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Democracy & Governance Sector PROJECT PROFILE

April 2012



The Palace of Justice and seat of the judiciary in Amman, Jordan.

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

Implemented by: Tetra Tech DPK

Duration: 2008 – 2013

Total Funding: \$25 million

Beneficiaries: Justice sector stakeholders and civil society

Geographic Coverage: Nationwide

<http://www.rolpjo.com>

Rule of Law Program

BACKGROUND

The “rule of law” describes a condition in which the actions of both citizens and public authorities are subject to written laws which are applied impartially by an independent judiciary. Strengthening the rule of law in Jordan has long been enunciated as a key objective of the Jordanian Government’s reform strategies. Desired outcomes of a strengthened rule of law are: increased public confidence in dispute resolution processes and decisions of the courts; greater protections of fundamental human rights; more robust civil societies; and increased economic opportunities for business growth and foreign investment in Jordan.

The Rule of Law Program (ROLP) assists the Jordanian judiciary in achieving substantial, sustainable progress towards its goal of creating a modern, independent, and professional judicial system that is consistent with international standards. The program supports the clear vision for building and institutionalizing Judicial independence articulated in the Judicial Council’s 2012-2014 strategy, which was developed through a broadly participatory process.

ACTIVITIES

- Empowering judicial independence through development of the administrative capacity at the Judicial Council to better manage judges’ affairs, statistically assess and report on performance of the judiciary, and strategically plan and manage modernization of the judiciary
- Developing the legal research capacity of the Cassation Court Technical Office to expedite and improve the quality of judgments in this court of final appeals
- Reducing case delay of judgments and execution of judgments
- Computerizing the courts to improve court, attorney, and public access to information, sharing of court data with other e-government entities, and improving the security of court records
- Re-engineering court business processes for more efficient, effective, transparent, customer-oriented delivery of services
- Developing mediation as an alternative dispute resolution option
- Enhancing the administrative capacity of court administrators and chief judges to more effectively manage the courts with proactive, information-based decision making practices
- Strengthening the legal knowledge and adjudication skills of judges



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Jordan's strong support for women's participation in the legal profession, coupled with support from USAID such as the Future Judges scholarship program (pictured above) and the Woman-to-Woman mentoring program, led to increase of women judges to 15% of all judges.

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- Developing the Judicial Institute of Jordan's capacity to create and deliver quality continuing legal education and new judge preparatory training programs
- Increasing public awareness of justice sector reform efforts and individuals' rights under the law through small grants and technical assistance programs in partnership with civil society organizations focusing on human rights, women and youth

PROGRESS & ACHIEVEMENTS

- Developed a custom Arabic-language case management system (MIZAN) and automated all 74 courts throughout Jordan, representing 100% of the national case load, including 44 conciliation courts, 19 first instance courts, 5 appeals courts, 3 special high courts in Amman, and 3 juvenile courts
- Helped the Judicial Institute become a regional model of excellence with a modern Judge Preparatory Program and a Continuing Legal Education Program conducting more than 100 programs annually on a wide range of legal and procedural subjects
- Assisted the Ministry of Justice in creating and administering a Future Judges Scholarship Program that encourages the best and brightest university students to study for undergraduate and graduate law degrees in Jordanian, U.K. and U.S. universities with a commitment to serve in the judiciary as judges; the program has resulted in a significant increase of women as students and future judges, placing the Jordanian judiciary on track to be gender balanced within a decade
- Provided grants to Jordanian civil society organizations that have directly impacted over 12,000 Jordanians, primarily women and youth, in 37 communities across Jordan
- Supported the Judicial Council in drawing up a strategy for the Independent Judicial Authority "The Strategy of Building 2012-2014".

PARTNERS

- Tetra Tech DPK
- Ministry of Justice
- Judicial Council
- All national courts from misdemeanor to supreme court jurisdictions
- Civil society organizations