

Success Stories' and Democratic Governance in the Middle East

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My presentation is a totally different one, it is more at the grassroots level. Hope you will enjoy this as much as I did while implementing the project.

I wanted to start with something that clarifies, how Annie from Jordan talks about success stories and democratic governance when she comes from a monarchy background, just for you to know.

So this is a bit information about Jordan for those who are not aware of that, I don't want to talk about it, I'm sure that most of you don't know exactly they are democratic. So the political system again, the executive branch, Chief of State, King Abdallah II since 1999 King Hussein's eldest son, first in line, inherited the throne.

Of course we do have the legislative branch, bicameral national Assembly for those who don't know of course, the Senate house of notables, a



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Chamber of deputies, House of Representatives elected by popular vote, on the basis of proportional representation, to serve 4 years term.

As for political stability, I just want to show you in advance how we were able to implement this project within these challenges. Jordan is one of the two Arab nations to have made peace with Israel and is a key ally of the US. The succession of immigration, migration including Iraqis and Syrians this is another challenge we are facing. King Abdallah faces the task of maintaining stability, while accommodating costs for reform and the national agenda blueprint for long time political economic and social economic change. Jordan's process of economic stabilisation has been undermined by instability in the region. But, even though, we were able to work with our partners, FPSC and Spanish cooperation to implement a 4 year project.

Regarding Jordan, we are proud to say Jordan has signed seven major conventions: Convention on Human Rights, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Convention on the Rights of the Child, and Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women. But, and despite all the troubles in the neighboring countries, Jordan was able to sustain his balance, we do have loyalty, I'm Jordanian and it's a fact.

The project I'm going to talk about is "The improvement of the social integration of disabled people in the middle east through accessibility. Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Egypt". I will talk about the Jordanian experience in this project.

In cooperation with the Spanish Foundation FPSC, and supported by the Spanish government represented by AECID. The main goal of the project is to improve the quality of life of PWD by ensuring accessibility to services and vocational training. If you want to talk about democracy, for me one of the major component is mobility and having access to services. We can say democracy is giving the rights for the most vulnerable people, and persons with disabilities are the most vulnerable people. I think democracy, even if you are not into democracy, is giving the right, like providing accessibility to services.

First: the activities took to evaluate and assess with the beneficiaries and the local community the selection of the public spaces to be adapted to



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the needs of people with disabilities whether in Syria, Jordan or Egypt. Second: execute adaptation works in 17 public spaces. By the way, we had the choice either to work with NGO's or with the public sector. Of course, if you work with NGO you will be services oriented, but if you work with the public it will be more development, and you will see now, I will be justifying my position. Of course, it is more challenging, more time demanding, more hectic but it's more sustainable.

Third: establish assistive technology workshop and adaptation unit, organize training sessions of vocational training in the private sector in Jordan, Syria and Egypt following the request of persons with disabilities. It's again about ownership, participatory approach, and the right based approach. So, these are the theories, let's see now about the real thing.

I try to evaluate myself. What is the success indicator?. There should be a success factor before indicators. Compliance with international law should be a success factor, we have to consider our success and what really made our project a success.

At the international level, UN Convention for the rights of PWD because this project really abides by CPWD, and the millennium goals. Our project complies with the millennium goals. And we have again complied with the CPWD because it breaks barriers, opens doors for an inclusive society and development for all. Again, in 2012 the theme "removing the barriers to create an inclusive society and accessible society for all" was the theme of the international organizations and local organizations.

Regarding the development based approach, based on the need of the local communities, exchange of expertise at both regional and international levels Jordan is a success indicator. Because selecting Jordan to be the place to really implement this kind of projects has been a success factor for several reasons: availability of an institutional environment in different fields, first Arab country to sign the UN Convention, availability of NGO with long experience in the field of disabilities, political stability and insured sustainability.

What is really nice about this project is that society has been an implementing partner conformed with the mission, objective and policies of FPSC and AHS. There should be some sort of a commitment between the supporting partner and the implementing partner. Involving agents in



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the design and planning and assessment of the project leading to ownership, integrating projects into the programs, adjusting project's activities from the highest administrative level to the field workers.

It has been a model of good practice in Jordan for the following reasons, and what is interesting and this is a question I wanted to ask, that the project has had a baseline survey, which has been implemented with the persons with disabilities themselves, involving them to decide what their needs and priorities are. Selecting Zarqa, where the project has been done, the second biggest city in Jordan, and with child's highest population with disabilities. And based on the needs of the local communities, especially PWD, we made the baseline survey, we made the questionnaire together with FPSC and they were the ones to decide, what centers to be accessed and what needs to cover.

As for identifying stakeholders, networking between NGO and the public sector, approval of the Prime Minister addressing all the concerned stakeholders. Before really starting our project we had to go to the Prime Minister and they have circulated a letter to all the ministries so that we can go and have access to assess any department whether it's Health, Education or Social Development. Partnership with Zarqa governorate to coordinate with all the concerned ministries, we could have them easily imposed the project into Zarqa, but we have involved them in the design, in the planning and in the implementation since the beginning of the project. Zarqa governorate is the entity that coordinates all the ministries. So before starting the project we made a workshop under the patronage of the Prince Raad involving all the partners and they presented a paper of the situation of PWD in Zarqa from a social and health perspective. And the media outcome of this is the coordination Committee.

As I said, establishing a coordination committee was the major outcome of this workshop because they were the one to coordinate and supervise and evaluate the project and not us. Hussein society, the implementing partner was only a member in this and it was not the one. It included social development directorate, health directorate, education directorate, construction directorate, Palestinian affairs, Zarqa municipality, Higher Council for Persons with Disability, and all concerned parties. They were the ones to invite the parties not us.



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At the committee level the success factor was to sensitize the needs of the local communities through surveys. They were the one who helped us in the survey, the members of the committee themselves because they have the access to all the directorates. Other factors were to achieve cooperation between all the concerned parties, plan, implement and assess, provide related data information to avoid duplication, approve the action plan, organize meeting progress reports, ensure ownership and sustainability.

As far as institutionalization is concerned, the committee was integrated in the governorate's program and not only for the sake of supervision of the activities of the project. It became a permanent committee inside the governorate to ensure coordination of activities concerning disabilities. The Committee activated all the members, ensured transparency by avoiding the abuse of the program for personal benefit, because in the past everybody knows what happened.

This is the governorate, where you can see the involvement of women is more than men themselves. We have achieved different things at the same time. Process for us is more important than the outcome of the project.

We made meetings in different directorates: one day at the directorate of the Ministry of Social Development, another day at the Society, so we could really exchange information and experiences.

As a success indicator at the end, we have established two Vocational Training Units and one workshop. By the way, we were able to abide by the timeline of the schedule relating to the other countries because of the structure of the project, and not because we were the best. Hashmieh vocational training schools for males and females allowed us to abide by the Spanish Cooperation by creating one female center and one male center. At the female center we established an assistive technology workshop. Assistive technology is a specialized technique to train PWDs on how to use computers. It is a special software and a special hardware. We established this workshop in Zarqa. We could have trained them in our workshop but we have transferred the knowledge there and built the capacities of the local communities.



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We have trained their trainers to assess PWD and trained them on how to use computers. We have adapted, of course environmental adaptations, for males and females, 4 health centers and 8 premises. 20 women and men with cognitive disabilities trained to use computers. This was the most challenging thing: how to train persons with cognitive disabilities to use the computers. According to the Ministry of Health the number of elderly people with disabilities who visited the Health Centers had increased substantially and this is becoming a best practice model for others to follow.

We work with the VTC and the VTC are considering our project as a Center for excellence to be transferred to other VTC in Jordan not only in Zarqa: another success indicator. This workshop we have established is for adaptations. We could have done the adaptation ourselves but, according to the project, we have trained the local communities; we have established the workshop for adaptations and accessibility, so that they can continue our job in Zarqa. We selected a Center that can really help the whole north. We have only one adaptation unit in Amman and the services are always really centralized in the capital. What have we done?. We have established the workshop, we have trained them so they can continue the mission and this is ensuring the sustainability of the project. All those people who work with us are persons with disabilities. The key actors in this project are PWD themselves providing models to their potentials, so we are raising awareness during the process.

Regarding assessment, three people assess the child: an special educator, an occupational therapist and an IT manager. According to the assessment, they can develop a special software and a special hardware for PWD to use computers. This is the accessibility we have done as I said, this is all our work which will be continued thru the workshop in Zarqa. In a few months we will sustain services by providing quality services, but beyond this to help refugees at the same time. With the help and cooperation of FPSC we were able to have some reallocations in order to transfer the allocations which hadn't been used in Syria for transparency and accountability reasons.

Our Center provides comprehensive services for PWDs in general and for children with physical challenges in particular. By the way, the trainees



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that learned how to use the computer were all persons with Down syndrome. All of them, 20. And you should see how happy they were.

Regarding refugees, we are providing services to Za'atri. We have two projects: a project supported by OCHA and another project supported by the Spanish cooperation through FPSC. We do not impose ourselves; we make partnerships with local organizations. As we have done in the north, we have made a partnership with Atakaful, an specialist with Syrian refugees, they would identify the needs of the Syrians. This is outside Za'atri camp where 150.000 Syrians live outside the Za'atri camp and 8% of them are PWD. Yet, we discovered that 25% of them are war injured, that's why the demand for orthoses is higher than for prostheses. We train and we select the partners that will continue to provide services for the refugees after we assess them and we provide them with the mobility aids. Our role is to assess them and to provide them with the mobility aids, but later on they need somebody to continue the project. That's why we do not really work alone, this is a special Health Center: we train the therapists and they are with us in assessing and then continue their job. This is what really distinguishes our project from the rest. It's not just giving the services.

We have female technicians because some ladies are a little bit sensitive to be assessed by males, so we took into consideration this aspect in our project. We are the only Center in Jordan that makes adaptations of the wheel chairs. We receive the wheel chairs and the mobility aids but we make adaptations and we have a specialized workshop which has been established with the support of FPSC. We do the assessment and we adapt the wheel chair or the mobility aid to the needs of each child.

As I said, we work outside the Za'atari camp in Ramtha, Ma'an and Karak and now we are working inside Za'atri Camp with the help of FPSC. We have just recently started. As I said, the role is to assess their needs and provide them with mobility aids, and train the therapist, and the family on how to take care of them in the future. We always involve the families in our practices.

Concluding remarks. A model project to be duplicated at the original level. Follow up is recommended to ensure sustainability although it is sustained but still we need a follow up system. We are doing it as an



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implementing partner until this stage. Transparency and credibility of the stakeholders are the key success factors for us.

Thank you.