**Youth Participation in Local Governance  
Final Evaluation**

***FINAL REPORT***

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**List of acronyms and abbreviations**

CSO Civil Society Organization

DGTTF Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund

FG Focus Group

HCY Higher Council for Youth

ICT Information and Communication Technology

IT Information Technology

IP Implementing Partner

MOMA Ministry of Municipal Affairs

MOPD Ministry of Political Development

MOPIC Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation

NGO Non-Government Organization

PB Project Board

PSUT Princess Sumaya University for Technology

UNDAF UN Development Assistance Framework

UNDG United Nations Development Group

UNDP United Nations Development Programme

UNFPA United Nations Population Fund

UNV UN Volunteers

YPLG Youth Participation in Local Governance

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**Responsibility**

This report represents the thoughts and opinions of the Evaluator. As such, he bears sole responsibility for the analysis and recommendations contained within it.

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### Executive summary

Youth Participation in Local Governance (YPLG) was implemented during a period of intense political transformation in Jordan and the wider MENA region. The project orientation was relevant to the priorities of the country and Jordan’s National Youth Strategy. Furthermore, it fell in line with UNDAF priorities on youth participation and took lead from UNDP’s Response Strategy for Transformative Change championed by Youth in the Arab Region, with its emphasis on “understanding power relations, wealth distribution and accountability from the ‘bottom-up’ and engage at the local level beyond technical capacity development of individual units”, in addition to “fostering the use of community driven development approaches” (p38). Given its ‘experimental’ nature within DGTTF, the project can be considered to be innovative in that it sought to explore relatively new channels for democratic engagement: “there is little work done on e-service delivery, e-participation and access to information” (p39).

Given these contextual factors, the project was designed and implemented is such a way as to generate strong ownership, debate and capacity development of an entirely new constellation of youth groups. The Focus Group (FG) formed under the project to guide the development of the game and youth portal in fact came to represent a wide range of youth voices capable of disseminating and applying new knowledge and opinions towards local policy advocacy, and even possibly national policy advocacy on wider governance issues. This can be considered an unanticipated but important achievement of the project.

Further elaboration was needed within the Project Document about the intended scope for youth participation activities, in particular how ‘access to representation’ and ‘access to partnership’ would be achieved. The Project Document could, for example, have explored how the project could turn the Youth Portal into a ‘two-way communication channel’ and facilitate ‘opportunities for meaningful participation’. The project placed only a small emphasis on assessing uptake of local advocacy efforts by FG members towards their Municipalities.

It is evident that a major hindrance to the effective implementation of the project stemmed from the limited capacities of HCY as the Implementing Partner (IP) and, in particular, the decision to situate primary responsibility within its Administrative Development Directorate. The project would have benefited from an initial capacity assessment, organisational development support and a sustained dialogue by the main project stakeholders on the overall objectives and results. This was particularly important as continuous engagement by other HCY Directorates (eg. Public Outreach, Media) and Ministries (eg. MOMA, MOPD) was needed in order to align project activities with the priorities of the National Youth Strategy and ensure better content generation for the game in particular. In practice, only the Administrative Development Directorate at HCY took on an active role in the project, which consequently took on a mainly technical focus related to the delivery of the game and portal. Since all FG meetings took place over the weekend, there were very few interactions between the FG and HCY.

The project developed a first-of-a-kind ‘educational game’ for Jordan. The White Paper on Youth Apathy had a primary focus on electoral democracy. Furthermore, only 1% of the total project budget was committed to acquiring Local Governance expertise and the ‘exposure visits’, while good, could have been expanded considerably. While the game had excellent graphic presentation, and it included a statement that encourages youth to oversee the performance of elected representatives, its content was limited to a basic interpretation of electoral democracy at the local level and the promotion of civic engagement and environmental sustainability. This stemmed from the fact that there was limited involvement of PSUT professors with the students developing the storyboard; UNDP only became aware at a late stage that PSUT was not able to meet the content requirements and therefore the Project Coordinator took measures to ensure that the basic requirements were met. The game ultimately failed to adequately address participatory democracy and local service delivery challenges, including the accountability interface between citizens and their local governments.

The Youth Portal represents a unique opportunities and tool for the Government of Jordan to explore dialogue with Jordanian youth on a wider set of issues than local governance. Administrative delays meant that the project has remained at the ‘access to information’ and ‘access to conversation’ stages. The portal was launched at the end of October 2013, which meant there was less than 2 months to disseminate and ‘test’ it as a means to enhance ‘representation’ and ‘partnerships’. Consequently, use by a wider target group remains limited, with only 193 users currently registered on the portal.

Despite some of the above obstacles and the project’s rather limited budget, and bearing in mind the nature of YPLG as an experimental DGTTF project, the Evaluator would like to commend UNDP’s efforts and achievements with regard to the mobilization of Jordanian youth activists, in addition to the development of the Portal as a new tool to stimulate wider youth participation in Jordan. To capitalize on this particular success, UNDP will need to enter into a dialogue with HCY in order to ensure that it urgently takes ownership of the portal, resolves problems related to its Administrator role, appoints and trains new content management staff (with sufficient qualifications), mobilises the technical committee (with sufficient youth representation), enhances the effectiveness of the portal through urgent responses to requests to upload content, develops operational and marketing plans, and disseminates and analyses the use of the portal.

Failing that, UNDP might need to consider alternative arrangements that will ensure the successful utilisation of the Portal. In this regard, the Evaluator recommends that UNDP develop a new project that remains within GoJ, UNDAF and UNDP priorities but: (i) broadens support and tools to the FG and stakeholders (using forthcoming UN youth mapping) as vehicles for youth participation in wider governance issues; (ii) considers options to support national policy advocacy by youth groups; and (iii) completes unfulfilled aspects of YPLG (overcome obstacles and enhance effectiveness of portal including the development of operational and marketing plans, recruit and train content manager, dissemination and analysis, etc.).

### Introduction

Youth Participation in Local Governance (YPLG) was developed as an ‘experimental’ project by UNDP and UNV Jordan, implemented using UNDP’s Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund (DGTTF) with a small grant of US$150,000. The objective as indicated in the original Project Document was to increase youth political participation and civic engagement in local governance through three strategic phases that would address lack of inclusive youth access to participation using an online portal and game on local governance:

YPLG included a strong emphasis on ‘innovative’ ICT tools, in particular two new applications: a digital game on local governance and a web-portal. It targeted young people in the age range 15-30.

During the first phase, it was envisaged that the new youth portal would provide a one-way access to information on why and how to participate. Content strategies were to be developed by young people to reflect their needs and interest, whilst also simulating the structure and “rules” of local councils. The idea was to provide young people with the required information and analytical skills to engage with local government institutions. A mapping study of existing youth initiatives was foreseen to: (a) provide content for the portal; (b) identify partnerships.

During the second phase, it was envisaged the portal would evolve into a two-way communication channel, with the game launched to the general public on the portal. A white paper was to be developed on the reasons for young people’s apathy towards meaningful participation and engagement in local governance, in order to identify gaps and opportunities and provide input for further development of the game and portal. The portal was intended to secure active engagement for young people including through blogs, surveys, social media platforms, etc. A risk management plan was to be developed before launching this phase, in order to address any potential online conflict.

The final phase was intended to explore ‘opportunities for meaningful participation’ of young people engaged in the game and portal. Incentives, such as competitions and rewards, were to be considered, based on interest and active participation. These incentives would link online participation to offline participation and would include: internship opportunities at offices of local council members, volunteerism in youth local councils, skills building opportunities with project partners, etc.

To guide implementation, a Results and Resources Framework was developed. This included the primary intended output: “Increased awareness among young people about local governance and political participation at local level”, baselines and output targets for 2012 and 2013. These targets primarily emphasized the portal and game as a means to improve knowledge. There was also a target to “establish platforms to channel youth participation at local level…in at least 2 Municipalities”.

While the Higher Council for Youth (HCY) was identified as the Implementing Partner (IP), youth participation was anticipated in the design, implementation and follow-up of the project. In this regard, the Project Document emphasized voluntarism in the conceptual development of the project outputs, and subsequently in outreach/partnerships. Princess Sumaya University for Technology (PSUT) was to be contracted to assist with developing the game. UNDP was expected to be involved through the recruitment of project personnel who would support HCY to implement the project. The Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC) was expected to oversee the overall performance of the implementing partner.

The project envisaged the establishment of strategic partnerships with other government entities, development partners and local NGOs to expand outreach. A technical committee of all relevant national partners was to be formed.

According to the Project Document, a Project Board (PB) would be established for “making management decisions concerning the project including approval of annual work plans, budgets and any revisions to the plans and budgets”. The PB was expected to convene annually, or as necessary when issues were raised by the parties. The PB was to be chaired by the HCY, and include representatives from MOPIC and UNDP. The options existed to include other project partners in the PB.

A Technical Committee was also to be formed composed of 3-4 relevant HCY directorates. Its role was to coordinate project implementation and report to the Project Board. In addition, a senior HCY manager was expected to be assigned to oversee project implementation.

The initial Risk Log identified the following (high-impact) risks: (i) exclusion for youth with no internet and/or computer access; (ii) online conflict caused by portal. The updated risk analysis was expanded to include: (i) merging IP with Ministry of Culture; (ii) delay in signing MoU with PSUT; (iii) delay in launch date; and (iv) game storyboard not rich in political participation content.

The project was implemented during 17 months (August 2012 – December 2013) against a backdrop of political turbulence and continuous advances in ICT and mobile technology. In addition to US$150,000, carry-over funds of US$14,000 were added from a closed Canadian project.

### Purpose

The purpose of the assignment, as specified in UNDP’s Procurement Notice dated 10 October 2013, is to conduct a final evaluation of the Youth Participation in Local Governance project.

As per the Procurement Notice, the following criteria and main questions should be assessed within the scope of the final evaluation:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Main questions** |
| Project Management | * Are the Project Management arrangements appropriate at the team level and Project Board level? |
| Project Design | * To what extent did the design of the project help in achieving its own goals? * Were the context, problem, needs and priorities well analyzed while designing the project? * Were there clear objectives and strategy? * Were there clear baselines indicators and/or benchmarks for performance? * Was the process of project design sufficiently participatory? Was there any impact of the process? |
| Relevance and appropriateness | * Was the project relevant, appropriate and strategic to HCY goals and challenges? * Was the project relevant, appropriate and strategic to the mandate, strategy, functions, roles, and responsibilities of the HCY as an institution and to the key actors within that institution? * Was the project relevant, appropriate and strategic to UNDP mandate? |
| Effectiveness and efficiency | * Were the actions to achieve the outputs and outcomes effective and efficient? * Were there any lessons learned, failures/lost opportunities? What might have been done better or differently? * How did the project deal with issues and risks? * Were the outputs achieved in a timely manner? * Were the resources utilized in the best way possible? |
| Impact and sustainability | * Will outputs/outcomes lead to benefits beyond the existing project? * Were actions and results owned by the local partners and stakeholders? * Was capacity (individuals, institution, systems) built through the actions of the project? * What is the level of contribution of the project management arrangements to national ownership of the set objectives, results, and outputs * Were the modes of deliveries of the outputs appropriate to promote national ownership and sustainability of the results achieved |

### Approach and methodology

This Final Evaluation was conducted within one month of project completion, during January 2014. It focussed on an assessment of project performance using United Nations Development Group’s (UNDG) Results-Based Management approach (Evaluation). In this regard, an assessment of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability was made using the original Results and Resources Matrix, other relevant documents and consultations with concerned stakeholders. Additional reflections were made in the form of recommendations on potential follow-up (output-to-purpose) in relation to future UNDP programming.

An initial desk review focused on the Project Document, annual work plans, activity reports, terms of reference, minutes of meetings, projects outputs (Mapping on Youth Initiatives, Study on Youth Apathy, etc.), other relevant documents (National Youth Strategy, UNDAF 2008-2012 and 2013-2017, UNDP Response Strategy to Transformative Change Championed by Youth in the Arab Region), online reference materials, websites and social media.

Subsequent field work took place during 19 – 23 January 2014, including interviews and focus-group discussions (FGDs) with project stakeholders and partners. The following stakeholders were met: HCY Assistant Secretary General and Director of Administrative Development; Project Coordinator; 3 members of youth focus group; UNDP; UNV and UNFPA (concerning future mapping on youth initiatives). In addition, ‘demonstrations’ of project deliverables were organized with PSU (game) and ECHO Techology Jordan (portal).

### Jordanian local governance in brief

‘Local governance’ in the Jordanian context can be viewed from a number of institutional perspectives. While the sub-national governance system is composed of deconcentrated units of the central government (Governorates) and elected local government “vested with financial and administrative independence” (Municipalities), the reality is that Municipalities are not fully granted these privileges, despite the fact they are mentioned exclusively in the Municipalities Law. The emergence of a nascent civil society in recent years opens opportunities for new forms of interaction between citizens and the state at the local level. Yet these relationships are new or almost completely unexplored.

According to the Municipalities Law, Jordanian Municipalities have 29 areas of responsibility which primarily relate to urban services, such as cleaning, spraying insecticides, street lighting, construction and maintenance of roads, slaughterhouses, markets, public parks, libraries and town planning. Municipalities also have a general local development mandate. MOI and MOMA exhibit major tutelage roles over the sector and only 3 per cent of total government expenditures occur in Municipalities. Municipalities receive income primarily from central government transfers and local taxes and fees. However, the financial situation of most Municipalities is very weak since many have a high salary burden, unsustainable debt service and revenue receipts are limited. In this regard, the central government has failed to commit fully to its obligations in terms of fiscal transfers and local capacity is limited in terms of collection.

Jordanian Municipalities currently suffer from a number of capacity deficiencies: outdated equipment and logistical means to ensure delivery and maintenance of services and assets; limited attention to urban growth and local development planning; *de facto* authority vested in the hands of the Mayor with limited checks-and-balances; patronage-based system of recruitment; inadequate civic engagement and a steady decline in approval ratings; outdated financial management practices and systems; severely limited investment capacity. Furthermore, there are aspects of the current legal framework which need to be reconsidered to ensure the full realisation of democratic accountability at the local level.

The above picture is by no means uniform, with large variations, dependent on the size and capacity of Municipalities. To compound these challenges, there is an insufficient regulatory framework to guide municipalities in their administrative duties. Finally, there is insufficient clarity in role division between Governorates and Municipalities, and the role of the Governors in particular, which creates ambiguity in terms of overlaps and oversight.

### Findings

#### Project Design

A number of aspects of the design can be considered to have made a positive contribution to the achievement of project goals. The participatory consultation process used to develop the content of the youth portal and game resulted in strong ownership, debate and capacity building of an entirely new constellation of youth groups, at a time when there was a real need to ‘capture’ an emerging group of youth activists in Jordan. This can be considered an important achievement.

The introduction of a Facebook page to accommodate the discussions of the Focus Group (FG) was a sensible step given the geographic spread of FG members, delays in developing the portal and (as-yet-unresolved) challenges related to the approval process for introducing new content onto the portal and the sustained management of the portal. It seems doubtful that HCY in its current format have sufficient political development or local governance expertise to successfully carry out the task of monitoring user content.

Output targets as defined in the Project Document were by-and-large relevant and sufficient in reach given the scale of the intervention (one exception is noted below).

The project would have benefited from an initial capacity assessment, organisational development support and a sustained dialogue by the main project stakeholders on the overall objectives and results. This was particularly important as continuous engagement by other HCY Directorates (eg. Public Outreach, Media) and Ministries (eg. MOMA, MOPD) was needed in order to align project activities with the priorities of the National Youth Strategy and ensure better content generation for the game in particular. HCY reported that they were preparing an MOU with MoMA but this was never completed, most probably due to the ministerial changes. In practice, only the Administrative Development Directorate at HCY took on an active role in the project (a role it was assigned by Project Board Chairman), which consequently took on a mainly technical focus related to the delivery of the game and portal. Since all FG meetings took place over the weekend because the members had university or work during the week, HCY employees never expressed interest in attending. Thus, there were very few interactions between the FG and HCY, and these interactions were usually initiated by UNDP. In addition, follow-up by the Project Board was insufficient to foresee and meet these challenges. This issue is dealt with further under sections 4.2 (Project Management) and 4.5 (Impact and Sustainability).

There are a number of other aspects of the design that did not support goal achievement. The Project Document lacked a much-needed interpretation of ‘local governance’ in its widest sense. Such an assessment during the early stages of project implementation might have resulted in the definition of clearer entry points for interaction between civil society and ‘local governments’, or in the definition of accountability relationship between citizens, Municipalities, Governorates and Ministries. Furthermore, the limited project budget (and chosen prioritisation within it) meant that investments to secure an in-depth understanding of local governance were not prioritized. As a result, activities targeting advocacy towards local authorities were poorly defined, and actual efforts that were effectively pursued by FG members were not fully registered or fed back into the project.

While the logic was clear concerning the early stages of ‘access to information’ and ‘access to communication’, the Project Document lacked clarity on the extent to which ‘access to representation’ and ‘access to partnership’ would be addressed and, more specifically, how it would be addressed. For example, while the Project Document mentioned that “the portal will provide a voice and active engagement for young people including through blogs, surveys, social media platforms, etc.” and that it “would evolve into a two-way communication channel”, the mechanisms by which youth advocacy might be received, interpreted, disseminated and responded to were not elaborated. Having said that, UNDP made specific efforts to pursue the output target to establish ‘platforms to channel youth participation at local level in at least 2 municipalities’ (see section 5.5 below).

All of the above meant that the project retained a rather technical focus related to the development of the game and youth portal, as a tool to foster real interaction between youth and their Municipalities.

#### Project Management

As stated above, an insufficient assessment of the capacity and ownership of the IP and its concerned Directorates meant that certain aspects of the design met with challenges during implementation. The position of the IP as a government authority changed twice during implementation. Furthermore, the selection of the Administrative Development Directorate as the responsible unit within HCY had a bearing on the prioritization of project activities and, ultimately, its focus. While concerned HCY staff were committed to project implementation, it is worth noting that, of the three HCY staff involved in the project, the Head of the Directorate took on a primarily administrative role related to the approval of expenditure and signing of official documents, while the E-Governance responsible followed up on portal development and the IT responsible provided IT support. Consequently, ICT-related aspects were prioritized over key areas of concern and an overall connection to HCY strategic priorities was missed. Given this scenario, the existing tools of the IP were too limited to interpret and fully utilize the theme of ‘local governance’ and the ambitious choice of an ‘interactive’ communication tool to stimulate youth participation. Under its management, it therefore became difficult for the project to be viewed beyond a technical solution targeting youth awareness and municipal elections in October 2013.

Barring the choice of an alternative IP, a capacity assessment and support plan could have been foreseen to pre-empt potential challenges related to project implementation and sustainability. In addition, further efforts would have been required to ensure the transfer of knowledge on local governance to non-FG project stakeholders. Further investments in expert knowledge would have been required, in addition to enhanced communication with other relevant government authorities (Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Political Development and Parliamentary Affairs, Education, Higher Education, etc.).

While the Project Board met on three occasions and was used to emphasise sustainability issues, it could have entertained broader discussions about the scope of the project and introducing other relevant stakeholders (who could provide relevant input on LG content).

UNV was expected to provide National UNVs to work on the management of the portal. This did not happen because the portal and game were delayed due to the delay in the MOU and problems in the story board development.

The level of human resources committed to project management were justified given limited budget, and UNV/UNDP’s decision to engage a competent and driven Project Coordinator with strong roots in Jordanian youth activism paid dividends in terms of ‘capturing’ a key group of emerging youth activists in Jordan. Given the absence of UNDP’s Governance Analyst during the early stages of project implementation, UNDP recognised the need to transfer required knowledge on local governance to the Project Coordinator through exchanges with UNDP New York and Cairo. Further ‘coaching’ during the early stages of the project may have resulted in more targeted activities towards ‘access to representation’ and ‘access to partnership’.

#### Relevance and Appropriateness

The project orientation was relevant to the priorities of the country and the HCY and its guiding document, Jordan’s National Youth Strategy. Furthermore, it fell in line with UNDAF priorities on youth participation and took lead from UNDP’s Response Strategy for Transformative Change championed by Youth in the Arab Region, with its emphasis on “understanding power relations, wealth distribution and accountability from the ‘bottom-up’ and engage at the local level beyond technical capacity development of individual units”, in addition to “fostering the use of community driven development approaches” (p38). The project was also innovative in that it sought to explore relatively unexplored channels: “there is little work done on e-service delivery, e-participation and access to information” (p39).

While the project was therefore relevant, appropriate and strategic to UNDP mandate, as outlined in 5.2 above, the functional capacity and existing role of HCY was not fully attuned to the local advocacy focus of the project. While outputs related to increased youth awareness were achieved within the FG; institutional weaknesses within HCY had an impact on the completion of certain activities as foreseen by the Project Document (see Annex). Furthermore, these institutional deficiencies prevented the realisation of wider dissemination activities which, in turn, meant that ‘access to representation’ and ‘partnership’ outputs were not achieved. Furthermore, activities were consistent with overall goal but incomplete implementation prevented the full realisation of objectives and intended impact.

Given advancement in mobile technology during the lifetime of the project, further opportunities for dissemination and educational outreach may have been achieved through the development of a mobile application version of the game disconnected from the portal.

While the game had an excellent graphic presentation, its potential value in targeting the accountability interface between citizens and their governments (local councils) was only explored to a limited extent. Two stages of the game (waste management and election posters) were oriented more towards civic education in the area of environmental sustainability than local government accountability. An additional stage (running after the bus) provided a good entry point for dialogue on municipal services but was rather basic in that it did not present real-life municipality challenges (eg. budget constraints). Finally, while the last stage (choosing electoral candidates) presented the basic concept of electoral democracy, it fell short of exploring a continuous accountability relationship between citizens and locally elected politicians, after elections. In this sense, the game was too limited to have a sufficiently detailed impact on the desired target group.

The portal is the first of its kind in an Arab country. It represents a unique opportunity to explore dialogue on a wide set of issues concerning youth participation and governance; this opportunity should be explored with intent and efforts should be made to ensure it gains wider interest and usage.

#### Effectiveness and Efficiency

The Innovation Camp and FG were an effective means to raise awareness and promote dialogue (ie. access to information / conversation) among the initial target group. 118 individuals are likely to have had a direct increase in awareness as a result of their engagement in the project. 1724 fans signed up to the project’s Facebook page. After 3 months, the portal has 193 registered users, with the highest monthly registration witnessed in Oct 2013 (67 users), followed by Dec 2013 (59), Nov 2013 (49) and Jan 2014 (17). 86% of visitors were new (as opposed to returning) and the average visit length was 1.52 minutes. Out of 433 visits, 329 (76%) were from Jordan. Given the above statistics, it is difficult to assess directly-measureable impact in terms of the target of improved knowledge on local governance of 2000 young men and women through playing the game or using the portal.

Delayed implementation prevented the full realization of objectives, in terms of increasing awareness amongst a wider target group. Further efforts will therefore be required to ensure the effective functioning of the portal before it is possible to assess their real impact.

Of the two visits to Municipalities by the FG, the Salt visit was of most value because it allowed for a detailed discussion about Local Governance challenges, including with a former Mayor and Former Minister of Municipal Affairs. Other simulated exercises during the innovation camp were of value but with a limited focus on electoral democracy. It is the Evaluator’s opinion that significantly more resources should have been dedicated to exposing FG members to municipal service delivery, capacity and accountability, in addition to the identification and separation of services falling outside municipal responsibilities. While not within the direct scope of the project, the FG might even have used these lessons to provide input into a national policy dialogue (ie. concerning decentralisation), as well as local advocacy efforts.

The use of voluntarism was a real plus point for the project, although more efforts could have been invested to guide ‘outreach’ and ‘partnerships’ (as anticipated by Project Document). In this regard, the White Paper on Youth Apathy pointed out some alternatives for closer engagement between young people and their Municipalities. Furthermore, effectiveness would have been enhanced through a more direct engagement of local government stakeholders and sustained support and dissemination of individual advocacy efforts by FG members towards their Municipalities.

FG and HCY appeared to operate in parallel with limited interaction during project implementation; the Project Coordinator serving as the link between these two disconnected groups. This was to the disadvantaged of the project, since HCY missed an opportunity to hear directly from FG members about their concerns regarding local governance.

Any assessment of cost effectiveness must bear in mind that the total budget for this intervention was very small. Approximately two-thirds of all expenditure was incurred in relation to the development of the game and youth portal (including the Youth Innovation Camp). With such a large investment in a relatively small project, it was difficult to mobilise more funds towards further municipal field visits, local governance expertise and continued advocacy work of new youth platforms.

The table below gives a breakdown of expenditure.

Payroll costs represented about 15% of the total budget. About 4% of the budget was allocated towards local consultants. Only 1% of the total budget was used for Local Governance expertise; the remaining 4% was used to recruit a Social Media Assistant and Storyboard Writer.

There was evidence of cost effectiveness, for example, through the engagement of youth in the design and development of the game. However, PSUT would have ensured a higher quality and more targeted game by committing more of the management’s time to its development, and by introducing professional local governance expertise to explore a wider range of scenarios related to local government accountability.

#### Impact and Sustainability

Activities and results were well-owned by FG members. The knowledge and capacity of individuals from within the FG was developed through the project. Furthermore, as mentioned in section 5.1 above, UNDP made specific efforts to pursue the output target to establish ‘platforms to channel youth participation at local level in at least 2 municipalities’. Rather than establishing new platforms, UNDP invested its efforts into supporting existing ones in Salt and Manshiet Bani Hassan, the first of which (Salt Youth Coalition) has been very successful. UNDP also succeeded in influencing the work of national platforms such as Taqaddam, IAF Youth Wing, Jordanian Youth Parliament, and Taaleeleh.

The choice of HCY’s Administrative Development Directorate as a focal point for the project led to a rather limited interpretation of outputs and activities. More space should have been created by the IP to engage different directorates that might have been more inclined to content generation, such as the public outreach or media directorates, or HCY staff working on the National Youth Strategy.

As mentioned in section 5.3, the game that was developed was too limited to perform anything beyond a basic educational purpose. Furthermore, the choice to limit local governance content within the portal to the game reduces opportunities to fulfil the project objective of “Increased awareness among young people about local governance and political participation at local level”. Further elaboration/development of the game could be considered, but only within a focus on civic education to wider youth groups.

While the portal opens a potential channel for youth participation in wider governance issues, the limited fulfilment of project dissemination activities makes it impossible to assess real impact beyond this initial group. A sustained dialogue was needed from the outset between UNDP and the IP to ensure that outputs were targeted according to overall objectives and results. In addition, more time and investment are needed to ensure wider institutional impact.

The choice of a government domain name (a mandatory requirement of the government) and requirement for individual registration and approval of content might prevent a more in-depth use by a wider group of youths. HCY has been trained to take on an Administrator role for the portal but there is no evidence of the performance of this role since October 2013. The longer non-utilisation continues, the greater the risk that the portal will be seen as an ineffective means to address concerns voiced by Jordanian youth.

HCY has stated that it is committed to disseminate portal/game through ‘all its activities’ including training to Youth Centres/Management Board (up to 150 people) but further dissemination would appear to be conditional on further financing.

These issues mask the largest challenges to the project’s sustainability: the lack of institutionalisation of the outputs of the project within HCY and other Government stakeholders. A committee alone may not suffice; HCY should consider the creation of a specific directorate to ensure that the project will be completed, in particular through the full utilisation of the portal and effective coordination with other government entities to follow up on the findings of portal debates.

### Conclusions and recommendations

The participatory consultation process used to develop the content of the youth portal and game resulted in strong ownership, debate and capacity building of an entirely new constellation of youth groups, at a time when there was a real need to ‘capture’ an emerging group of youth activists in Jordan. This can be considered the biggest achievement of the YPLG project.

The insufficient assessment of the capacity and ownership of the IP and its concerned Directorates meant that certain aspects of the design met with challenges during and beyond implementation. The existing tools of the IP were too limited to interpret and fully utilize the theme of ‘local governance’ and the ambitious choice of an ‘interactive’ communication tool to stimulate youth participation.

The Evaluator considers that the project will remain incomplete without further steps by HCY to reinforce its ownership, enhance portal effectiveness and resolve content generation issues. For the portal to become an effective vehicle for *wider youth participation in governance*, HCY should commit itself to an internal process that guarantees input from Directorates other than the Administrative Development Directorate. It should resolve with immediate effect outstanding problems concerning its role as an administration, then recruit and/or identify and train a qualified content manager. Given the wide potential scope for petitions, etc. this process should also include other relevant Ministries and national authorities. Furthermore, HCY should take steps to ensure that the planned Technical Committee is operationalized with immediate effect. The Committee should be sufficiently representative of Jordanian youth who were involved in the FG.

A course of no follow-up would be detrimental to UNDP’s earlier investment, and risk losing out on potential gains from the mobilised youth activists that are a part of the FG. The Evaluator therefore recommends that UNDP develop a new project that remains within GoJ, UNDAF and UNDP priorities but: (i) broadens support and tools to the FG and stakeholders (using forthcoming UN youth mapping) as vehicles for youth participation in wider governance issues; (ii) considers options to support national policy advocacy by youth groups; and (iii) completes unfulfilled aspects of YPLG (overcome obstacles and enhance effectiveness of portal including the development of operational and marketing plans, recruit and train content manager, dissemination and analysis, etc.).

Such a project could focus on building sustainable institutions, policies and systems to support youth participation in decision-making. It could build on the achievements of YPLG by focusing on the creation, and continued support to, new youth networks in Jordan. The analysis contained in the White Paper of Youth Apathy could be developed further to include an assessment of youth priorities for service delivery and political participation. In this regard, a national youth survey to be conducted in April 2014, could provide valuable input to the development of such a project. The Youth Portal could then become a real tool for Jordanian youth to convey their concerns, and for the Government to receive, interpret and respond to these concerns. This alternative should preferably be implemented by UNDP with input and support from relevant partners, or alternatively together with a qualified partner for which a prior capacity assessment should be carried out. . Such a project could draw from the lessons of similar initiatives in other countries and, in-so-doing, would potentially have a much wider impact than the current phase of support.

### Annex Review of Results Matrix

| **Expected output and purpose**  **Expected output:** Increased awareness among young people about local governance and political participation at local level  **Purpose:** Provide youth across Jordan with inclusive access to participation through:   1. access to information 2. access to conversation and representation 3. access to partnerships | **Activities / Results**   * LG learning materials developed * FG trips to 2 Municipalities to identify development challenges and prioritisation * Meetings with government officials to promote LG and public service accountability structures * Informal mapping of youth initiatives in Jordan * MOU finalised for game * LG materials transferred into storyboard for game * White Paper of Youth Apathy * Portal and game design, outline and content developed with active participation of youth * Increase in awareness of 118 individuals (directly measureable) as part of the 5 focus groups that generated content * FB page with 1724 fans (target 2000 young men and women), with women comprising 46% of current engagement * Portal with 193 users after 3 months * Dialogue with 22 youth platforms maintained within project * Platforms with continued independent relations | **Not complete / operational**   * Identification of pilot municipalities and universities * Limited game content on local accountability and political participation beyond elections * Mapping of youth initiatives in Jordan * Offline platforms to channel youth online participation * Plan/costing for mobile game * Pilot testing of game after launch day * Operational plan for portal * Identification of young UNVs to maintain portal * Dissemination / marketing campaign and accompanying game learning module * Technical Committee with youth participation to support portal sustainability * ‘Inclusive access to participation’ and lessons learned by FG members from interactions with own Municipalities |
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