



**POST PROJECT EVALUATIONS
FOR THE
UNITED NATIONS DEMOCRACY FUND**

EVALUATION REPORT

**UDF-JOR-13-553 – Increased Citizen Dialogue through Strengthened
Media in Jordan**

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Disclaimer

The views expressed in this report are those of the evaluator. They do not represent those of UNDEF or any of the institutions referred to in the report

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I. Overall Assessment

This report is the evaluation of the project “Increased Citizen Dialogue through Strengthened Media in Jordan” implemented by Journalists for Human Rights (JHR). The project was initially set to be implemented from 1 November 2014 to 31 October 2016, and was later granted a two-month extension at no additional cost so the project effectively ended on 31 December 2016.

Through this project, JHR sought to expand the space for informed public dialogue on human rights issues in Jordan and contribute to building a stronger public culture of respect for human rights. The project aimed at developing a training manual on how to use data-driven journalism to cover human rights issues and on training a group of journalists to apply these skills in their daily work. In addition, the project aimed at fostering a more informed public dialogue on human rights issues through the production of high quality journalism and radio programmes that actively informed and engaged the public on human rights topics. Finally, the project aimed at increasing the sharing of information on human rights issues through the leverage of new technology tools developed by JHR - such as the Maidan app - which can provide media with more factual information to produce human rights-oriented stories. JHR received an UNDEF grant amounting USD 150,000 to carry out activities outlined in more detail in Section II below.

The project’s overall development goal was to “contribute to building a public culture of respect for human rights in Jordan, with a focus on freedom of expression and gender equality.” The specific objective is to “equip Jordanian media with tools and skills to facilitate a more informed public dialogue about human rights issues.”

The project exceeded initially-set targets. Eleven senior journalists and 69 students/junior journalists were trained on the use of data-driven journalism in covering human rights issues. The training manual, although published at the end of the project timeline, has already been applied and promises to have wider use in the sector. Fifty-two in-depth stories were published in the course of the project, and 12 radio shows were organized and broadcast. The project helped consolidate a community of journalists highly engaged in covering human rights-related issues. It also helped in setting higher standards for reporting, encouraging other journalists to adopt similar methodologies and widen the use of data-driven and evidence-based journalism. As such, the project contributed to building a public culture of respect for human rights in Jordan, with a focus on freedom of expression and gender equality.

Key recommendations are mostly related to JHR’s strategic engagement in Jordan. The organization has been implementing projects in the country for more than four years, and while it was essential to build a core in the capital, Amman, it is critical for JHR to have a strategy that encompasses stronger and more comprehensive geographic outreach. Increased strategic engagement also includes building synergies with human rights campaigns to ensure wider media coverage of nonprofits’ campaigns and help influence relevant stakeholders. JHR should

also prioritize and consider expanding their work on “Maidan”, the platform and application that was designed by the grantee to aid in human rights reporting and journalism.

As for lessons learned, the project confirmed that introducing fact-based journalism to leading human rights journalists can provide an excellent entry point for informed social debates and instilling democratic values. Providing trained and mentored journalists with a platform where they can share their personal experiences covering human rights issues is a powerful tool for both journalists and the public, whereby processes and research methodologies are made public, furthering the project’s objective of consolidating a culture of respect for human rights in the country.

II. Project Context

(i) *Development Context*

Despite being considered a regional haven surrounded by conflict and ongoing instability, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has major internal issues including the ongoing presence of Syrian refugees, skyrocketing inflation, and ongoing social discontent. Jordan had already welcomed hundreds of thousands of Iraqi refugees in the years following 2003, and more than a million Syrian refugees are estimated to have arrived in the country since 2012. While legislators and the government have been overwhelmed with the refugee response, social development has stalled. Coupled with other economic issues, the Jordanian public has struggled to engage constructively with the government and the monarchy around issues related to social justice. Social inequality in the country also contributes to gender inequality: for example, honour killing is condoned by some, and Jordan is among those countries with the largest gender-based disparities in the world according to the World Economic Forum’s global gender gap report¹.

The Arab spring had little impact in Jordan, as Jordanians watched other neighboring countries becoming increasingly destabilized. The Jordanian government continued to attempt to silence calls for change, or channel only those that also fall in their interests, and freedom of both expression and association have been constantly challenged by the authorities. Reporters without Borders’ 2013 press freedom index ranked Jordan as 134th out of 179 (in 2017 it ranked 138th out of 180), just below Zimbabwe. Government intervention in media regulation reached a peak in 2013 with the adoption of amendments to the Press and Publications Law requiring new websites to apply for a government license. The amendments also hold news agencies liable for

¹ World Economic Forum, *Global Gender Gap Report*, <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2016/rankings/>; (9 October 2017)

online comments about stories. By the end of 2013, more than 300 websites had been shut down by the government.²

As in other places, the Jordanian media has been prone to sensationalism and tabloid-like reporting that has easily tempted journalists into subjective formats of reporting. Due to its traditional nature, the language used is often dull and repetitive, even on human rights issues, and limited creativity has affected the interest of readers. As a result, the motivation of journalists to work on investigative pieces or in-depth journalism decreased with time. With an increased internet penetration rate, print media suffered from a diminution of readership. Furthermore, there was a loss of interest in the profession itself, relying mostly on official news agencies such as Petra, and sources from other countries.

In such a context, local journalists have become cautious, and the practice of self-censorship has risen. Journalists have been sanctioned, imprisoned, or excluded from the profession if they presented critical coverage of certain sensitive topics, such as stories about the royal family or religion. One journalist, Nahed Hattar, was even killed by an Islamist for a Daesh-related caricature in 2016.

(ii) Project Objective and Intervention Rationale

According to the project document, the project “Increased Citizen Dialogue through Strengthened Media in Jordan” aimed to:

- Equip media and civil society with tools and skills to facilitate a more informed public dialogue on human rights issues, and
- Generate reliable information that can be used to make public cases for government action, with a focus on strengthening the capacities of committed journalists.

Project participants included journalists, students in journalism, and civil society activists. The project had a comprehensive model of implementation which contained three components. The first aimed at enhancing the skills of the Jordanian media to cover human rights issues effectively through tailored training workshops and practical mentorship to teach journalists the model for mainstreaming coverage of human rights issues into daily journalism. JHR aimed at enhancing the commitment of journalists to make their reporting:

- Genuinely participatory (with data and affected voices in the stories);
- Inclusive of accountability;
- Use of non-discriminatory language focused on empowering the afflicted community by potentially surfacing potential solutions to problems; and
- With clear linkages to legal rights that are being abused as a result.

The second component aimed at increasing informed dialogue on human rights issues, through an increased production of high quality media coverage. Journalists were mentored and

² Reporters Without Borders, *Press Freedom Index*, <https://rsf.org/en/ranking> ; (9 October 2017)

supported in developing data-driven publications in their outlets or through their freelancing work. Radio shows were also produced to follow-up on specific stories, where government and civil society representatives discussed the issues at hand in the presence of affected individuals.

The third component aimed at increasing the sharing of information on human rights issues, through reinforcing an already-existing tool, “Maidan”, described by the grantee as the first open-source citizen reporting software in the Arab region, as it allows the media to employ crowd-sourced information to produce more accurate stories on human rights violations. The application works through a website/platform, and collects information from three different sources: SMS, web, and phone inputs (such as videos, photos, or even audio). The end result of this component was different and will be explained in the course of this report.

Over the span of two years, the project’s planned activities were:

- Development of training material on human rights reporting and data journalism
- 10 local senior journalists trained in human rights reporting and data journalism
- 40 local junior journalists/students trained on human rights reporting and data journalism
- One comprehensive study on Jordanian media coverage of human rights issues
- Production of 30 investigative stories via sub-grants
- Broadcast of 12 radio forums on human rights issues
- Upgrade of citizen reporting mobile app and online platform “Maidan”, including developing a public page where journalists can publish data
- Promotion of the citizen reporting mobile app and online platform “Maidan”
- Development of the Arabic section on JHR’s website to share stories

The expected outcomes of the project were:

- 1- Enhanced skills of Jordanian media to cover human rights issues effectively
- 2- More informed public dialogue on human rights issues in Jordan
- 3- Increased sharing of information on human rights issues

The project strategy was built on a three-year process of assessing partners and sector needs in the Middle East, and filled the gaps in JHR’s overall work in Jordan to ensure more sustainability and a greater impact focusing on the media. The project was implemented through a coalition of Jordanian media development organizations, such as the Jordan Media Institute (JMI) and the Community Media Network (CMN) in which each brought expertise and strengths that the project capitalized on in order to maximize its impact. Through the course of the project, an additional partnership with 7iber was set-up in order to enhance the project’s impact.

III. Methodology

UNDEF's 2017 operational manual for post-project evaluations was the initial reference document to develop the methodology. Basic criteria of constructive process, focus on lessons learned, forward-looking, and comprehensive view of the project's results were respected. Information was collected, analyzed, and is presented in this report according to the OECD – DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. An additional criterion was included aimed at analyzing UNDEF's added-value. The post-project evaluation also aimed at linking evidence-based findings to recommendations.

An international expert designated to conduct the evaluation prepared a preliminary planning note (Launch Note) in August 2017. The Note was based on a review of the following project documentation:

- Project document;
- Mid-term progress and final narrative and financial reports;
- Milestone verification reports;
- UNDEF Programme Officer mission note; and
- Email correspondence between UNDEF Programme Officer and the grantee.

The evaluator and the grantee then proceeded to hold introductory Skype conversations to develop a schedule of interviews that would take place during a field mission to Jordan from 16 to 21 September 2017. During the field mission, the evaluator interviewed the grantee's current staff, participants in the project activities, partner organizations, government representatives, and one UNDP representative. The full list of people interviewed is presented in Annex 3.

As mentioned in the launch note, the evaluation adopted a transparent, inclusive, participatory and results-based approach to collect, analyze and report on findings and recommendations. It assessed the rationale and justification for the project as well as the outputs, outcomes and impacts achieved. The evaluator also assessed the sustainability of the intervention including mechanisms and strategies put in place to ensure that the benefits transcend the end of UNDEF grant. The formulation of questions during the interviews and meetings included a gender-mainstreamed approach at all times, both in terms of project participants and topics of focus and outputs.

IV. Evaluation Findings

(i) *Relevance*

The media's engagement with human rights is extremely relevant for democratic development in the Arab region, especially in Jordan. Some members of the royal family and the government are considered champions for women's rights and human rights in general. However, conservative backlash is still strong, with public debates often breaking away from fact-based

discussions. Furthermore, the security situation and risks of terrorism continuously generate limitations to press freedom and access to information.

In this context, the objectives and activities of the project were highly relevant. The project related to UNDEF's own aims and objectives, and the design of the project was developed to suit the context and the needs of stakeholders.

Journalists at the heart of the project

Most interviewed journalists spoke positively about their experience through the course of this project, especially when it came to renewing their motivation and commitment to producing quality articles. Most journalists also talked about the open space that the project consolidated for like-minded journalists to work in.

The design of the project was developed along the lines of previous similar JHR initiatives in Jordan where the needs were clarified and discussed with key stakeholders based on lessons learned. As a result, the training workshops and subsequent production of stories were highly relevant. Targeting journalism students at the JMI was also of great value to achieving the project's goals, despite the lack of clarity of young graduates in their career paths which may lead them away from investigative journalism. However, introducing them to democratic and human rights concepts in the course of their studies was seen by faculty and staff as a success in itself.

Quality and data-driven content benefit all stakeholders

Data journalism helped journalists explore certain sensitive topics from an angle that was better accepted by the relevant stakeholders, from readers to government officials. Journalists were committed to using the scope of this project to strengthen the quality of their articles. Civil society activists were also pleased to see this type of engagement and those interviewed expressed positive feedback regarding the process of sharing information. The executive director of one NGO relayed her satisfaction to the fact that key concepts were no longer diluted in general terms but that cases were selected, trends identified, and infographics developed that were helpful for their own advocacy. The fact that better documentation led to better reporting was key to ensuring that articles were convincing. A government representative also mentioned the appreciation of his unit towards fact-based journalism, saying that it opened better channels of communication.

Activity and output consistency with intended outcomes

Activities and outputs were consistent and relevant to the intended outcomes. As mentioned above, the training component was successful as most interviewed participants felt that it provided them with the skills they needed to improve their work. While the training manual was delayed in its publication due to implementation challenges, it is currently being disseminated and used, as witnessed by the evaluator.

The production of stories and broadcast of radio shows also met and even exceeded the intended results. Instead of 30 in-depth stories, 52 ended up being published under the scope of the project. All of these stories were also the basis for radio shows, expanding the outreach of certain issues and opening a platform for the public to engage with journalists, government representatives, and civil society activists, through phone calls made directly to the live show. Among the most engaging topics were the issues of: tribal custom law, fair trial and rights of detainees, migrant workers' rights, orphan and adopted children's rights etc.

The study led by JMI was relevant to assessing the progress made by the Jordanian media in covering human rights-related issues. According to the study, from 2013 to 2015, the increase in human rights coverage was 81%, with a specific increase of nearly 48% in terms of covering elements of accountability and linkages to human rights legislation. While not all of this increase can be directly linked to this project, it is clear from interviewing journalists and other stakeholders that the space for dialogue on human rights issues in Jordan has significantly increased through the course of the project.

Maidan changes from concept to implementation

The component related to Maidan was more challenging to implement, and the concept of the app and platform changed in the course of the project. With different opinions and interpretations, the understanding of the purpose of this app was not harmonized across the board. The director of CMN mentioned the already-existing platforms in every news outlet and on social media for the public to send suggestions of topics, challenging the added-value of the app from the perspective of the users. With a relatively good internet penetration rate in Jordan, users can find platforms to share grievances and raw data, and would not have needed the platform. According to one former CMN staff working on the outreach, the initial concept of crowd-sourcing of data through users uploading of content through the internet and SMS was challenging to relay internally within CMN and with the larger public.



As a result, an internal evaluation returned the component to JHR, where the concept was amended and focused to publicize the work of journalists in covering the stories published under the project.

Detailed data and more infographics/visuals were made available to the public to go more in-depth on specific topics. Furthermore, the platform has also been used to voice participant journalists' personal feedback over the experience of developing fact-based stories. The engagement of the public increased significantly with a successful digital outreach strategy, with comments and additional data provided through comments and online debates.

Although the final output was not the one originally conceived of in the project document, it nevertheless did relate to the intended outcome to reach beyond the human rights' sphere, enhancing public dialogue on human rights issues with increased quality information.

Risks, assumptions, and partnerships

JHR and its partners managed to tackle the risks of the project in a constructive manner, keeping sight of achieving the project's objectives. The main challenge was reaching a similar understanding and interpretation of the intervention rationale with the partners. Two components, initially set-up to be implemented by CMN and JMI were returned to JHR: Maidan, and the development of the data-journalism training manual.

These changes did not affect the quality of the partnerships as other components continued to be implemented by these partners. In order to enhance the results of the project, an additional partnership with the online news outlet 7iber contributed to increasing the quality of its outputs, and generating more public exposure.

Other indirect partners also benefited positively from the project such as newspapers. For example, the editor in chief of Al Ghad underscored the importance of supporting the capacity strengthening of her team, and the extent of the project's useful results over the quality of the newspaper in general, its increased readership online partly due to compelling infographics.

Taking gender into account

Gender-mainstreaming was successful across the different components of the project. The gender balance of the selected journalists was in favour of women journalists. In addition, more than a quarter of the published stories tackled serious issues related to women's rights such as women in the labor market, bodily rights such as maternal leave, rape and abortion, and political participation of women.

These topics were engaging to the public and generated increased and informed citizen debates, especially with engagement and input from government officials.

(ii) Effectiveness

The project's objectives have been reached, and in some instances exceeded the target indicators, as a result of the project's effective activities.

Enhanced skills of Jordanian media to cover human rights issues effectively

All participants of the training workshops that were interviewed, from senior to junior and student journalists mentioned an increased understanding on how to report on human rights issues, in addition to increased knowledge in data-journalism tools and techniques. One senior journalist admitted her misunderstanding of how infographics and data-driven stories could enhance her coverage on human rights, and how the project's activities and mentorship resulted in her succeeding enhancing the quality of her reporting and mentorship of other journalists on her team. A total of 11 senior journalists and 69 junior and student journalists, exceeding the

initial targets of 10 and 40 respectively, were trained on data-driven journalism and human rights.

The UNDP staff member in charge of monitoring milestone activities on behalf of UNDEF described the training as being highly interesting, even mentioning that their UN communications teams would also have benefited greatly as many lack skills related to visualization of data.

The delay in the publication of the training manual did not impact the project's effectiveness as the same materials had been previously used in the workshops themselves. The manual is still relevant and has the potential to be a key reference tool for any Jordanian journalist or citizen journalist to develop their own stories.

The mentorship element of the production of stories was effective, but in different terms than initially expected. Mentors were senior journalists with little time on their hands to provide support to others. As a result, the JHR trainer and project manager in Amman, himself a human rights journalism expert, took over this component of the work.

Increased informed public dialogue on human rights issues

The activities also exceeded their initial targets, with 52 stories published (30 were originally planned), and 12 radio shows (picture on the right) covering some of the most appealing topics to the public. Stakeholders from both civil society and the government confirmed the high-quality coverage of the selected issues, effectively opening or consolidating channels of communication and debates around solutions at hand. Among the topics that drove



substantial debates and follow-up coverage by other news outlets was the issue of Syrian refugees leaving Jordan to attempt crossing to Europe, and the risks that it entails. Humanitarian organizations providing services to refugees used this story to raise awareness on the dangers associated with the crossings. One comment shared by a few interviewees related to the length of the radio show, as one hour exceeds the average time spent listening to the radio. Their online presence on the Ammanet website was also difficult to access, but effective outreach achieved by live streaming the show through social media.

While indicators related to Maidan were also completed, they do not accurately indicate the extent of the effectiveness of the platform online, due to its new uses. In fact, not only were datasets compiled, and public interaction increased, but there was also an increase in the engagement of journalists themselves in sharing their personal feedback as to how they

developed their articles and research. This accentuated the consolidation of a space for journalists to interact with the public over the coverage of human rights issues.

Increased sharing of information on human rights issues

Views of the online platform and social media related to Maidan have also exceeded initial targets. With more than 24,000 followers on Facebook and a monthly average of 1,220 views for the website between May and December 2016, the project's activities gained significant visibility. The indicator related to the visits to the JHR's website was not directly relevant to the project's activities, however there was a noted increase in online traffic towards the website.

(iii) Efficiency

The budget as implemented enabled the project to meet its objectives. There was a reasonable relationship between these inputs and the project's outputs.

Financial management structure

The budget design did not clearly reflect the partners' parts of the budget as their items were spread out across all budget headers. While this proved difficult to evaluate, it did not disable the project from achieving its objectives.

With two main partners, agreements were signed to sub-grant elements of the implementation. The evaluator reviewed the contracts between JHR and CMN, and JHR and JMI, and both included financial requirements and due diligence measures. JHR's finance manager, based in Toronto, had access and was able to track all expenses made by the partners and approve the expenditure reports in accordance. Payments to the sub-grantees were made upon satisfactory justification of expenses.

In addition to JMI and CMN, whose responsibilities were detailed in the project document and amended as per the explanation provided in this evaluation, new partners included 7iber, for story productions with their journalists, and a digital marketing company Gini, for the Maidan digital outreach strategy and implementation. In total more than 35% of the project's budget was sub-granted to these four partners. These institutional arrangements were cost-effective and promoted accountability, as a couple of payments were withheld by JHR until their partners produced satisfactory supporting documents.

Project activities

Budget lines were respected, and project activities took place in a cost-efficient way. Expenses were reasonable and were all linked to a logical thought process. For example, the decision of moving the development of the training manual and the Maidan platform back to JHR was a highly efficient measure that ensured the successful implementation of these activities, albeit with some delay as per the initial timeline. Both partners confirmed that these changes also had a positive impact as it allowed them to focus on the components of the project where they had comparative advantage.

Other costs also had efficient results. A stipend or financial incentive of USD 100 was provided for each journalist for the stories they covered as part of the project. Although the amount was relatively limited, it did encourage journalists to collect accurate data and ensure quality reporting.

Some items were also co-funded by JHR core funds, such as the training workshops with senior and local journalists, as well as the stipends. JHR's contribution was important as it guaranteed quality implementation of these activities, indicating efficiency on this front.

Internal M&E

Aside from a transition period in between the appointment of project coordinators in Jordan, the project was well monitored and evaluated regularly. The regional programme manager visited the country every few months to assess the progress of the project, provide technical support, and enhance the quality of the activities and relationships with key stakeholders. In addition, the project coordinator kept regular track of progress with weekly narrative reports to the program manager, including additional documents with updated progress of research or article writing, among other examples.

The project coordinator was in regular communication with all the journalists participating in the project activities. Through regular meetings, phone, or social media, mentoring was also provided by the project coordinator, who is a leading human rights journalist himself.

As with partners, the monitoring and subsequent internal interim evaluations were extremely timely and efficient. Informed decisions were made, in a transparent and fair context, with both partners, JMI and CMN. Both agreements were revised, and components of the project were returned to JHR when appropriate to achieve the overall project objective, namely the manual for human rights data-journalism with JMI, and the Maidan app with CMN. According to their respective representatives, these decisions did not impede on the positive relationship they have with JHR. On the contrary, it may have relieved some pressure from both.

(iv) Impact

Impact on participants

The project had positive impact on all project participants and stakeholders. Senior journalists (pictured on the right during the workshop) were able to use their new skills to strengthen the quality of their stories, which in turn were more widely read and shared by the public. One journalist was unaware of how the integration of visuals and infographics could impact the presentation of her



findings and reinforce the solutions that she would highlight. Even a former journalism student, who attended the workshop but did not work as a reporter in her institution indicated that the workshop was the most interesting learning opportunity she had at JMI.

The new methodology of work was quickly adopted by all journalists who continued to produce stories. This in turn affected the media community in general, as it strived for increased professionalism. Journalists returned to their news outlets - mostly newspapers - requesting upgrades in their teams, or for more support for visuals from their graphic design unit.

One of the most relevant impacts of this project was the consolidation of a stronger network of like-minded journalists, raising the bar in terms of quality reporting on human rights, using the correct terminologies, using accurate data to advance findings, and relaying civil society and government perspectives towards potential solutions.

Some of the interviewed participants, mostly from the junior and journalism students, mentioned the need to have longer workshops for data-driven journalism. Four days were seen as too short for some, as they were new to both human rights reporting and data-driven journalism. However, four full straight days were also challenging for senior journalists to commit to, as they continue to have their regular jobs and obligations. Nonetheless, all confirmed the positive impact this learning opportunity had on their personal development.

Impact on other stakeholders and communities

The project had a catalytic effect in society. Certain pieces broke taboos and forced the government to take action. The project had a clear impact on democratization. The radio shows and articles allowed for more informed public debates, through which affected individuals shared their stories directly with government officials. Dozens of phone calls were received and comments left on social media. This unique opportunity was used by journalists for further follow-up stories.

One government representative described the articles published through the course of this project as proactive and impactful, as opposed to reactive media coverage of certain

Ezz Elnatour, a junior journalist who works for 7iber, covered the issue of ongoing imprisonment of Jordanians in Iraq in November 2015. He highlighted the plight of one family whose son, Saleh Abed Allatief, had been imprisoned for years.

Allatief was released by the Iraqi authorities after the action of relevant authorities in both countries. However, he still awaits a security permit for his return to be issued by the Jordanian Interior Ministry.

The Iraqi parliament's human rights committee has asked Ezz for more information and called upon prisoners' families to submit requests for follow-up through legal Iraqi channels. Further, through its offices in Jordan and Iraq, a follow-up meeting to bring together the families of the prisoners with an Iraqi delegation in Amman to go through the issue in detail and seek justice is planned.

issues. This representative praised the quality of the work, underscored the importance to continue networking with the journalists directly to strengthen this new alternative media that is providing essential content. The example of the legislative repeal of penal code article 308 was also used to describe the instrumental role of the media in pushing for this policy change.

Another government representative also highlighted the need for specialized journalists, as they perceived a clear quality shift with the articles published in the course of this project, with other sensational angles for the same topics. They were encouraged to see that the professionalization of covering social and human rights issues is growing and will allow for improved communication with government bodies.

Some topics and approaches were ground-breaking and the public's engagement with the stories was considerable. For example, the articles around police brutality, and tribal law, had created a domino effect in the media, with follow-up stories from other news outlets. The UNDP staff member who had monitored the project on behalf of UNDEF also confirmed that outreach was increased after radio shows by successive follow-up stories by multiple newspapers, enhancing the informed debate.

Finally, Maidan did not have the impact that it originally intended, with a focus more on the online platform rather than the software application itself. This is mostly due to the fact that users did not understand what the added-value of the app would be. It is possible that this may have been a result of conflicting priorities and not prioritizing the introductory messaging regarding the app. It seemed like there was a lack of ownership of Maidan across the board. However, instead of relying only on the crowd-sourcing element, the platform shifted its use to include more “behind the scenes” journalism and preparations for investigative pieces. This provided a space for citizen journalists, activists, and other stakeholders interested in journalism and human rights, to familiarize themselves with data-journalism tools and processes.

(v) Sustainability

The project, as designed and implemented, created a continuous impetus towards democratic development. All journalists (except some student journalists) interviewed mentioned their continued interest and engagement in covering human rights issues. Some journalists were enthusiastic in describing their “specialization”, for example in covering children's rights, or detainees' rights.



The project helped sustain a network of human rights-driven journalists that come from different background and news outlets. Many of those journalists had not been in contact with each other, and this has raised the standards of quality reporting in the Jordanian media. Many of the journalists interviewed were still working on investigative pieces and were continuing their work beyond the scope of the project. While there may be some level of collaboration, the project helped create a positive competitive space for journalists to showcase their skills after project completion, despite the gap in resources between outlets.

One civil society representative discussed the importance of enhancing this collaboration with the media further, by sending more of their staff or smaller community-based organizations to train on the use of infographics and data-journalism, and also by finding unified angles of approach with their own advocacy platforms in order to increase the chances of government response. This in turn links with the ownership of data-driven pieces, which was consolidated throughout the project and continues as the main priority for JHR's work in Jordan.

Because of the focus on the production of stories and training workshops, the sustainability of the project's activities beyond the capital, Amman, was limited. Outreach towards citizen journalists and freelancers was attempted, but not all had the resources and capacities to attend a week-long workshop in Amman.

The study conducted by JMI on media monitoring of human rights-related coverage was not properly disseminated, as journalists and participants were unaware of its publication, creating a missed opportunity in terms of outreach. While some journalists and stakeholders seemed to be familiar with the study, many others were not. There was an absent link that would have bridged the study back with the rest of the project. The sustainability of this component thus remains to be seen in light of comparative studies in the future.

The crowd-sourcing component of the mobile app and platform are also currently on hold. While the website and the social media pages are active and continue to relay coverage of human rights-related pieces, there were technical delays in transferring ownership of the domain name.

The partnerships with 7iber (online media) and Al Ghad (newspaper) were formed as a direct result of this project, and aim at strengthening the capacities of their journalists on human rights-related coverage and data-journalism. In addition to being an indication of financial sustainability, with the diversification of funding sources, this indicates that the benefit of this project continued well after the UNDEF funding ceased.

(vi) UNDEF Added Value

There was a clear added-value to the UNDEF funding. In addition to the presence of a UN logo, that seems to have enhanced the image of the project, stakeholders mentioned the positive

value of a donor that did not impose guidelines or specific topics to focus on. This freedom of choice to the project partners, news organizations, and the journalists proved to be fruitful.

While the promotion and visibility of the project were mainly focused on JHR, it seemed clear that UNDEF's presence in this field that is easily prone to politicization was constructive and neutral. This in turn allowed for a better outreach to diverse groups of journalists, from different political spectrums, and acceptance from civil society and government to participate in the project's activities.

The UNDP staff member monitoring the project on behalf of UNDEF highlighted the need to have consider synergies with the ongoing work of some UN agencies in strengthening the media sector in Jordan, such as UNESCO. The coherence of this project was still relevant, but more debriefing with herself before or after the milestone activities would have been preferred. She also added that she had not received any further information beyond the activities she monitored, and that she would have liked to receive a copy of the final narrative report of the project.³

V. Conclusions

(i) The project was relevant and bridged a gap in the media landscape in Jordan. Improving the quality of journalism around human rights issues is the first step to ensuring productive public debates on these issues. In a context where the government is on high alert for security-related incidents, the line between press freedom and national security gets thinner. However, the project was able get all stakeholders, including the government interlocutors, to focus on specific facts and data-driven analyses and feed into a constructive democratic approach to finding concrete solutions to rights issues.

(ii) The project was effective in achieving its planned objectives despite changes in the implementation modality. The project raised the public's awareness of the importance of evidence-based reporting, journalists had higher standards than ever to respect when covering human rights issues, and communication channels were opened with other important actors such as civil society activists and government representatives. With JHR's taking over of two components, namely the development of the training manual and the outreach for Maidan, the effectiveness of the project was better supervised and maintained.

(iii) The project was efficient. Resources were appropriately allocated, and minimum standards for accounting and accountability of partners were respected. Target indicators were surpassed, and activities tailored to fit the needs of participants. Instead of running two workshops for

³ UNDEF confirmed that the final narrative report has been sent to UNDP. Following review of this document, UNDEF also highlighted that JHR Jordan had recently been involved in working with another grantee in Jordan on a project promoting the rights of migrant workers.

senior journalists, the decision to organize only one, and focus on the production of stories was cost-effective. As for workshops for junior journalists, five were organized instead of the initial two, as the need for further in-depth training was expressed.

(iv) The project had a positive impact on both participants and communities. The media landscape in Jordan has improved as a direct result of this project. The use of visuals and infographics was spread across several news outlets after the training workshops, and in turn impacted the quality of journalists' findings and analyses. Affected individuals, families, and communities, were able to contribute to the scope of the project, and follow-up stories resulted in increased citizen dialogue through the strengthened media.

(v) Articles and media coverage related to the project's activities had an impact that exceeded expectations. The presence and engagement of Mohammad Shamma, a highly respected and renowned human rights journalist seems to have made an incremental difference to the impact of this project. The network of engaged journalists expanded, and effective debates ensued, some ending up with government engagement on certain issues, such as the Jordanian man detained in Iraq.

(v) The project will carry a significant legacy in the media landscape in Jordan. The fact that journalists used their new skills in their existing work in their respective news outlets have created an improved work environment for them and their colleagues. The training manual and the Maidan platform will continue to be maintained by JHR as part of their ongoing work in Jordan, and will continue to be two essential references for beginners in data-journalism in the country.

(vi) UNDEF's support had added-value. With all the controversy related to foreign funding of NGOs as a regular matter of concern in Jordan, especially as it relates to media engagement, UNDEF's support definitely had value added as it provided a neutral, credible, and legitimate source of funding. The UNDEF funding allowed for journalists coming from very different political, religious, and social backgrounds to meet and work together, without a priori, and come out with productive and meaningful collaborations.

VI. Recommendations

(i) JHR should develop a long-term strategy for Jordan, including improved outreach to geographic provinces, improving linkages between project components, and providing different level workshops according to journalists' experiences with data-journalism. JHR should also improve its assessment of potential partners to ensure their ability to implement the agreed set of activities and targets.

- (ii) *JHR should build on synergies with other civil society organizations*, and coordinate the production of stories with planned human rights advocacy campaigns. Human rights campaigns in Jordan have often lacked proper media coverage to ensure wider impact. If mentored journalists produce stories in line with campaigns, there is a better chance that of influencing public opinions towards solutions.
- (iii) *JHR should re-prioritize the work on Maidan*, articulating a vision that is more easily relayed to different audiences for better understanding of the platform's added value. JHR should consider turning the software open source in order to allow other development and humanitarian applications of the tool.
- (iv) *JHR should strengthen the mentoring of journalism students at JMI*. Few of the students taking part in the workshops on data-journalism have pursued a traditional journalism path that allowed them to use the knowledge and skills they acquired. While the choice is personal, JHR could ensure that some of the most engaged students receive internship or employment opportunities that help them make a better informed choice for their career development.
- (v) *UNDEF should ensure complementarity and communication with other similar UN-led initiatives in the country*. Final narrative reports should be shared with the UNDP staff member having observed milestone activities and the UN Country Team to increase transparency. Informing these stakeholders of the project's achievements after its closure is important as it gives them the opportunity to verify or provide feedback on the submitted information.

VII. Lessons Learned

Introducing stakeholders to data-driven journalism is a judicious entry point towards informing social debates on rights issues and potential government interaction. In Jordan, there is a growing appetite for evidence-based journalism, and despite potential backlash from illiberal actors, there is slow and steady progress.

A platform allowing journalists to detail the background of their stories can contribute to creating a consolidated network of like-minded professionals. The Maidan platform transformation into a space for journalists, citizen journalists, and engaged individuals can serve in the continuing professionalization of the profession in Jordan and elsewhere.

Software and tools developed in a project may have different applications beyond the initial concept. In spite of the issues linked to different understandings of the Maidan application, the tool can be highly useful and efficient for journalists and other actors alike. It is important for both JHR and UNDEF to consider other applications of specific software development or

upgrades beyond the scope of the project for sustained impact and synergies with other human rights, development, or even humanitarian initiatives.

Projects conceived, planned, designed, implemented, and monitored in equal partnership with national and local partners have an increased success rate. JHR's ability to adapt its strategy through careful review of local partners' feedback was essential for the success of this project.

VIII. Annexes

Annex 1: Evaluation Questions and Detailed Findings

DAC criterion	Evaluation Question	Related sub-questions
Relevance	To what extent was the project, as designed and implemented, suited to context and needs at the beneficiary, local, and national levels?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Were the objectives of the project in line with the needs and priorities for democratic development, given the context? ▪ How well did the project relate to UNDEF's aims and objectives? ▪ To what extent were project stakeholders including beneficiaries involved in the formulation and design of the project? ▪ To what extent were decision makers (i.e. government, news room editors, heads of media companies and others) involved in the project in order to open up more formal channels for HR reporting and awareness? ▪ To what extent the intervention as designed enhanced public dialogue on human rights issues? Did the project reach beyond those that were already talking about human rights issues? Or is the value more focused on more human rights issues covered and with better quality, than who it reached? ▪ Should another project strategy have been preferred rather than the one implemented to better reflect those needs, priorities, and context? Why? ▪ Were risks appropriately identified by the project? How appropriate were the strategies developed to deal with identified risks? Was the project overly risk-averse?
Effectiveness	To what extent was the project, as implemented, able to achieve objectives and goals?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What has the project achieved? How do the results contribute to each of the outcome areas of the objectives? ▪ To what extent have the project's objectives been reached? Were the project activities adequate to make progress towards the project objectives? ▪ Did the project have an effective way to measure the outreach and impact achieved through the 30 investigative stories and the 12 radio forums? ▪ Were the mobile app and online platform adequate mediums to provide access to information and to reporting HR issues to the targeted audience? ▪ On delays in the availability of the Maidan online platform/app and NGO website in required languages: did this create missed opportunities for impact? ▪ Did key stakeholders fully participate in the project? ▪ Did the right stakeholders benefit from the project; were there other important stakeholders not included? Is there any legacy or impact (e.g. capacity development or other) left with the partners? ▪ How effective were the trainings and capacity development activities with a target group that is already educated and aware (including senior journalists)? ▪ On delays and implementing partners: To what extent could

		<p>this have been prevented and did the adjustments made yield the desired quality and impact?</p>
Efficiency	To what extent was there a reasonable relationship between resources expended and project impacts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Was there a reasonable relationship between project inputs and project outputs? ▪ Did institutional arrangements promote cost-effectiveness and accountability? Are there examples of leveraging other resources or partners in joint activity during the project? ▪ Was the budget designed, and then implemented, in a way that enabled the project to meet its objectives? ▪ A couple of implementation planning issues were brought up (developing the training materials for journalists and developing the “Maidan” platform). To what extent were these consequential in the project’s impact? ▪ Did the co-financing of USD 26,400 add value to the project? How so?
Impact	To what extent has the project put in place processes and procedures supporting the role of civil society in contributing to democratization, or to direct promotion of democracy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent has/have the realization of the project objective(s) and project outcomes had an impact on the specific problem the project aimed to address? ▪ Have the targeted beneficiaries experienced tangible impacts? Which were positive; which were negative? ▪ To what extent has the project caused changes and effects, positive and negative, foreseen and unforeseen, on democratization? ▪ Is the project likely to have a catalytic effect? How? Why? Examples?
Sustainability	To what extent has the project, as designed and implemented, created what is likely to be a continuing impetus towards democratic development?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent has the project established processes and systems (especially the mobile app and platform) that are likely to support continued impact? ▪ To what extent were the capacity development activities delivered in a way that will ensure a sustained impact among the direct beneficiaries? Were the new skills consolidated during the project? Is there evidence that the skills are being practiced beyond the scope of the project? ▪ Are the involved parties (individual journalists and media organizations) willing and able to continue the project activities on their own (where applicable)? ▪ Was the project set to leave a sustainable legacy beyond networks of journalists that are simply connected and informed? Was there something left behind in terms of setting up sustainable entry points for participation?
UNDEF value added	To what extent was UNDEF able to take advantage of its unique position and comparative advantage to achieve results that could not have been achieved had support come from other donors?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What was UNDEF able to accomplish, through the project, that could not as well have been achieved by alternative projects, other donors, or other stakeholders (Government, NGOs, etc). ▪ Did project design and implementing modalities exploit UNDEF’s comparative advantage in the form of an explicit mandate to focus on democratization issues?

Annex 2: Documents Reviewed

Background documents

- UNDP, *Arab Human Development Report*, <http://www.arab-hdr.org/>; (27 September 2017)
- Reporters Without Borders, *Press Freedom Index*, <https://rsf.org/en/ranking> ; (9 October 2017)
- World Economic Forum, *Global Gender Gap Report*, <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2016/rankings/>; (9 October 2017)

Project documentation - UDF-JOR-13-553

- Project document
- Reports: mid-term progress report, final narrative and financial reports
- Final financial report with break-down
- Milestone verification narrative and financial reports

Project outputs

- The manual “Data journalism in covering human rights issues”, in Arabic
- Maidan App, Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Maidan.Jordan/>
- Maidan App, the website and platform: <http://maidanapp.net/>
- The JMI study “Human Rights Violations in Jordanian Media Outlets”, 2015

Annex 3: Persons Interviewed

JHR staff	
Naregh Galoustian	Programme Manager
Mohammad Shamma	Project Coordinator
Nabin Pokjarel	Finance Manager
Journalists	
Roula Othman	Syrian junior journalist, Radio Al Balad and Radio Rosana
Musaab Shawabke	Senior journalist, Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism
Wasan Haddad	Journalism teacher, Petra University
Ezzdine Natour	Senior journalist, 7iber
Duaa Ali	Senior Editor, 7iber
Nadine Nimri	Senior journalist, Al Ghad newspaper
Rania Sarayah	Senior journalist, Al Ghad newspaper
Rifaat Mohammad	Syrian journalist, freelancer
Dana Jibreel	Junior journalist, 7iber
Hiba Abu Taha	Junior journalist, freelancer
Hala Omar	Junior journalist, Hayat FM
Rawan Hadid	Junior journalist, Jordanian State TV
Project Partners	
Daoud Kuttab	Executive Director of Community Media Network and Al Balad Radio
Yassar Durra	Fundraising Manager, Jordan Media Institute
Raed Nishwat	Director, Kuplix
Other stakeholders	
Samar Muhareb	Executive Director of ARDD-Legal Aid
Rana Sabbagh	Executive Director of Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism
Dr. Fawaz Ratrouf	Spokesperson for the Ministry of Social Development
Joumana Al Ghanimat	Editor-in-chief, Al Ghad newspaper
Salma Nims	Secretary General, Jordanian National Commission for Women
Nora Isayan	Communications Analyst, UN RC/HC Office

Annex 4: Acronyms

ARIJ	Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism
CMN	Community Media Network
JHR	Journalists for Human Rights
JMI	Jordan Media Institute
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization