



2021 CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION SUSTAINABILITY INDEX

JORDAN
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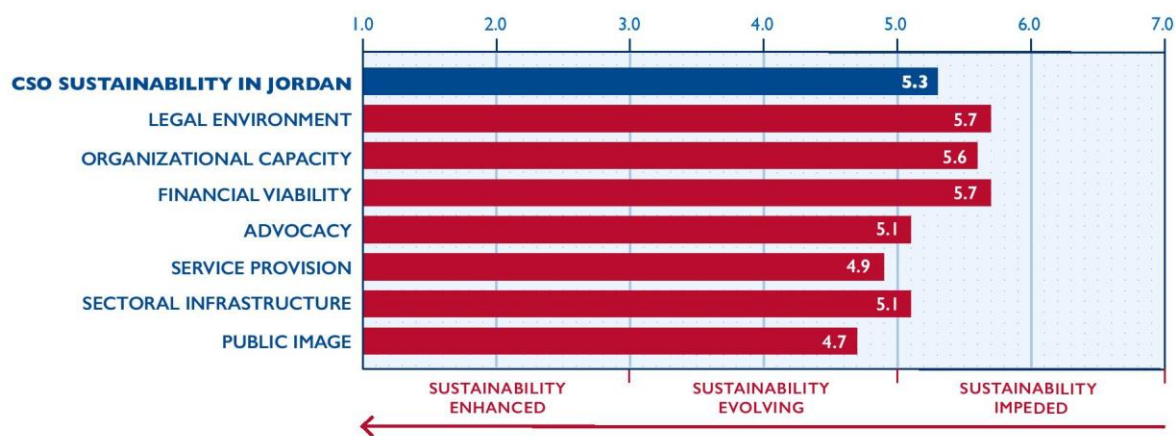
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OVERALL CSO SUSTAINABILITY: 5.3



Jordan was heavily impacted by political and economic turmoil in 2021. As the country continued to deal with the impact of COVID-19, both public and state officials raised concerns about the government’s management of the health crisis. Following the earliest cases of COVID-19 in the country, Jordan announced a state of emergency in March 2020, which continued to be in effect through 2021. The state of emergency activated Defense Law 13, which provided the government with sweeping powers to pass further measures (known as Defense Orders), such as prohibitions on movement and travel, bans on social gatherings, and punishment for spreading information about the pandemic that would “cause panic.” Though many of these restrictions were slowly eased by late August 2020, the state of emergency remained in place throughout 2021 and upticks in cases in March 2021 spurred the reimposition of nightly and weekend curfews and penalties for social gatherings. At the end of April, the weekend curfew was lifted but the nightly curfew remained in place. By the end of the year, Jordan had recorded a total of roughly 1,100,000 cases of COVID-19, and just over 40 percent of the population was vaccinated. The government also worked to ensure vaccination of the large refugee population living in Jordan, and over half of adult refugees in the country were vaccinated by early 2022.

In March, protests erupted across the country after a state hospital ran out of oxygen, leading to the deaths of at least seven COVID-19 patients. The Minister of Health submitted his resignation while demonstrators decried the government’s response to the crisis, worsening economic conditions, and the restrictions and emergency powers that had been re-instituted through the Defense Law.

In April, in a rare public split in the royal family, Jordanian authorities arrested nineteen people, including King Abdullah II’s half-brother, Prince Hamzah bin al-Hussein, who was placed under house arrest. The arrests were reportedly triggered by palace fears of a planned “coup” after Prince Hamzah criticized the King’s pandemic response in a meeting with tribal leaders. While no charges were brought against Prince Hamzah, a former royal court chief and another man were tried for sedition and sentenced to fifteen years in prison for allegedly trying to destabilize the kingdom; an appeals court upheld that verdict in September.

In June, King Abdullah II appointed a committee to modernize the political system, headed by former Prime Minister Samir al-Rifai and made up of ninety-two public figures from different sects. In October, the committee put forward recommendations and constitutional amendments on electoral laws, political parties, and decentralization. The proposals also include establishing a National Security Council headed by King Abdullah II. While CSOs were involved in the drafting of the report, the committee’s findings did not address civil society directly. The full impact of the recommendations remains to be seen.

Regional politics spurred public demonstrations in 2021 as well. In May, thousands of Jordanians marched to the border in solidarity with Palestinians. This came in the midst of ongoing normalization initiatives between Israel and others in the region. Despite public opposition, in November 2021 Israel and Jordan signed a declaration of intent for a water-for-energy deal, a notable step in the normalization of relations. The deal was co-signed by the United

Arab Emirates, which hosted the discussions, and would see Jordan build 600 megawatts of solar energy to be exported to Israel, in exchange for 200 million cubic meters of desalinated water.

Still reeling from the impact of COVID-19, Jordan continued to face an economic crisis in 2021. Public debt again exceeded the country's gross domestic product (GDP) but was slightly less than it had been in 2020 (a deficit of JOD 2.05 billion, or \$2.89 billion, in 2021 compared to JOD 2.1 billion, or \$2.96 billion). Protests in November decried the continued rate of inflation while calling for the lifting of pandemic-related restrictions. The economic downturn also added obstacles to the livelihoods of thousands of refugees. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), by late 2021, over 670,000 people from Syria had sought refuge in Jordan, approximately 85 percent of whom lived outside of refugee camps.

Public freedoms and civil liberties continued to face restrictions in 2021, partially due to the government's use of the pandemic as an excuse to limit freedoms of expression and assembly. The sedition trial highlighted the risk of such crackdowns and government authorities imposed a gag order on news concerning the "coup plot" and the Pandora Papers reporting on alleged King Abdullah's properties abroad. Jordanian law criminalizes defamatory speech and speech considered critical of the king or of government officials and institutions, among other things. Authorities also curtailed press freedom in 2021 by prohibiting coverage of some local developments, including an ongoing crackdown on the independent Teachers' Syndicate.

In this context, overall CSO sustainability deteriorated slightly in 2021. The legal environment, CSO organizational capacity, financial viability, and service provision—all of which deteriorated moderately in 2020 with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic—remained relatively unchanged in 2021. CSO advocacy, sectoral infrastructure, and public image all recorded slight deteriorations, largely due to continued financial challenges, restrictions spurred by the health crisis, and negative perceptions of CSO work beyond a select few government-friendly organizations.

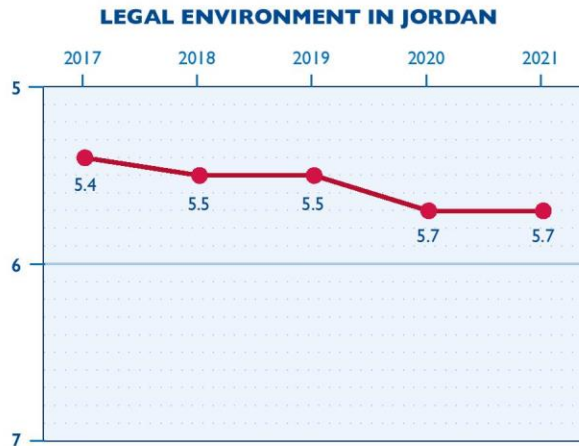
As of the end of 2021, there were a total of 6,749 societies registered with the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) under the Law on Societies 51 of 2008. Over the course of the year, 317 societies were newly registered while 376 were dissolved. While no information is publicly available regarding the cause for the dissolutions, primary reasons include the organization's own choice or lack of capacity, failure to carry out activities within a year of its establishment, or violation of the Law on Societies. Before 2015, some organizations were instead registered as civil, non-profit companies with the Ministry of Trade and Supplies (MoITS) to avoid the many government approvals required to register and operate under MoSD. The government ceased licensing such companies under MoITS after 2015, but approximately 600 CSOs continue to operate under MoITS as civil, non-profit companies. There are also approximately ten Royal Non-Governmental Organizations (RNGOs).

LEGAL ENVIRONMENT: 5.7

The legal environment governing the CSO sector remained largely unchanged in 2021. Despite consultations with local and international CSOs around improving the Law on Societies, MoSD ultimately concluded the meetings without implementing any changes or amendments, pointing to a lack of consensus.

Law on Societies 51 of 2008 and its amendments continue to be the primary law governing the operation of local and foreign organizations. The law and its implementation impose various restrictions on the work of most CSOs, including the need to register and seek approval to receive foreign funding; an unregistered CSO may work as a non-formal group, but it is difficult for them to receive funding. CSOs are also not permitted to engage in political or religious activities. Other CSOs register under Labor Law 8 of 1996, which regulates the work of trade unions and employers' associations. Organizations registered with MoITS as civil, non-profit companies are governed by Companies Law No. 22 of 1997. RNGOs are established based on royal decrees and parliamentary endorsement rather than through standard registration procedures and are generally subjected to less governmental scrutiny than other CSOs¹.

¹ RNGOs active in 2021 include: King Hussein Foundation (KHF), Jordan River Foundation (JRF), The Crown Prince Foundation (CPF), King Abdullah II Fund for Development (KAFFD), Queen Zein Al Sharaf Institute for Development (ZENID), Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development (JOHUD), The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN), Royal Health Awareness Society (RHAS), The Royal Film Commission Jordan (RFC), and Royal Scientific Society (RSS).



Registration procedures did not change in 2021 and CSOs continued to face multiple barriers in the process, including delays in receiving approval of registration requests (which legally should be provided by the Registry Council within thirty days). Some of the processes and mechanisms for registration also remain unclear. For instance, while legislation exclusively grants the Registry Council the authority to make decisions on CSO registration, numerous other bodies responsible for follow-up complicate the process. The Law on Societies also includes unclear language, including in regard to coalitions and foreign funding. While Article 23a allows for the formation of unions or societies to coordinate efforts, Article 24 states that no society may be a member of another society, causing confusion in the creation of networks or alliances. The text also lacks

clear policies, timeframes, or regulations for fundraising.

In 2021, several organizations were denied registration as de facto restrictions were placed on the objectives that CSOs can state. The restrictions were not written into the law, which states only that an organization’s established goals and objectives should be determined specifically and explicitly; in practice, however, in 2021, objectives were limited to training, rehabilitation, education, and health. Registration requests may not combine two or more objectives. Experts further noted that “activities misaligned with the organization’s goals” was one of the most common reasons cited for the rejection of foreign funding.

Also in 2021, the Registry Council (under MoSD) raised concerns about the status of organizations still registered as civil, non-profit companies under MoITS. Because the Jordanian Civil Code considers companies to be for-profit, the Council said it is illogical for CSOs to fall under the category of non-profit companies; however, this did not result in any changes in 2021.

In March 2021, MoSD announced the formation of a committee to review the Law on Societies. Community dialogue sessions led by the committee engaged over 2,500 CSO representatives and were supplemented by CSO input submitted through videoconferencing and other online platforms. CSO input emphasized the importance of clear and open processes for registration and ensuring that oversight comes only as needed, not preemptively, while also recognizing the state’s right to establish a system for accountability and oversight in line with international norms. Proposed amendments included, for instance, mechanisms to encourage youth participation and a clause on fundraising. Current donations are treated according to the 1957 regulations of the Fundraising System; updated text would define “fundraising,” outline mechanisms, and establish terms that align with the current environment, including delineation between charities and CSOs.

However, MoSD ultimately called an end to the committee and dialogue meetings, pointing to a lack of consensus on the proposed amendments and claiming that, if there is no added value in amending the Law on Societies, it will not be amended. MoSD indicated that despite the suspension of the consultations, it will continue to receive input through the Registry Council website. Broadly, CSO representatives reported that the process thus far helped to identify problem areas and build communication between the sector and government representatives, and agreed that more discussion is needed in order to pass the amendments through all necessary legislative steps. However, some also noted challenges in the government’s management of the consultative process and the tracking of changes, which impeded communication and consensus in the committee.

Government scrutiny of CSO operations continued in 2021. Organizations are required to obtain the governor’s approval to hold private events fourteen days in advance and the governor can reject the request without explanation; this requirement was in place even before pandemic restrictions on movement and gatherings. Organizations must then submit the approval to the host (such as hotels), alongside the names, nationalities, and governorates of participants. Given increasing concerns during the pandemic, in 2021 these restrictions were particularly notable in Amman, while in Ajloun, for instance, no requests for events have been rejected since the beginning of the pandemic. While COVID-19 restrictions had eased enough by the end of the year to allow such gatherings, now the Ministry of Health must also confirm that sanitary requirements are met. These measures often caused delays in the implementation of activities.

Freedom of expression remained restricted in 2021. The 2020 issuance of Defense Order No. 8 made it illegal to spread news or information about the pandemic that would “cause panic.” This, combined with the ongoing use of the Cybercrime Law to limit criticism of the government, spurred continuing self-censorship.

The Teachers’ Syndicate also remained shuttered by the government in 2021, on what Human Rights Watch calls “dubious legal grounds.” Jordan’s largest labor union, the Syndicate was shut down in July 2020 and its leaders charged with misappropriating funds following widespread demonstrations for a promised wage increase. The Syndicate’s appeals to resume operations continued through the end of 2021.

There were no changes in the laws and regulations regarding taxation in 2021. Tax exemptions are still limited and only granted to orphanages, associations for people with disabilities, and CSOs deemed “public interest” organizations, and even they sometimes face difficulties in obtaining the exemptions. Societies with religious, charitable, humanitarian, scientific, cultural, sports, or professional purposes are eligible to apply for charitable status, and donations made to societies with charitable status are exempted from income tax.

CSOs are allowed to charge fees for goods and services, compete for government contracts at the local and central levels, organize fundraising campaigns, and accept funds from foreign donors. However, CSOs must receive approval from the government before accepting foreign funding through a process that remains unclear and is frequently delayed, especially for projects working with Syrian refugees and projects related to media, human rights, and gender-based violence. A Specialized Committee under the Registry Council is responsible for reviewing applications then referring them to the Cabinet for approval. However, the Committee is often accused of bias in the approval process, with comparatively slower turnaround for grants related to sensitive issues such as women’s empowerment and public participation. The Committee has also become increasingly interested in operational issues in recent years, further delaying funding approvals.

Some organizations, such as the Justice Center for Legal Aid (JCLA) and Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARDD), continue to provide CSOs with legal services and consultations. However, JCLA’s mandate is to provide legal services more broadly to those who cannot afford them, and they still do not cover the needs of all CSOs, especially charities. Some CSOs still prefer to resolve legal problems through personal relationships rather than through formal legal channels.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY: 5.6

Overall organizational capacity of the CSO sector remained stable in 2021, after moderately deteriorating in 2020 due to the impact of pandemic restrictions and lockdown. International organizations and RNGOs headquartered in Amman typically have greater capacities than medium-sized organizations and charities and those based in rural areas.

Many CSOs attempted to extend their outreach in response to the continuing health crisis and were somewhat more successful in 2021 as COVID-19 restrictions and curfews gradually eased, allowing a limited return to in-person meetings. However, restrictions on assembly remained a challenge, especially in highly populated areas like Amman, where the threat of COVID-19 was more prevalent. Most CSOs focus their work on traditional target groups in their local communities and lack the necessary resources to extend their reach. Because CSO work typically depends upon donor agendas, it often also targets specific groups, such as refugees.

CSOs are required to have strategic plans in order to register and obtain foreign funding, and most are committed to clearly defining their missions and objectives. Though the COVID-19 crisis and lockdowns forced many organizations to deviate from their traditional objectives, many were able to return to their primary objectives in



2021. CSOs continue to have varying abilities to evaluate their performance and measure their level of achievement and impact.

By law, a society (registered with MoSD) is required to have a governing board, while a non-profit company (registered with MoITS) is required to have an executive board. Given COVID-19 limitations in 2020, the government had ordered the postponement of internal elections for governing bodies of unions, societies, federations, and sports clubs; instead, they were permitted to take place beginning in January 2021. There remains a wide disparity in organizations' ability to define appropriate roles, responsibilities, and job titles. Some organizations, particularly CSOs focused primarily on charitable purposes, are run by families and often fail to engage youth in the administration of the organization. Those organizations also frequently struggle with institutional capacity and lack clear legal structures, such as governance standards and procedures, in their bylaws. Most CSOs—even larger, higher capacity CSOs—lack clear and up-to-date internal policies on issues like preventing violence and harassment in the work environment.

When the COVID-19 lockdown began in March 2020, many CSOs stopped operating, and even as CSOs gradually returned to operations, some projects remained suspended and funding cuts continued to be a significant obstacle in 2021. Some organizations were forced to lay off some employees and merge their branches. For instance, Doctors Without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières, MSF) ended one of its largest interventions responding to the needs of Syrian refugees in northern Jordan, reorienting its priorities and handing work over to other actors and the Jordanian Ministry of Health. As the health crisis eased over the course of 2021 and CSOs returned to full operations, organizations were able to expand their staffs and were faced with the need to build their technical and administrative capacities, including reporting, preparation of project proposals, and attracting funding.

The protection legislation, Defense Order No. 6, which was passed in April 2020, banned employers from dismissing workers during the pandemic in order to protect Jordan's already frail economy. However, according to a report by Middle East Eye, in 2021, thirty-one international NGOs and foreign ambassadors pressured Jordanian authorities for exemptions from the law in order to dismiss local staff, saying the measure had left some of the organizations "on the brink of failure." The law was also actively opposed by the Jordan NGOs Forum (JONAF), given the financial strains it placed on employers, and NGOs argued that they were forced to keep paying employees on fixed-term contracts who would have been released with the end of their projects. Ultimately, the report recorded a total of seventy-two dismissals from the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Mercy Corps, and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). Information about dismissals from national organizations or within the private sector was not publicly available.

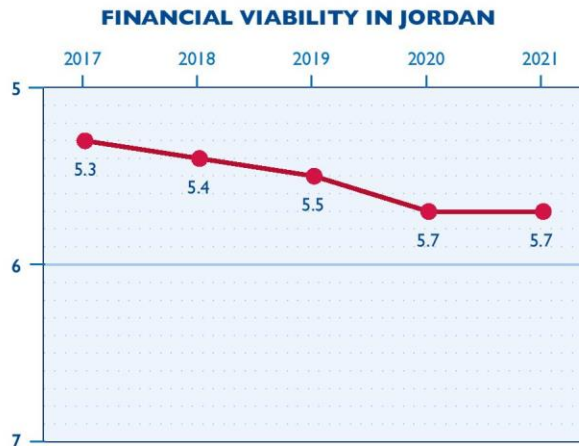
CSO engagement of volunteers was very limited in 2020 and continued to decline in 2021. According to the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) World Giving Index 2022, which reports on developments in 2021, at just 9 percent, Jordan had the third lowest participation rate for volunteering in the world. Some report that the lack of clear goals among CSOs limits their ability to attract volunteers. This is particularly true for charities, which often share opportunities only with experts through personal relationships.

Many organizations rely on donors to provide the equipment and software that facilitate their operations, such as financial and administrative systems. Otherwise, CSOs rely on social media platforms and personal email accounts to manage their work. Some CSOs continue to lack the financial resources to upgrade their information and communication technology (ICT), while others lack the required technical expertise. Larger organizations and RINGOs often have greater technical capacities. Because many organizations began to return to in-person activities—an option that their beneficiaries also preferred—there was little focus on improving their technical capacities in 2021.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY: 5.7

The overall financial viability of the CSO sector remained unchanged in 2021. Foreign funding to the CSO sector remained low compared to pre-COVID-19 levels and local funding somewhat declined as both the private and public sectors continued to grapple with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

CSOs struggled to diversify their sources of funding in 2021 as private sector support declined and the public sector directed the vast majority of its efforts towards combating the health crisis. Some organizations had to merge their branches, suspend projects or programs, or close operations entirely due to their dependence on



local funding sources, such as grants from ministries and the private sector. Projects working with refugees were particularly impacted by this decline in 2021.

Large organizations and RNGOs receive the largest share of local support, whether from the private sector or from ministries and official bodies. RNGOs often receive much of this funding, given that they do not need to obtain as many official approvals, are able to reach different groups in most regions of the country, and enjoy a positive reputation among local communities. These larger organizations also tend to have more qualified staff. Smaller organizations and charities therefore work to build partnerships with them to obtain a portion of the funding. These factors similarly apply to competition among CSOs for foreign funding, with

smaller organizations and charities face added obstacles in writing project proposals in English.

Foreign funding to CSOs remained low compared to pre-COVID-19 levels. According to the Registry Council, 192 foreign funding requests were approved in 2021 (data for 2020 approvals is not available, due to the lack of official reporting during the lockdown). Major donors in 2021 included USAID and the European Union (EU), but data on the total amount of funding approved in the year is not publicly available. As discussed above, delays in the approval of foreign funding particularly impeded those CSOs working in areas like human rights and gender-based violence, and some reported that the government tended to reject foreign grants for projects it considered primarily under the government purview.

CSOs improved their fundraising capacity in 2021 as they worked to collect donations online, given continued restrictions on in-person activities. The Naua online platform was particularly impactful in helping CSOs and voluntary initiatives collect donations. An initiative of the Crown Prince Foundation, Naua aims to promote philanthropy and develop a sense of social responsibility through networking between CSOs like the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization and individual and corporate donors; the platform is open to all organizations and individuals. CSOs like the King Hussein Cancer Center and Al-Aman Fund for the Future of Orphans also collected donations through the eFAWATEER.com platform of the Central Bank of Jordan. Still, individual giving remained limited, and according to the CAF World Giving Index 2022, only 14 percent of survey respondents had donated money in the previous month, placing Jordan in the bottom ten of the countries surveyed.

Few CSOs have been able to generate income through the provision of products and services since the start of the pandemic. This was especially true for smaller organizations and charities. For example, for-profit kitchens run by some societies were notably impacted by the nationwide lockdowns and curfews. Income from renting halls and facilities also declined as events were postponed or shifted to online platforms. The government contracts some CSOs to provide care services for orphans, those deprived of family ties, and juveniles.

In 2021, there was no change in CSOs' financial management systems, operations, or procedures. Societies are legally required to submit annual financial and administrative reports, but financial capacities vary widely. Larger institutions and RNGOs are more likely to have qualified staff, strong financial systems, and a higher level of governance compared to medium and small organizations. Partnerships between large and small organizations can be beneficial in knowledge sharing, particularly in regard to financial management, meeting donor requirements, and carrying out internal financial audit procedures.

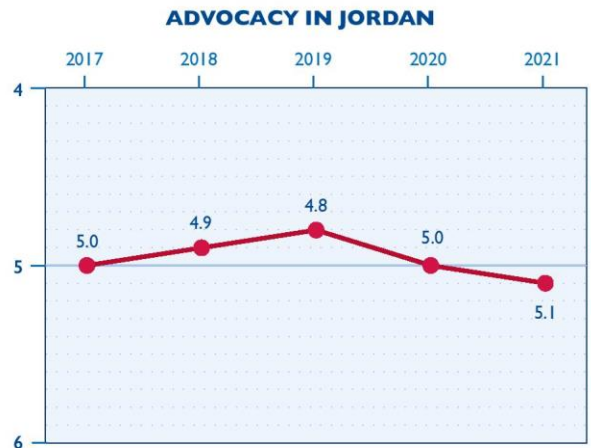
ADVOCACY: 5.1

CSO advocacy slightly deteriorated in 2021 as CSOs struggled to adapt their tactics to communicate with or lobby the government in the midst of pandemic restrictions.

Civil society's ability to influence government decision making was limited in 2021, even as some coordination was evident in consultations around the Law on Societies. The second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic recession affected the quantity and types of advocacy efforts made by CSOs due to limitations on in-

person meetings or demonstrations and CSOs' available funding for such initiatives. In 2021, CSOs still depended heavily on traditional methods of advocacy and there were few attempts to shift to new tactics, such as using social media and digital tools to influence decision makers.

Some CSO involvement in government decision making was evident in their engagement with the Royal Committee to Modernize the Political System. Appointed in 2021, the Committee included representatives of CSOs and parties and drafted a new Political Parties Law (passed in early 2022). It reviewed the existing law, considered international and Arab best practices, and conducted nearly ninety dialogues with a wide range of political and partisan representatives. CSO input was evident in the new law, particularly in strengthening the roles and rights of women, youth, and people with disabilities in party and public life.



Government decisions rarely took into account input or advocacy campaigns from CSOs in 2021. For instance, the government enabled the Ministry of Environment to reset the boundaries of the Dana Biosphere Reserve to start copper mining operations in the nature reserve. This decision was made without consulting the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN), which oversees the reserve and strongly opposed the move through online campaigns.

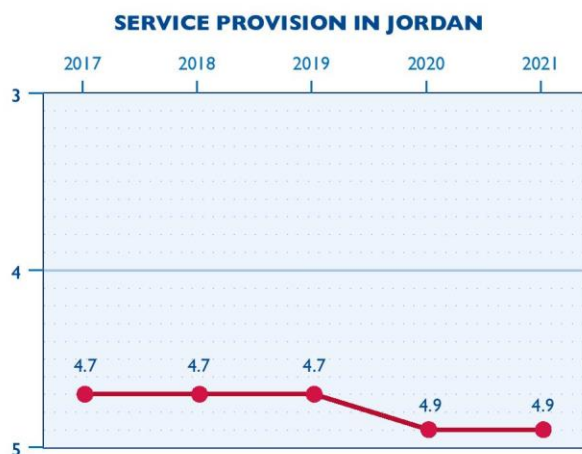
In Amman, protests in March and November called for the repeal of the Defense Law and expressed frustration with the government's handling of the economic and health crises. The Defense Law, activated for the first time in March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, granted the government with sweeping and relatively unrestricted powers. By November, the continuing economic crisis and impact of inflation spurred further demonstrations. Throughout the year, the Amman Chamber of Commerce (ACC) and other business associations actively voiced concerns about the impact of the Defense Law on small and medium enterprises, both through public statements and through meetings with government authorities. The head of the ACC, for instance, publicly described the government's measures as "unjustified" and stressed the resulting lack of trust between the public and the government, heightened by the government's failure to consult with the private sector before issuing the regulations.

Jordanian journalists called for the rejection of proposed amendments to media regulations, especially in regard to licensing fees for news websites, the licensing and monitoring of audio-visual works, broadcasting licenses, and radio and television re-broadcasting. The Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists (CDFJ) also highlighted the potential impact of the proposed amendments and the restrictions they would place on activists on social media. The amendments were seen as a threat to media independence and would significantly increase annual fees, adding to the financial crisis already facing independent news media in the country; they remained under discussion and not yet approved as of the end of 2021.

Also in 2021, women's organizations, including the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JCNW), organized a demonstration in front of Parliament to call for the approval of an amendment to Article Six of the Constitution. The amendment would add "sex" to the Article, which currently only ban discrimination based on "race, language, and religion." The women's movement in Jordan has been active for over three decades and used the opportunity to call attention to wider demands, with the slogan "Equality is a right." Opponents to the amendment fear long-term repercussions on Jordan's family affairs laws, which are based on Islamic legal teachings. Discussions around the proposed amendment continued into 2022.

In 2021, advocacy for CSO law reform showed some promise of MoSD consulted with CSOs and created a committee to review the Law on Societies. More than 2,500 CSO representatives participated in the consultations and CSOs provided additional input online. MoSD later ended meetings of the committee and consultations, pointing to a lack of consensus, but remained open to suggestions submitted through the Registry Council website. Though some CSOs saw the existence of these channels for dialogue as an important step, others were disappointed by the lack of tangible outcome thus far.

SERVICE PROVISION: 4.9



CSO service provision remained unchanged overall in 2021 as CSOs continued to adapt to limited funding and ongoing COVID-19 restrictions.

Traditionally, local and international CSOs operating in Jordan offer a wide variety of services in areas including law, education, health, training, rehabilitation, women's rights, and more. However, CSO service provision continued to be impacted by the COVID-19 crisis, particularly due to ongoing restrictions on in-person activities; even as some restrictions were lifted, some buildings and services were limited to those who had been vaccinated. CSOs continued to try to adapt their services to this challenging environment, for instance, by providing psychological counseling for survivors of gender-based violence over the phone or online rather

than in person. Still, organizations struggled to use technology to adequately provide their usual services given lack of ICT, limited staff capacity, or the beneficiaries' limited access to technology.

CSO services benefit various segments of the Jordanian society, including women, youth and children, and people with disabilities, as well as the refugee population, without discrimination. Often, however, services provided to local communities are based on the action plans and agendas of foreign donors, rather than on local needs assessments.

The various orders issued under the Defense Law, including limitations on public gatherings (Defense Order No. 3), continued to negatively impact CSO operations in 2021. Defense Order No. 5 suspended the normal process of litigation, in turn suspending some legal services and affecting issues related to child labor and juveniles. Small organizations were further impacted by the application of the Social Security Law, which required employers to include all employees in social security, thereby imposing a financial burden on already-struggling organizations.

CSO services in 2021 also remained limited due to wider funding challenges. Some CSOs reported, for example, that refugee relief work was not effective due to a lack of foreign funding allocated to that area, and the World Food Program (WFP) warned of "severe underfunding," threatening its ability to provide food assistance to more than 500,000 beneficiaries per month.

CSOs remained unable to recover the costs of their services in 2021 by charging nominal fees, renting their halls, or providing certain products, for instance through for-profit kitchens. Some organizations had previously collected nominal fees for training services, but ongoing restrictions on gatherings significantly impacted these opportunities.

The government recognizes CSOs' value added in some areas and contracts them to provide select services. MoSD, for example, contracts CSOs to provide care for orphans and juveniles. On the whole, however, the government did little to acknowledge the services provided by CSOs in 2021.

SECTORAL INFRASTRUCTURE: 5.1

The infrastructure supporting the CSO sector slightly deteriorated in 2021 as intermediary support organizations (ISOs) struggled to meet the increased need for support and training opportunities were limited.

ISOs continued to be severely impacted by limited funding, which affected the size and nature of services that they offered to CSOs. At the same time, the need for ISO services like training and technical support increased. This need was especially evident among small community organizations. In 2021, ISOs such as the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, the Jordan Hashemite Fund for Human Development (JOHUD), and the Crown Prince Foundation provided services to CSOs including training, technical support, and consultancies to help develop missions and strategic plans.

In general, ISO services are available in most governorates. ISOs, including RNGOs such as the King Hussein Foundation and the King Abdullah Fund for Development, serve as local grant makers by sub-granting international donor funds to meet locally identified needs and projects. This system of grant making is also more efficient for foreign donors because those ISOs are not required to obtain approvals for foreign funding. Local sub-granting increased in 2021 but remained below pre-pandemic levels and was not enough to overcome other declines in local funding.

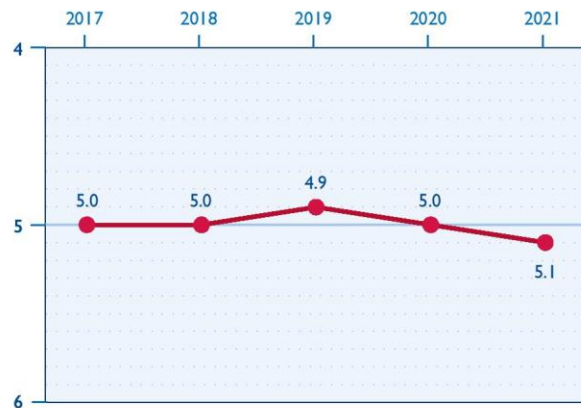
Foreign donors also encourage coalitions and partnerships to achieve specific development objectives and build alliances among CSOs, but the legal environment does not encourage collective work

between CSOs, as discussed above. However, some CSO coalitions were active in 2021. The King Hussein Foundation (KHF), for instance, led a consortium of several organizations under the three-year “You have a right, a choice.. claim it!” project, supported by the Netherlands, to improve national and local responses to gender-based violence. The consortium also addressed the rights of women with disabilities and worked to enhance women’s rights in marriage contracts.

CSO training opportunities are available in Amman and in the governorates, primarily in Arabic, and gradually began to return to in-person sessions in 2021. However, available programs are not based on on-the-ground needs assessments so do not necessarily meet the needs of CSOs or activists in local communities. CSOs lack opportunities for training in proposal writing and attracting funding, non-profit financial management, and conducting advocacy campaigns.

Intersectoral partnerships remained limited in 2021 as the public sector focused on mitigating the effects of the pandemic and the private sector continued to struggle with financial difficulties. Social responsibility programs offered by private sector institutions also declined. There were, however, some prominent examples of partnerships with large, well-known CSOs. The Jordanian branch of the Orange telecommunications company, for instance, continued to work alongside JOHUD, a partnership that began in 2001. In 2021, Orange supported JOHUD’s mobile clinic as part of the Goodwill Campaign, which raised awareness of preventive measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and provided health care to those in need. Orange also signed an agreement to support the establishment of three new sites under the umbrella of the Women’s Digital Center program, implemented in partnership with JOHUD. The new sites will fall under a three-year program co-funded by Orange and the EU called Innovation for Enterprise Growth and Jobs.

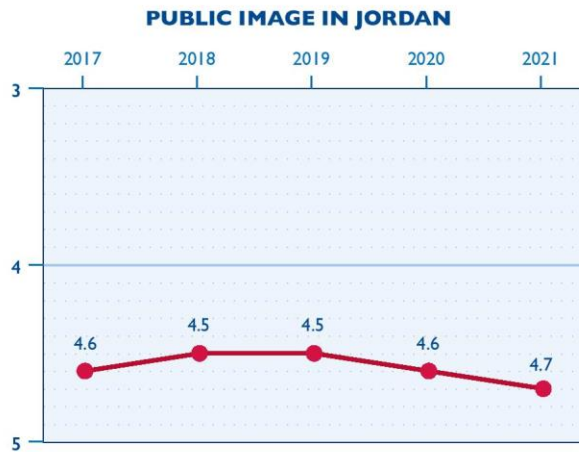
SECTORAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN JORDAN



PUBLIC IMAGE: 4.7

The public image of the CSO sector slightly deteriorated in 2021 due to the selectivity of media coverage and negative statements from some government officials and members of the public regarding CSOs’ missions and objectives.

While the COVID-19 crisis continued to receive the largest share of media coverage, traditional public media and private media dedicated notably more attention to CSO activities in 2021. The Jordanian state television broadcaster, for instance, hosted four to five organizations every week in order to spread awareness about the activities and roles of CSOs within Jordanian society. While this was spurred primarily by the media’s drive to increase viewership, not necessarily by CSO outreach, it did increase visibility for some. Civil society representatives were also widely present in popular programs on Al-Mamlaka TV and Roya TV to discuss topics like education and workers’ rights in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and evaluating the government’s handling of the crisis. Some critics, however, noted that programs featured the same select few representatives from civil society, raising questions about the diversity of perspectives being promoted. Those few representatives that appeared in the media tended also to be those with good relationships with the government.



As in 2020, only some CSOs enjoyed some level of public support. Some members of the public, and even government representatives and decision makers, continue to believe that CSOs exploit foreign funding and are working to spy for or implement foreign agendas, far from the customs and traditions of Jordanian society. The large increase in the number of charities addressing the Syrian refugee crisis greatly contributed to this belief and concerns about foreign funding targeting special interests. However, charities and local communities maintain more positive relationships in rural areas, and these communities are more familiar with CSOs' role and the services they provide as compared to that of CSOs in large cities like Amman, Zarqa, and Irbid.

Observers report that government agencies typically prefer to work and build relationships with certain organizations, particularly large CSOs and RNGOs, while ignoring the contributions of community-based organizations and small charities that work primarily with women and youth. The private sector's perception of the role of CSOs did not change significantly in 2021, but their engagement with CSOs through social responsibility programs somewhat decreased due to the continued financial crisis.

The use of social media varies widely between CSOs. Large CSOs and RNGO typically have more resources to invest in hiring communications specialists, while smaller CSOs lack the necessary finances and internal capacity. In general, organizations increased their use of social media to raise awareness about their work and promote their public image in 2021.

Most CSOs publish annual programmatic and financial reports, though they do not proactively share the results of their work with the public. In 2021, the coalition of Jordanian human rights CSOs, Himmam, commissioned experts to prepare a guide on financial policies and conduct an assessment on the standards of good governance within its member organizations to increase accountability and transparency.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed herein are those of the panelists and other project researchers and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or FHI 360.

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