeting the local community
9. Develop a realistic media plan that would help to guide the youth to participate in enterprises and promote the success stories and initiatives of the youth.