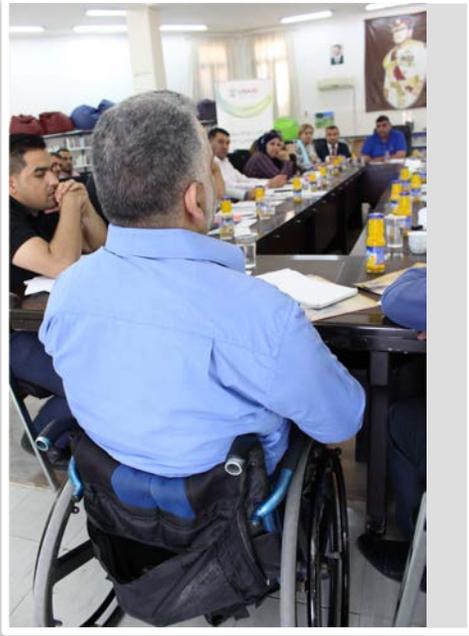




Decentralization: Early Steps



“
What’s different about this initiative is the approach to tackle the lack of administrative and financial supervision amongst organizations working with youth in general and people of special needs in particular.”

Mohammed Al-Khaza’leh
Aiyal Al-Ghad Club for People with Disabilities

As Jordanian municipalities prepare to enter a new chapter in democracy, the municipalities of Greater Mafraq, Al Khalidiyah, Al Dhulail, Al – Hallabat, Sahel Horan, New Ramtha, New Deir Alla, and Greater Tafileh made a significant step forward under decentralization as they brought municipal and community members together.

Through a municipality-led initiative, the USAID Jordan Cities Implementing Transparent, Innovative and Effective Solutions (CITIES) team conducted a series of capacity-building sessions to train the Local Development Units within the eight municipalities on how to identify the needs of youth as well as how best to engage with them to transform these young voices into integral partners in the decision-making process. The session was attended by the municipalities’ local development staff working as a team in an illustration of the key principal of decentralization - “...*political development should start at the grassroots level, and then move up to decision making centers and not vice versa*” < King Abdallah II, 27 January 2005>.

Thus, Youth Service Providers in each of the eight municipalities joined forces in a committed effort to establish a network to address youth engagement challenges and to leverage resources identify and address youth needs. As hoped, wider-scale activities sprang from these capacity-building efforts with youth service providers’ representatives across each municipality coming together to form a network that the network members say, “*speaks for all*”.

The current array of outcomes from these municipal-led networks vary in nature such as free access to a soccer field for young females and families during “low peak times” in response to cultural sensitivity and planning for a training workshop on “Debate Skills” for 25 youth within the ages of 18-35 in Al-Hallabat; employment for a member of the network to teach language courses for youth groups in Al Dhulail; and in a more advanced scenario, a municipal-led youth service provider task force collaborating with the municipality on a proposal for a \$50K grant by the African-Asian Rural Development



Decentralization: Early Steps

Organization for the development of a revolving fund to aid poor families.

This network addresses a critical step in decentralization - youth participating in the decision-making process for youth.