Jordan: Promoting Economic Opportunities for Businesses and Youth

Jordan has experienced rapid development and social change over the previous three decades, and continues to work towards a greater social, political and economic transformation. For over a decade, Global Communities has been helping Jordanians tackle their most pressing issues, including access to credit, economic development, civil society and child labor.

Community Engagement Project: Building Cohesive and Resilient Communities

The USAID Community Engagement Project (USAID CEP) is working in collaboration with Jordanian partners, Al Jidara and Jordan River Foundation, to strengthen community organizations and local government efforts to meet local needs in three governorates: Irbid, Mafraq and Tafileh. The program works by bringing together community members, non-governmental and community-based organizations, and local government to engage in a continuous, conflict-sensitive participatory process of identification and prioritization of stressors. Through the formation of volunteer groups representing all areas of society (women, youth, government, business, tribal, and religious leaders), USAID CEP will help communities to develop immediate and long-term solutions, utilizing effective and transparent communication mechanisms in support of increased community cohesion.

Creating Employment Opportunities for Youth

Through the MENA Youth Empowerment Strategy (MENA-YES), Global Communities, in partnership with the Caterpillar Foundation, has launched a three-year, $4.4 million program to target youth aged 15 to 29 in Jordan, Lebanon and Yemen to prepare them for the labor market and job placement. Special emphasis will be given to disadvantaged youth, low- to medium-level skilled individuals, women, peri-urban and rural youth, and individuals working in hazardous environments. The program offers technical, demand-driven training, assistance with internship and apprenticeship placement, as well as, support for entrepreneurship and self employment activities and assistance accessing credit.

Global Communities’ work supporting youths in Jordan builds upon the Combating Exploitive Child Labor through Education (CECLE) program. Funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, The goal of CECLE was to remove and prevent children from participating in the worst forms of child labor.

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Expanding Access to Credit

Vitas Jordan has grown since 1998, when it started as a program of Global Communities and USAID, designed to bring microfinance to the residents of Southern Jordan. In response to the great demand that came out of these communities, the program transformed into a permanent institution, MEMCC (Middle East Micro Credit Company), which has served people in need across the entire country since 2003. Today, Vitas Jordan is Global Communities’ most profitable development finance institution and it is one of the largest microfinance institutions in Jordan. Offering a diversified selection of loan products, Vitas Jordan reaches out to a broad clientele and serves the changing needs in the market.

Jordan Loan Guaranty Facility

With funding from USAID to support start-up and operational expenses over a five year period, the Jordan Loan Guaranty Facility (JLGF) is a $250 million, OPIC-backed facility designed to overcome obstacles to bank lending. By coupling loan guarantees with customized technical assistance for participating banks and non-bank financial institutions (NBFIs), the JLGF will also strengthen the capacity of the Jordanian financial services sector to continue serving the credit needs of the SME market in a sustainable manner.

RECENT PROGRAMS

Combating Exploitive Child Labor through Education (CECLE)

Funded by the US Department of Labor, the goal of CECLE was to remove children from the worst forms of child labor and prevent additional children from entering into such dangerous activities, while providing them with direct educational services and other non-formal education. Through CECLE, Global Communities also strengthened policies on child labor and education and built the capacity of national institutions, raised awareness on the importance of education and supported research on child labor.

Aqaba Community and Economic Development (ACED) Program

The Aqaba region of Jordan has undergone tremendous economic growth, as a result ACED helps community-based organizations build their capacities to take advantage of these new economic opportunities and to be full participants in the development of the region. Through the program, Global Communities built the capacity of all facets of civil society by encouraging the local community to participate in development decision-making; enhancing the capacity of local civil society organizations to provide relevant services; encouraging local citizens to participate in the modern economy; and creating opportunities for interaction between citizens and private sector.

Global Communities is an international non-profit organization that works closely with communities worldwide to bring about sustainable changes that improve the lives and livelihoods of the vulnerable. Development is not something we do for people; it is something we do with them. We believe that the people who understand their needs best are the people of the community itself. Please visit our website at www.globalcommunities.org for more information.