



النهضة العربية للديمقراطية والتنمية
Arab Renaissance for Democracy & Development



A GLOBAL NGO NETWORK
FOR PRINCIPLED AND EFFECTIVE
HUMANITARIAN ACTION

Localization



JONAF Response to COVID-19 Assessment



November
2020



ARDD

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Introduction

The economic and social life in Jordan has been impacted adversely by the COVID-19 crisis as vulnerabilities deepened and got compounded. While the residents of Jordan became more in need of humanitarian aid and assistance, the COVID-19 crisis made delivering aid more difficult due to stoppages and breakdowns of supply chains, and to the sudden and immediate increase in demand for aid.

The Jordanian government was praised early on for seemingly managing the crisis effectively. However, the praise was short lived as economic and social hardships grew, and delivery hinged upon accessing the most vulnerable, learning their locations, needs and ultimately reaching them.

The role of civil society came to the forefront in terms of access to vulnerable communities, and its specific and local knowledge, and awareness of the needs of vulnerable individuals and communities. Consequently, the government, which responded exclusively during the first two weeks of closure, adapted its response plan to allow some civil society organizations to help through predefined channels and measures. The Jordan National NGO Forum (JONAF), which has been participating in the humanitarian response during the COVID-19 crisis, was among the first responders.

JONAF was established in 2016 by a group of local civil society organizations (CSOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other entities with the aim of coordinating and leading the national humanitarian response and development efforts in Jordan. Currently, JONAF includes 50 member organizations from across the Kingdom, including four CSOs with observer status.

Due to the significant role JONAF played during the first phase of the crisis, the need for assessing the overall capabilities of JONAF members' responses throughout all the phases of the COVID-19, since its onset in Jordan became apparent. During August-September 2020, the Arab Renaissance for Democracy & Development (ARDD), in coordination with the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) Secretariat, commissioned an assessment of JONAF's response plan to the COVID-19 crisis. The assessment is conducted as part of the project "Strengthening in-country NGO Fora to promote enhanced NGO collective action at field level during the COVID-19 response". The objective of the assessment is to assess JONAF's response to the COVID-19 crisis by evaluating and documenting the main experiences, available capacities, gaps and achievements, as well as the effectiveness and efficiency of its COVID-19 response and the collaboration of the forum.

The assessment consists of four key sections: the first presents the methodology; the second describes the sample; the third delineates the findings (basic functioning and structure, forum decision making, collaboration and partnerships, reputation and visibility, ability to learn and improve, and sustainability); and the last provides the recommendations of the study.

Methodology

Information Areas

The assessment focused on three areas, the ICVA project requirements in line with JONAF objectives, and ARDD/JONAF's Emergency Response Plan objectives:

1. ICVA Project Requirements
 - a) Conduct a review of the COVID-19 response, including how JONAF members had to adapt ways of working in Jordan in areas in which they were active.
 - b) Evaluate JONAF members' involvement and capabilities for future similar efforts.
 - c) Evaluate the membership, membership criteria, responsibilities, accountability and commitment requirements.
2. JONAF Forum Objectives
 - a) Coordination and representation.
 - b) Advocacy efforts.
 - c) Knowledge exchange and capacity building for members.
3. JONAF Emergency Response Plan (ERP)
 - a) Protection and health prevention in response to the COVID-19 risks and dangers.
 - b) Immediate assistance to ensure all communities in Jordan enjoy health and have their livelihood secured.
 - c) Manage information dissemination to better inform policies and decision-making processes while responding to the COVID-19 crisis.
 - d) Complement and further coordinate government efforts to respond to the COVID-19 crisis.

The Research Approach

ARDD developed six criteria for the assessment, which are guided by the three areas of focus. Under each criterion, a set of specific objectives was agreed upon to arrive at the intended results. The following table includes the criteria and specific objectives of the assessment:

Assessment Criteria	Specific Objectives
Basic functioning and structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The basic structures and processes inherent in the functioning of the forum. The forum's ability to function effectively and efficiently. The internal human resources and operating mechanisms (volunteers vs. full-time staff).
Forum decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The skills, relationships and vision of the forum. The JONAF members contribution to the forum's functioning and success. The effective approaches and mechanisms adopted for localization and decentralization.
Collaboration and partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The forum's overall ability to build relationships with individuals, members and organizations outside of the forum, including government bodies. The growing role and reach of the forum through relationships, and networks with internal and external members, including the government.
Reputation and visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Forum's and members' visibility with stakeholders, target audiences, media channels, and government bodies.
Ability to learn and improve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The forum's ability to systematically collect data to inform decision making. The forum and members' ability to learn and improve in time through sharing knowledge and best practices.
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and build members' capacities to act as a forum and implement relevant interventions to respond in a more efficient and accountable way to their communities in times of emergency in the long term.

The assessment adopted a mixed-methodology approach to ensure a multi-dimensional perspective and a participatory approach to gauge participants' engagement and sense of ownership. ARDD designed inclusive and gender-sensitive tools, both quantitative and qualitative, to better understand how women, men and people with disability (PWD) were contacted and engaged during the first phase of COVID-19 in Jordan.

For the quantitative tool, a survey tool was designed to include different data collection techniques such as multiple choice selection, Likert scale and open-ended questions. The data collection was led by ARDD during September 2020; the collection process was conducted through self-administered online interviews via “KOB0”, which is an online data collection tool, where the survey link was shared among the forum members through WhatsApp and Emails.

The assessment aimed to survey a 50% (25 organizations) sample of the JONAF. The sample was designed to include members, partners and observers, especially the organizations that responded to the COVID-19 situation.

Key informant interviews (KIIs) were designed to complement the survey. Interview questions were based on the preliminary findings of the survey. The questions were focused on JONAF’s overall performance during the crisis, as well as on communications, advocacy and media coverage.

The KIIs included both a phone survey and face-to-face interviews conducted by ARDD’s research team during September 2020. The sample was designed to randomly select key stakeholders representing JONAF, such as key members and partners, and government actors that supported the COVID-19 response. The interviews were recorded using “Audacity”, which is an offline software.

Sample

ARDD collected surveys from 34 members and observers from JONAF, categorized as follows: 31 regular members, one member in the steering committee and two observers covering 11 governorates. Furthermore, ARDD completed eight KIIs, which included two JONAF members [Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization (JHCO) and Women Helping Women Network], one member from the JONAF Executive Committee (Tamkeen for Legal Aid), two JONAF observers (Harra Initiative and Radio Al Balad), two JONAF partners (the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) and Shoura Organization), and a government ministry, the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC).

Governorate	Number of members	Number of observers	Percentage
Irbid	7	0	21%
Tafleh	2	0	6%
Aqaba	3	0	9%
Karak	1	0	3%
Balqa	2	0	6%
Zarqa	1	0	3%
Ajloun	1	0	3%
Amman	7	2	26%
Madaba	1	0	3%
Ma’an	1	0	3%
Mafrq	6	0	18%

Findings

1. Basic Functioning and Structure

JONAF members work in different humanitarian and developmental fields and offer a diversified set of expertise. The vast majority of the members run projects in multiple sectors simultaneously. When the surveyed sample was asked to choose all the sectors they work in, the following was determined:

- The majority of the members who completed the survey, 32 members (94%), work in the sustainable development field.
- More than half of them, 20 members (59%), work in the humanitarian response area.
- A quarter of the sample (nine members), work in both fields (sustainable development and humanitarian response).
- More than one third (38%) of the members work in other areas.

The following are the most frequently focused upon information areas by the sample members in the development field:

- Women empowerment, 32 members (94%).
- Local community development, 29 members (85%).
- Economic empowerment, 25 members (74%).
- Youth empowerment, 24 members (71%).
- Education and raising public awareness, 22 members, (65%).
- Political empowerment, 18 members (53%).

On the other hand, JONAF members also deliver humanitarian assistance in different areas:

- Distributing humanitarian aid, 17 (50%) members.
- Social protection services, 15 (44%) members.
- Child protection, 15 (44%) members.
- People with disability services, 13 (38%) members.
- Medical and mental support, 12 (35%) members.
- Protection programs, 10 (29%) members.

Though the vast majority of members operate in the developmental field, 30 members, 88% of the sample, are also involved in humanitarian aid efforts as part of the JONAF response to COVID-19. According to one key informant from the Women Helping Women Network organization, most of the local civil society organizations engage in delivering humanitarian aid, as it is relatively easier for them to assist in this field than in other fields. This explains the shift in focus during the COVID-19 response to delivering humanitarian aid, regardless of whether they had relevant previous experience or not.

The majority of the interviewed key informants affirmed that the shift in focus indicated a good level of flexibility in terms of members' own mandate, which allowed them to engage positively in the COVID-19 response. However, according to Women Helping Women Network, such flexibility might allow for errors and mistakes to occur, and even sometimes pose the risk of corruption. On the other hand, only four members in the sample of key informants reported their inability to participate in the COVID-19 response due to the restrictions enforced by the Ministry of Social Development in their regions and the geographic distance from their areas of operation.

Generally, the members indicated that the roles within the forum are clear and understandable, and showed a high level (72%) of satisfaction with their understanding of their roles. Furthermore, JONAF associates were more content (77%) with the existence of and the level of activity of committees and workgroups formed by JONAF.

Membership Criteria

According to JHCO, the membership criteria should be open, thus creating a large scope for participation. Furthermore, predefining fixed criteria may exclude some newly established associations from participating in the response efforts. Tamkeen shared the same point of view while suggesting defining specific criteria for participating in humanitarian responses.

The majority (25) of the organizations, especially those engaged in distributing humanitarian aid, depend on volunteers to deliver aid. Moreover, 17% of the surveyed members stated that they do not utilize volunteers. For example, Tamkeen, which is a legal aid organization, stated that they did not need volunteers as they provide legal aid and counseling which requires specific legal expertise.

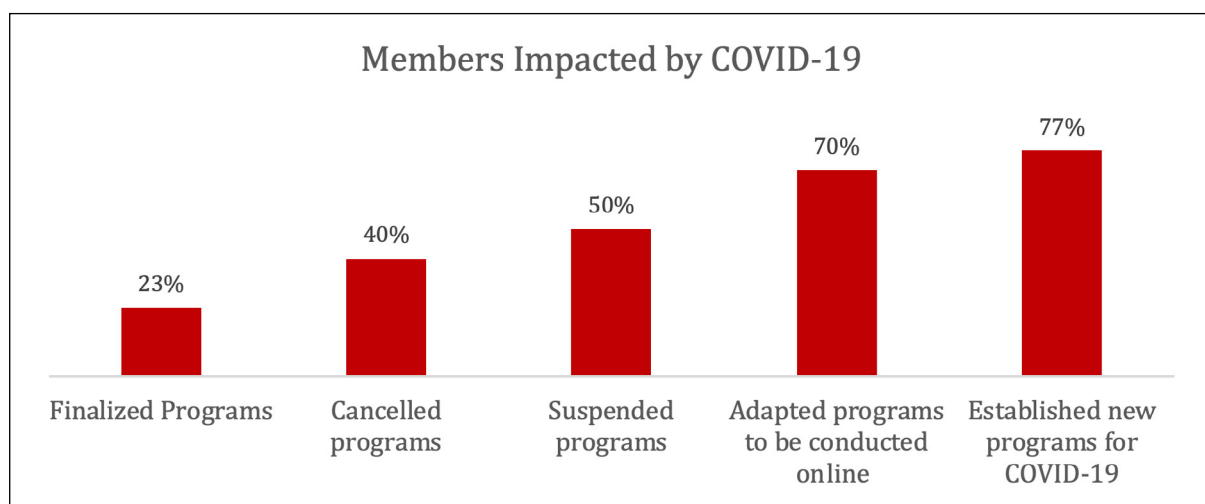
For Radio Al Balad, compliance with the mutually agreed-upon minimum standards and codes of conduct is necessary to accept members. Harra conditioned membership on having basic professional and moral standards. In addition, the real desire for social change should be one of the main conditions for accepting a new member. Although this last condition is hard to measure, it should be evaluated in some way, stated Shoura, which also stressed the importance of continuously evaluating members' development.

COVID-19 Impact on JONAF

While 30 members of the 34 surveyed organizations participated in the response, all organizations have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 crisis and the preventive measures taken by the government in response to the crisis. The impact took different shapes on the programs run by JONAF members. When members were asked about their response and the impact of the crisis on their programs, the results were as follows. (Please note that percentages do not add up to 100% as an organization may run multiple programs simultaneously).

- **Established New Programs for COVID-19 (77%):** organizations that established new programs after the imposition of a nationwide curfew.
- **Adapted Programs to Online Delivery (70%):** organizations that were able to adjust their activities online fully or partially, like meetings, some workshops and research activities.
- **Suspended Programs (50%):** organizations that could not adapt their delivery online in any way during the crisis, as their programs require direct physical interactions or immense crowds. Still, these programs could be delivered later on.

- **Canceled Programs (40%):** organizations that could not conduct their programs in any way. Neither could their programs be delivered at a later stage, therefore they were completely canceled.
- **Completed Programs (23%):** organizations that were able to continue and finish their programs during the crisis as planned, with no changes or adaptations.



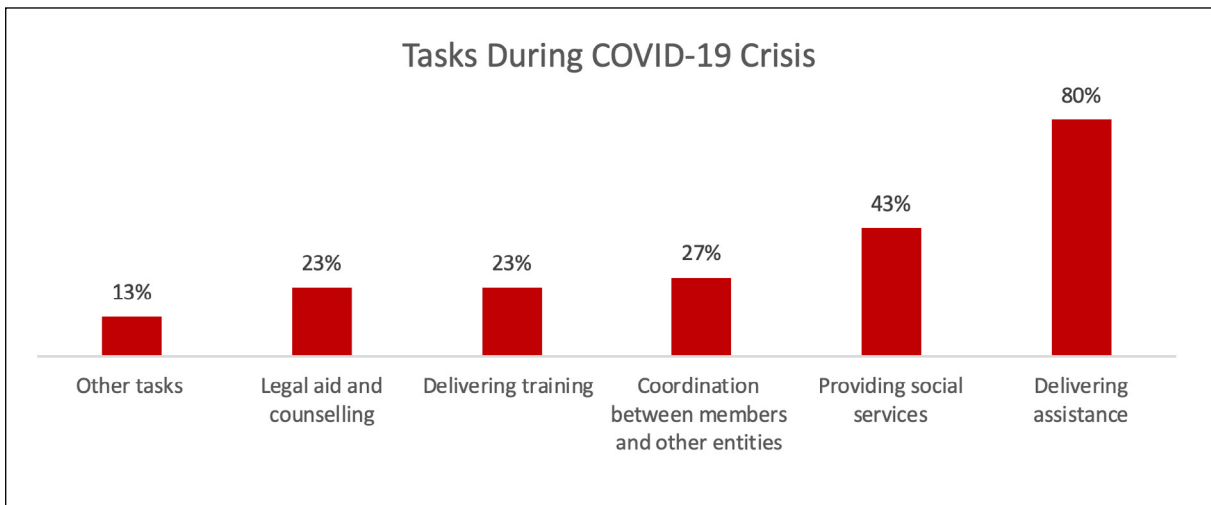
Of the surveyed sample, 27 (90%) out of 30 organizations were forced to suspend or cancel their existing programs due to the onset of COVID-19. Out of the 27 organizations negatively impacted, only 18 (67%) were able to adapt or come up with new programs to conduct. This indicates that the other nine organizations were not capable to adapt and cope with the impact of the pandemic.

Delving into the programs, each JONAF member is currently running seven programs on average. Out of all the projects, almost half (45%) had to be canceled or suspended, while 43% of the projects have been either newly established or adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, 12% of the programs were finalized/completed successfully, despite the organization being affected.

As the sources of funding were curtailed due to the pandemic, 17 members (57% of the sample) were forced to lay off some staff members during the crisis. Fifteen organizations gave cancellation of current projects as the main reason for laying off employees, since the majority of their employees worked on program basis. Ten organizations gave insufficient funding to cover the near future expenditures as the reason for reducing the number of employees. Many members reported both these reasons for laying off employees. Some organizations faced more severe staff reductions than others. For example, the Institute for Family Health lost 120 (30%) of its employees during the pandemic, Al Kiram Charity lost 42 (100%) of its employees, and Youth without Borders lost 26 (76%) of its employees.

JONAF's Response

JONAF witnessed an increase in the number of requests for assistance, 18 (60%) out of 30 received additional requests for various types of assistance. Members that received additional requests were able to respond to only 58% of the requested assistance directly, while (36%) of the requests were referred to other organizations.



Delivering Assistance

As part of the JONAF’s response, a majority of organizations, 24 out of 30 (80%) partook in the task of delivering assistance to affected populations. The primary means of assistance provided to targeted communities was the provision of basic needs through the distribution of food packages, cash and medical support. Of the 24 organizations that delivered assistance, two thirds (66.6%) provided more than one type of assistance. Furthermore, 22 (92%) of the 24 organizations delivered assistance in the form of food packages, while 13 (54%) provided cash assistance and eight (33%) provided medical aid.

Providing Social Services

Furthermore, 13 (43%) of the 30 respondents contributed in the form of social services. Among those who delivered social services, psycho-social support was prioritized, with 85% of the participants delivering this service. The importance of offering mental health support services was evident as 69% of the participants provided them, while 15% delivered other social services.

Delivering Training

Seven out of the 30 participating members provided training. Among the sampled, a total of 31 training sessions took place. These sessions were primarily conducted to enhance participants’ organizational capacities. The surveyed sample expressed a high level of satisfaction (86%) with the forum’s training to build the members’ capacities during the COVID-19 response phase.

Legal Aid

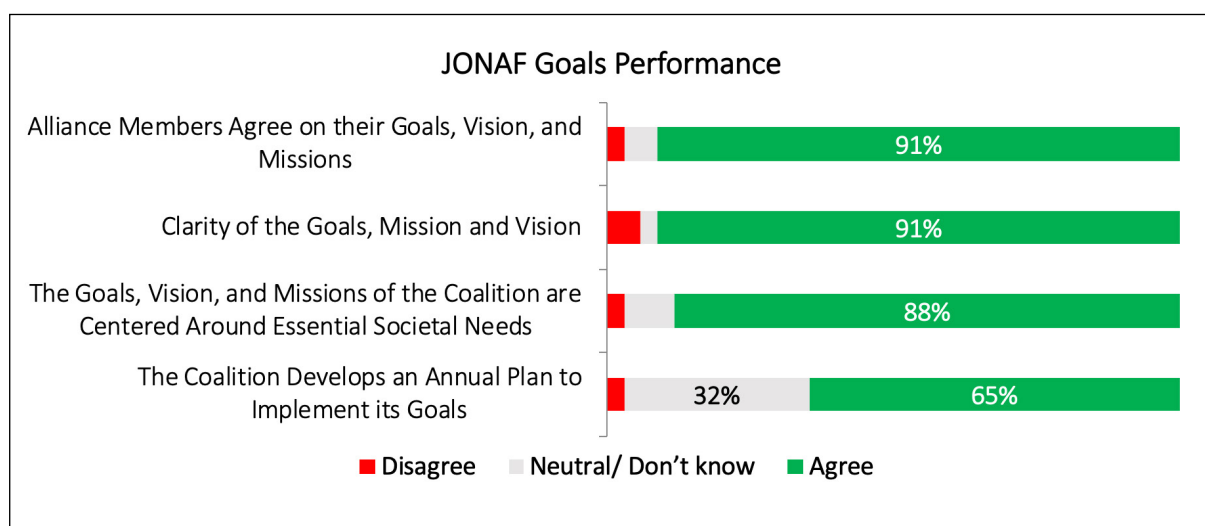
Legal Aid and counseling services is another service component provided by seven members in the 30 sampled. Participants provided three different types of legal aid during the response: in domestic violence cases, in legal issues related to financial obligations and in cases related to work complaints.

2. Forum Decision Making

General look into goals and vision (before and during COVID-19)

General evaluation of the goals

Members expressed confidence in JONAF's ability to prepare and implement goals, with 75% being satisfied with JONAF's performance. The goals set by the forum are clear and well documented; 31 (91%) out of 34 members agree that the goals are clear. At the same time, 31 (91%) out of the 34 members strongly believe in JONAF's goals and visions. When it comes to the relevance of the goals to the essential social needs, a significant portion, 88%, agree that they are pertinent. However, the forum lacks in one key area, which is the ability to develop an annual plan to implement the members' goals; it is a field in which members gave it a (65%) score.



While the majority of the members feel that the goals are clear and understandable, Women Helping Women Network says defining goals that are attainable and measurable is a major challenge, as there is the risk of having members copy the objectives of others while lacking the capacities to achieve them. Harra, for example, adopted participatory approaches to better define and prioritize local community needs.

Including Members in the Decision-making Process

The members of the JONAF alliance believe in the forum's goals and vision. However, some members feel that they have no say when it comes to the decision-making process, as only 59% are included in this process. Only seven in every 10 members say they are consulted before a decision is made. The result is JONAF-set goals and visions that are less matched to all the members' goals and vision; merely 65% agree that the plans set by JONAF are relevant to their own goals and contributions.

All the interviewees agreed on the importance of having sufficient information to make better decisions. Specifically, the Jordanian Hashemite Charity organization mentioned the urgent need for comprehensive and reliable databases for the beneficiaries, the civil society organizations and volunteers, as well as for utilizing information technology and systematizing the re-

response mechanisms. This recommendation was also emphasized by the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, as coordination is key to an efficient response.

Evaluation of JONAF’s Activities

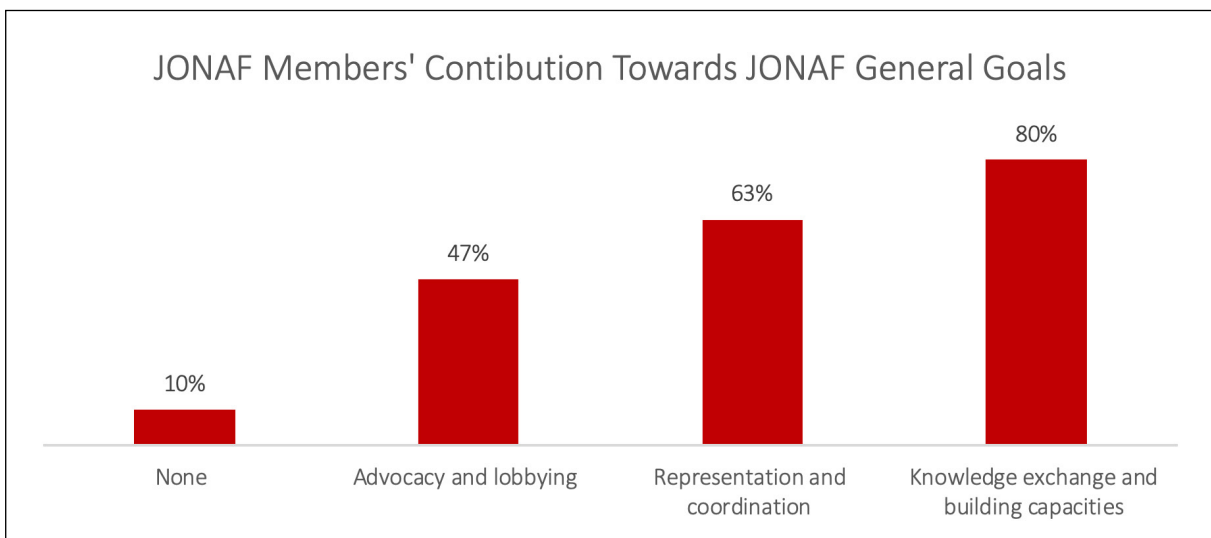
To strengthen the alliance, JONAF needs to look into its members’ activities and their perception of it. Regarding members’ continuous improvement, 85% of them agree that JONAF strives to build their capabilities and skills. Internal communication is essential within the alliance, as it helps understand each member’s role. While 74% of the members are in fairly constant communication, 65% others are not in regular contact, and this makes their roles less clear. To help improve the process, the Shoura organization suggests conducting continuous research activities that include surveys and need assessments.

Goals and Vision During COVID-19

Contributions towards JONAF goals

Representation and coordination are among JONAF’s main objectives, yet only around half of the members (63%) worked on achieving this goal during the crisis. At the same time, the affiliated organizations expressed the need to improve the representation of the wider spectrum of the Jordanian civil society in the forum. Of these, (72%) expressed satisfaction with the current level of representation. Much fewer members (47%) worked on the second objective, which is advocacy and lobbying, which seems to be a lesser priority than the delivery of urgent humanitarian relief. Lastly, most of the affiliated organizations (80%) contributed to the third goal of JONAF, which is to improve knowledge exchange among members and build their capacities.

The key informant interviews showed that each organization was aware of its part in the response process, but due to inconsistent communication, there was a lack of knowledge regarding responses conducted by other members. This aligns with the fact that 43% of the members were unaware of the full document of JONAF response.



General Evaluation of the Goals

In their response, 93% of individuals agreed that JONAF was able to meet the goals it set. Still, eight of every 10 members felt that there was no clear plan set by JONAF during the pandemic. Resulting key issue was clearness of members' roles, tasks and responsibilities.

Members' Inclusion in the Decision-making process

From the onset of COVID-19, decision making within JONAF became a more collaborative effort. The alliance included the members through open discussions and the sharing of ideas. During the open discussions, the members were able to share their points of view freely; 87% of forum organizations were asked about their needs and concerns. Furthermore, 97% of the organizations gave a prominent leadership role to women in their response to the crisis. However, despite their involvement in the decision-making process 63% of the organizations said that not all members participated in JONAF's response.

Evaluation of JONAF's Activities During COVID-19

During the pandemic, JONAF exerted efforts to help prepare and build members' capabilities and skills. The result is that 83% of the members agreed that the forum was able to successfully build and improve their skills and capabilities through its programs. Organizations were provided with different types of training to prepare for the response. The majority of the organizations, 80%, said that the training provided was relevant to their needs.

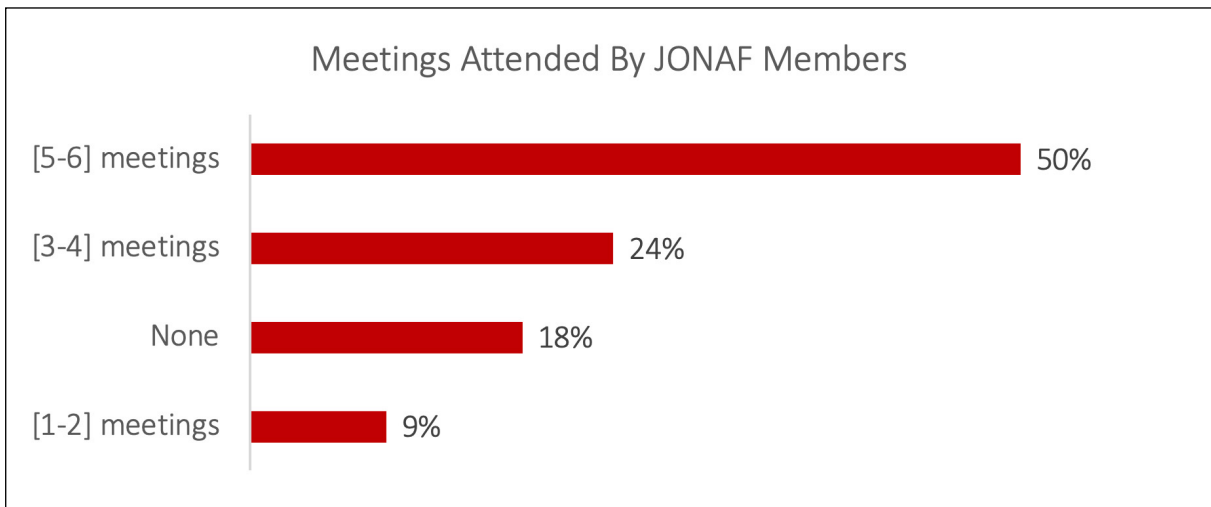
3. Collaboration and Partnerships

Communication

During the pandemic, communication among JONAF members was effective, as stressed by 87% of them who expressed satisfaction. Communication was effective and continuous, as proved by the satisfaction levels during the response (83%), compared to (74%) before the crisis. Effective communication was carried on with government bodies and other civil society organizations as well; satisfaction with communication with government entities was expressed by 77% of JONAF members, while satisfaction with communication with civil society organizations scored slightly lower at 73%.

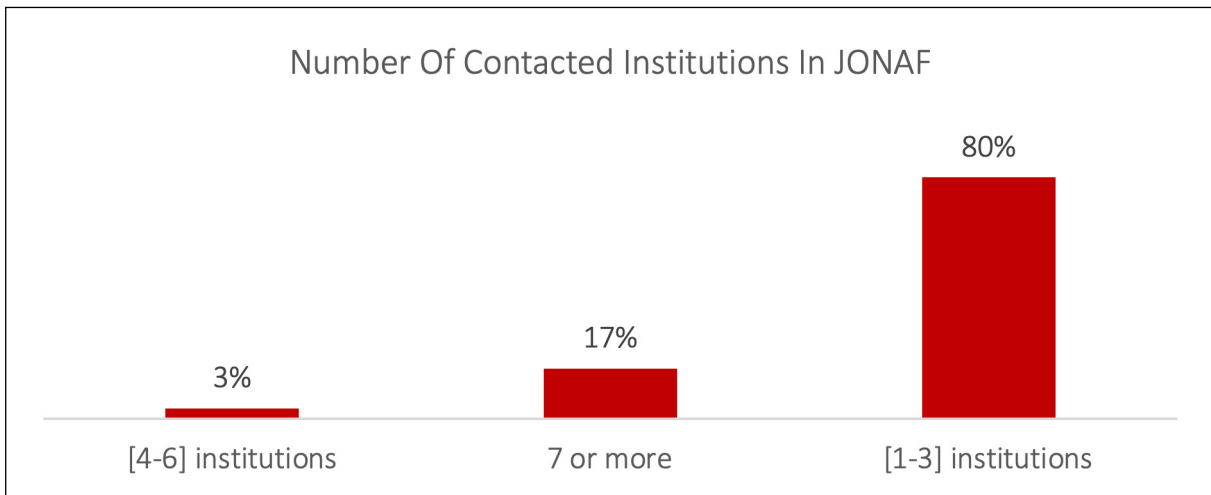
Internal Communication

JONAF members attended about four meetings on average during the period of assessment. Half of the participants (16) attended five to six meetings organized by JONAF, while almost a quarter, eight participants (24%) attended three to four meetings, and three members (9%) attended one or two meetings; six members (18%) did not attend any meetings, mainly due to the geographical distance or to the fact that they had joined the forum more recently. The high level of attendance could be attributed to the fact that meeting times was convenient to 77% of the organizations.



In terms of internal communication, with other JONAF members, on average members contacted around three institutions. The majority (80%) of the surveyed sample contacted one to three institutions from JONAF. A minority (3%) contacted four to six institutions, while 17% contacted seven or more internal institutions. The most mentioned organizations among the list of contacts were Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization (JHCO) and ARDD.

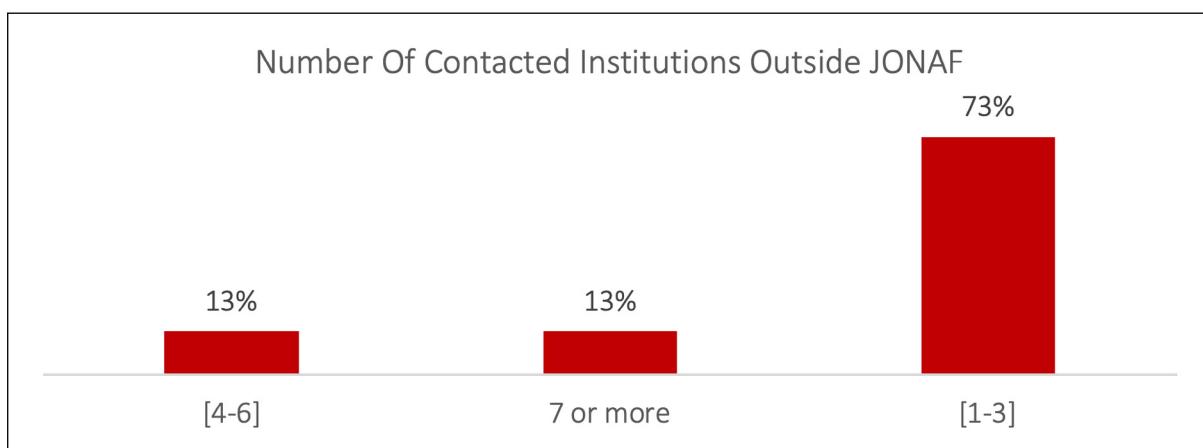
WhatsApp groups are the most prominent choice to follow up on the forum’s news during the response for half of the participants (50%). Social media pages are the second most relevant source of information, followed by 30% individuals. Emails about the forum news are another source followed by 20% of interviewees.



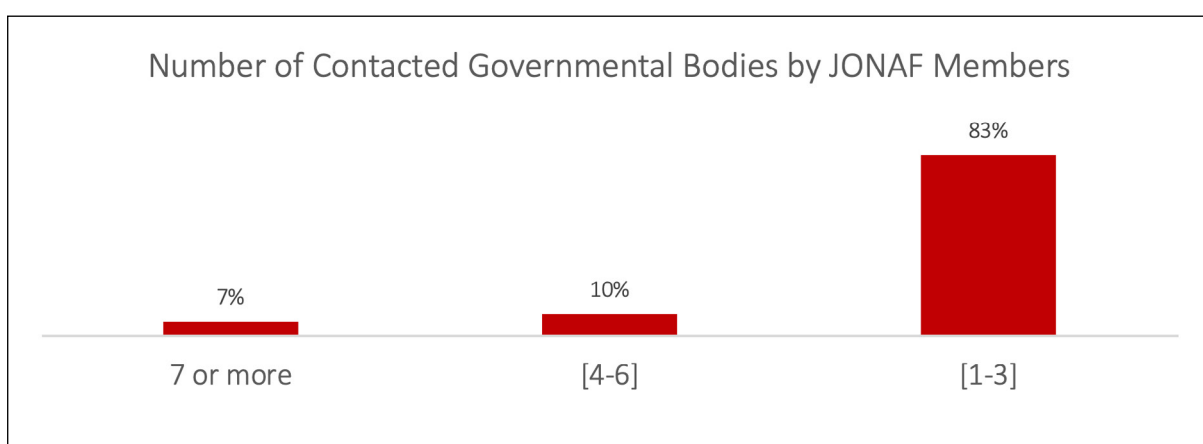
While the majority of the interviewees agreed that WhatsApp groups are a primary communication tool, Tamkeen expressed some concerns about the written means of communications which cannot convey all the information as comprehensively as other means of communication, such as video calls. Another interviewee, Radio Al Balad, which is a media expert emphasized the importance of the physical interactions and meetings that cannot be replaced fully by virtual meetings.

External Communication

Regarding communication with civil society organizations outside JONAF, on average the forum members contacted about three such organizations. The majority of the participants (73%) contacted one to three organizations, 13% of the sample contacted four to six organizations and 13% of the sample contacted seven or more organizations. The most contacted organization was Tikiyet Um Ali charity. Some JONAF members incorrectly referred to other members of the forum as external organizations.



The sample showed a moderate level of satisfaction (78%) with the number of connections and efficiency of relationship with government agencies and community leaders. On average, JONAF members contacted three governmental bodies; 83% of the sample contacted one to three government bodies, 10% contacted four to six institutions, and 7% contacted seven or more such institutions. The most mentioned government institutions were the municipalities and the Ministry of Social Development.



Cooperation

The results of interviews and survey data demonstrate that JONAF has a good relationship with different government bodies, like the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, and this facilitated its response in different areas. JONAF also has a good relationship with the government coordinator for human rights, and this relationship needs to be maintained. Additionally, the JONAF members praised the local municipalities for their support to the responses during the crisis.

While it is important to maintain these good relations, it is even more important to institutionalize the relationship between civil society organizations and government bodies, especially with the security apparatus, in a way that opens meaningful dialogues and brings about important changes, according to the National Commission for Women.

One of the critical areas of cooperation with the government regarded Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation approvals of projects. The ministry adopted a “fast track” approach to respond to project proposals in less than 48 hours since the submission of the proposals, according to the interview with the ministry. The approach was considered efficient and fast by many responding organizations, including ARDD.

All of the interviewed key informants stressed the importance of partnering with government bodies and other organizations that work on similar missions and have the required capacities and expertise to achieve them. For example, Harra suggested cooperating with research units in the municipalities that conduct similar plans and efforts, thus complementing existing efforts and using the available resources instead of starting the journey from scratch. Signing memos on this purpose is the first step toward building such cooperation.

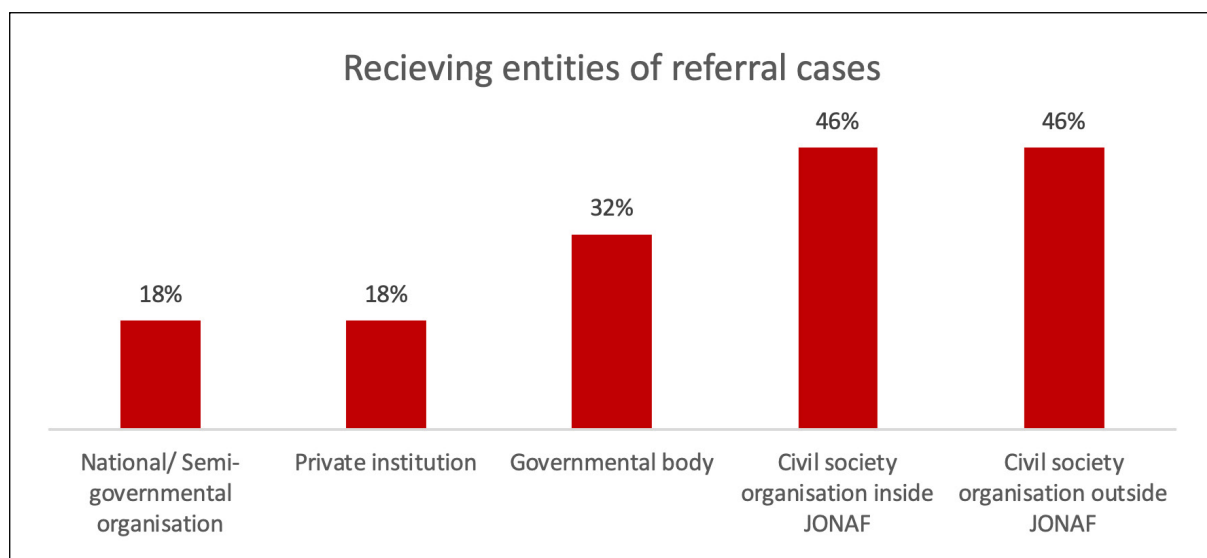
The Ministry of Planning and JHCO suggested emergency groups formed by associations and volunteers to respond exclusively in times of crisis. For better responses in the future, JHCO called for removal of restrictions on local associations, enforced by defense orders that prevented them from engaging early in the COVID-19 response. In times of crisis, there should be direct contact between the governor and the development directorates, and particular local associations that are free to move so that they can respond efficiently to emergencies. This suggestion should be conveyed to the government in formal letters, and consequently start developing a pro-active plan.

The forum cooperated actively with the government when carrying out its response to the crisis, (73%), but the level of influence on the government policies remained less effective (67%). Radio Al Balad said: “We did not influence the government policies, not because the response is not good, but because the government took a military centralized approach and responded exclusively without cooperating with the civil society organizations.” It added: “The forum improved a lot, but not to the extent that the government cannot ignore us.”

On the other hand, 87% of the members agree that JONAF’s cooperation with other civil society organizations was effective, particularly regarding the influx of collective demand for assistance; 87% of JONAF members could benefit from the information and resources that these civil society organizations provided.

On average, the sample responded to 58% of the direct aid-demand cases, while it referred 36% of cases to external organizations and institutions. Some members cooperated with more than one type of entity for this purpose simultaneously. In nearly half of the situations (46%) the

cases were referred to other JONAF members, and an almost equal percentage was referred by JONAF members to civil society organizations outside JONAF; (32%) of cases were referred to government bodies, 18% to private organizations, and 18% to national or semi-governmental organizations.



4. Reputation and Visibility

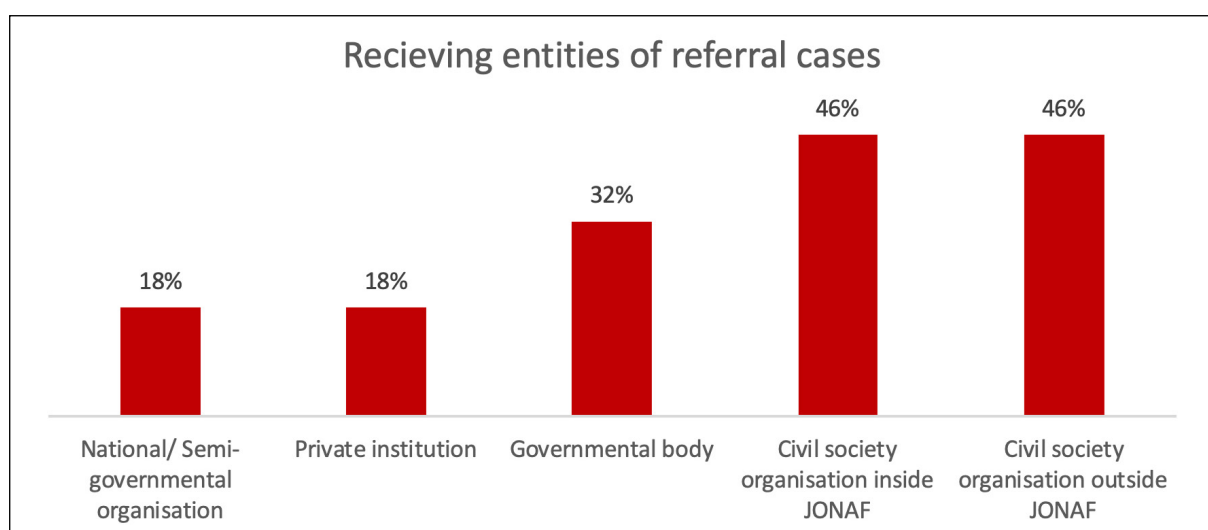
Evaluating JONAF members' visibility and importance, via different media platforms, the survey proved that members' achievements and contributions were highly appreciated (83%) during the crisis. The survey investigated the different media channels and platforms that highlighted members' news and achievements by asking the members to check everything that applies on these platforms. The findings show that 73% of the participants got their achievements highlighted on the Facebook and Twitter pages, while news websites highlighted the work of 37% of the participants and 27% of the sample's efforts were highlighted by other JONAF members. According to the surveyed sample, the forum communicated effectively (90%) with the local press during the crisis.

The sample was most satisfied (87%) with the forum's efforts to inform the local community about the most important activities and achievements during the COVID-19 crisis through social media pages, the forum's website, periodic publications and others. In parallel, the majority of key informant interviews affirmed particular satisfaction with Radio Al Balad's prominent role in producing the program "Together we defeat Corona", which discussed safety and infection issues, gender dynamics in the crisis, domestic violence and online learning over the course of 40 episodes. Radio Al Balad also stressed the importance of building the media capacity of members, suggesting that each organization have a media coordinator to manage social media platforms, write news and press releases, take high-quality photos and make quality videos.

More than two-thirds of the JONAF members' achievements (73%) are highlighted on social media pages, yet the majority of the interviewees agreed on the need to increase the level of members' engagement on the Facebook pages since the current level of interaction on the social media pages does not reflect the actual size and efforts of the forum.

5. Ability to Learn and Improve

Regarding the most followed data collection methods by JONAF members during the crisis, the survey findings show that 14 members (47%) participated in data collection efforts during the crisis. Data collection methods were diversified, as follows: communicating directly with the beneficiaries and stakeholders (40%), engaging in the field (23%), following-up on the latest reports by government, local and international organizations (23%), and conducting surveys (23%). Interestingly, 27% of the surveyed participants gained data from exchanging information with organizations outside JONAF while only 17% exchanged information with JONAF members.



While 79% of the organizations that participated in data collection activities shared information with other members, only 40% of the sample shared the acquired experience and skills with other organizations -with five on average- during the response. To increase the level of exchanged experience among members, Tamkeen suggested creating a plan that obligates members to submit regular reports on their work and activities to the steering committee. The data collected regarded topics like domestic violence, violation of work rights and women issues. For example "Women Helping Women Network" investigated the hidden domestic violence by surveying 273 families to explore exchanging roles in the family, family health and relations. Yet, the members showed moderate satisfaction (78%) with the amount of forum studies of women issues.

6. Sustainability

To secure more sustainable funding opportunities, three key informants suggested seeking local financial resources, such as local donors and businessmen. Moreover, they suggested investing in the funding resources by using them to establish sustainable profitable projects, and not only for relief and humanitarian projects. In this sense, sustainable development and humanitarian aid complement each other and ensure the forum's sustainability. More than half of the participants (58%) believe the amount of funding was not enough during the crisis; 57% of the sample had their funding curtailed, 33% did not register any change in the amount of funding and only 10% received greater funding during the crisis.

Recommendations

Short-term goals

- Evaluate each shifting mandate for members during the crisis, in terms of capacities and impact, to limit errors and mistakes, and any danger of corruption.
- Define and document each member's capacities by evaluating its role in the response to COVID-19 and conducting self-assessments, to assign better roles to members, commensurate with their capacities and specialties.
- Develop a more effective participatory method to take collective decisions and involve members' in the response plans.
- Communicate JONAF's annual plan to the members, to improve individuals' understanding and knowledge of their roles.
- Design inclusive gender-sensitive guidelines that follow best practices and criteria to be adhered to by all members when conducting emergency and humanitarian responses.
- Enhance experience sharing by members. This could be facilitated by asking them to submit to the steering committee regular reports on their work and activities, which than can be shared with the rest of the members.

Long-term goals





- Utilize information technology effectively by building members' capacities and improving their ability to work online, as well as providing them with needed technologies.
- Provide better funding and sustainable resources to protect human resources.
- Establish comprehensive and reliable databases for the beneficiaries, the civil society organizations and volunteers cooperating with JONAF, to save time and effort when conducting response actions.
- Raise the awareness of JONAF members regarding their affiliation, roles and responsibilities.
- Produce the forum's annual plan and clarify its objectives in consultation with the forum members.
- Conduct more frequent meetings regularly to activate the internal communication channels for JONAF members.
- Enhance JONAF's relations with external civil society organizations and government bodies.
- Institutionalize the relationship between civil society organizations and government bodies, especially the security apparatus, in a way that could open meaningful dialogues and bring about important changes.
- Reduce complex government bureaucratic processes, especially in times of crisis. Forming emergency teams with predefined roles and communication channels with the government is a key to efficient and smooth processes, especially in a crisis.

- Cooperate with research units in the municipalities that exert similar efforts and conduct similar plans, to complement existing efforts and use the available resources.
- Enhance advocacy and lobbying efforts to influence government policies and to generate better decentralized, localized, responses. Building on the initial response to COVID-19 is a starting point.
- Increase members' level of engagement with social media pages, as the current level of interaction on the social media pages does not reflect the forum's actual size and efforts.
- Build continuously members' capacity to collect data and conduct surveys.
- Diversify funding resources, which could be local donors and businessmen, and not only foreign resources. Develop sustainable projects by using the funding to establish sustainable development projects, and not only for relief and humanitarian projects.
- Develop the media capacities of each organization, enabling each to be a media coordinator and manage social media platforms, have the basics to write news and press releases, take high-quality photos and produce quality videos.



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