MEDA, in partnership with the Government of Canada, is implementing the Jordan Valley Links project, which will provide women and youth, as well as existing market actors, with the capacity building and incentives required to develop their businesses and better integrate women and youth in four value chains: food processing, community-based tourism, clean technology, and access to finance.

MAJESTIC SPECTRUM OF HOPES
By Nour Qawsmi

Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah personally conducted a number of visits to encourage and showcase the business operations of some micro entrepreneurs, particularly women-led and owned microenterprises. Three of JVL private sectors partners, Baraka Destinations Sawwah Travel and Bilforon hosted the Queen and linked her to 11 of the project’s women entrepreneurs. These meetings and visits by the Queen seem to have had a huge impact in not only boosting the self-confidence and the self-esteem of these women, but also seems to be positively impacting their business sales due to the publicity. Read More...

Project Quick Facts
Goal:
Increase the contribution by 25,000 women and youth to Jordan’s economic growth by improving their entrepreneurial and business acumen, and by reducing market and socio-cultural barriers to their entry for enterprise development.

Funder:
Global Affairs Canada

Project Length:
2016 - 2021

Implementing Partners:
9 Key Facilitating Partners
5 Lead Firms

Geographical Coverage:
25 Districts
6 Governorates
By Connor Taylor

**Business Plan Competition**

This summary document is an overview of the JVL’s business plan competition. JVL facilitates the provision of training, market linkages, business development support, and access to finance, including business grants for women and youth entrepreneurs. These grants allow JVL to intervene at key points in the development and growth of micro-enterprises where women and youth entrepreneurs may be facing limitations in areas such as access to finance and business development services. JVL runs regular Business Plan Competitions (BPCs) to support outstanding entrepreneurs in accessing the financial resources required to establish new businesses or expand existing enterprises. It is through the BPC that entrepreneurs are selected to receive grants. A key component of the granting process is ongoing support from the JVL team to address gaps and challenges faced by entrepreneurs. Throughout the application, evaluation and pitching process, JVL and its local partners provide business support to strengthen the business concept and plan. Read More...

**Listening to Clients Voices—Gender Progress Markers**

JVL’s ultimate objective is an increased contribution of women and youth to the economic wellbeing of Jordan. As such, gender has been built into JVL’s monitoring and tracking systems. Gender Progress Markers (GPMs) are a measurement tool, supplementing a project’s suite of monitoring and evaluation techniques, to observe the changes in social and gender dynamics affecting women and men in their families and local communities. The purpose of GPMs is to move beyond numbers and quantitative data; GPMs look at how attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours related to gender in society progress and change over the life of a project. JVL has developed a GPM manual and summary document which illustrates the process of creating and implementing Gender Progress Markers in addition to providing examples of tools and methodologies for those wishing to implement GPM in their project(s). By creating a baseline and continually tracking how project interventions affect certain “domains of change”, projects can use GPM as a tool to measure progress on goals specifically targeting gender inclusion. Read more...

**Utilizing Technology to Advance Project Management: Insights from Jordan Valley Links**

This learning document outlines the challenges that JVL has faced using Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software as a data collection and processing tool. In addition, it also illustrates the potential for such software to assist non-profit and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to improve organization, data management, progress tracking, and other aspects of project management. While JVL is still learning about the intricacies of CRM, it has benefitted from the way that information about clients, stakeholders, and project partners can be easily tracked in real-time and customized for the needs of project staff. Using JVL’s design of its CRM system as a basis, this learning document demonstrates the process of uploading data into the database and cleaning it for use in programs such as PowerBI. The document concludes with a series of lessons learned and suggestions on how to maximize the potential of CRM for use in development projects. Read more...

**Conducting Market Systems Programming in Jordan: Background and Context**

Using secondary research in addition to JVL project documents, this learning document illustrates the social and economic challenges affecting Jordanian women and youth and acts as an introduction to Jordan’s operating environment. Despite geopolitical, economic, and social challenges, Jordan still provides programmatic opportunities for organizations wishing to conduct projects related to economic development, environmental sustainability, and improving women’s economic participation. By closely understanding the Jordanian context, organizations are more likely to implement projects that will have a more sustained positive effect. Read more...
Project Quick Facts

**Goal:**
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**Funder:**
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Sheikha is a traditional housewife who always regretted having to leave her education too early. She used to take care of her kids, do all the house chores and sometimes helped in selling groceries in the family’s convenient store. With her children now attending university and rising education costs, Sheikha felt that she had to contribute to the household expenses. In November 2018, Sheikha attended a Savings and Loan Groups (SLG) session facilitated by the Jordan River Foundation (JRF) where she learned about SLG operations and how they can assist women to build up their savings. She quickly solidified herself as a community leader as she realized the potential of SLGs as an effective method of saving money and funding entrepreneurial activities.

Shortly after her training sessions, she volunteered as a group leader and helped establish 18 SLGs consisting of 30-33 members each with the help of her neighbours and friends. In each of these groups, Sheikha helped facilitate training for all members on SLG operations and best practices and established herself as a trustworthy voice in the community. When members began starting their own businesses, they consulted Sheikha for advice and guidance. Sheikha’s community support has even helped encourage women to attend meetings by themselves rather than being accompanied by a male family member. Most importantly, Sheikha wants all women in Jordan to realize the important role they play in all communities and feels emboldened to apply her enthusiasm in a way that uplifts the women in her community.

Sheikha was asked to reflect on some personal experiences with helping women in her community. “When forming one of the groups and beginning the initial training on savings and establishing small businesses, one of the women, Shireen Matalqa, approached me and told me that although she was great at baking cookies and cake, she had no idea how to properly market them.” Sheikha mentored her on financial literacy and the basics of business management, and shortly afterwards she took a loan from the group to start her business. As a result of Sheikha’s mentorship, this woman’s business was successful and continues to prosper. She is ever thankful for Sheikha’s help in making her a successful business owner and a more confident person.

Another beneficiary of Sheikha’s mentorship is Toqa Bani Younes, a university student who suffers from kidney failure. “She wanted to help her parents by covering part of her health expenses. I encouraged her to take a loan from the savings fund to purchase make-up, cosmetics and accessories to sell them to her university colleagues.” This allowed her to earn money which helps alleviate some financial burden off her family.

Sheikha has also encountered success running her own small business. Starting with 70 JOD (CAD $130) as a loan from her local SLG, she bought organic thyme and produced 20kg of za’atar, a spice mixture that includes the herb along with toasted sesame seeds, dried sumac, often salt, as well as other spices. From this initial investment, she earned a net income of 30 JOD (CAD $56). She also makes a variety of ready-to-cook meals and dried herbs. Currently, her monthly net income is 250 JOD. At “Treasures of the Jordan Valley” event organized by the project in December 2019, she earned 250 JOD and credits her experience at the bazaar with opening up new horizons and causing her to think more seriously about her business.
Key JVL Highlights

Live Experience in As-Salt, Jordan

JVL project in partnership with its local partner BookAgri and Funded by Global Affairs Canada has created three different destinations in As-Salt, Ajloun, and in Jerash, this was implemented through the CBT program which will empower women and youth to be the hosts for tourism and tourists in their villages.

Gender Sensitisation Training

As part of Gender Equality Mainstreaming (GEM) with private sector partners, the JVL team conducted gender sensitization training for its partner GreenTech. The training was held at JVL offices during which GreenTech staff were introduced to gender related topics and the company's GEM action plan was validated by the company’s staff, management and the JVL team.

New market opportunities for women entrepreneurs with Sameh Mall

A signing ceremony was held between Sameh Mall, MEDA Jordan and Sarh International. Under this new agreement, Sameh Mall will provide dedicated space for JVL women and youth entrepreneurs to sell their products in several branches of Sameh Mall. Sameh Mall has 29 branches across Jordan.

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