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## **Building administrative capacity to deliver for youth in Jordan**

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This chapter examines the formal organisation of youth affairs in Jordan with a focus on the administrative capacities within the Ministry of Youth. It will analyse the coordination mechanisms established horizontally (across ministerial departments) and vertically (across the different levels of government) to translate the ministry's strategic objectives into programmes and activities across the governorates. Based on an overview of innovation in governance to mainstream youth concerns in policy making across MENA and OECD countries, it will point to good practices and lessons learned that could be applied in Jordan.

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Administrative capacities matter to deliver policies, programmes and services that are responsive to the diverse needs of young people. However, as a recent OECD report across more than 40 countries demonstrates, the financial and human resources at the government entity steering youth policy and programming are often weak (OECD, 2020<sup>[1]</sup>).

In Jordan, the transformation of the Higher Council for Youth into the Ministry of Youth in 2016 was perceived as a signal to place the concerns of young people higher on the political agenda<sup>1</sup>. With the adoption of the National Youth Strategy 2019-25 in 2019, Jordan has made an important step in consolidating the role of the ministry, however, capacity challenges continue to persist (Chapter 2).

This Chapter discusses the formal organisation of youth affairs in Jordan with a focus on the administrative capacity that is available within the Ministry of Youth. Based on the initial assessment of existing coordination mechanisms to implement the NYS 2019-25 in Chapter 2, it will analyse to what extent the ministry's strategic objectives are coordinated horizontally (across ministerial departments) and vertically (across the different levels of government). The Chapter will build on the self-assessment of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT), conducted by the Ministry of Youth in the context of elaborating the National Youth Strategy 2019-25, and provide further insights based on the interviews conducted by the OECD and documents made available by MoY's Institutional Development Unit. It will complement the analysis with good practice examples from across MENA and OECD countries.

## Organisation of youth affairs at the central level

As stipulated by Regulation No. (78) of 2016<sup>2</sup>, the Ministry of Youth is mandated to entertain communication channels between the government and youth, develop youth's skills and abilities, and to coordinate between all entities supporting youth. The ministry is also in charge of designing and implementing youth policies and programmes to ensure their integration and participation in political, social and cultural life and of maintaining and rehabilitating sports facilities. Under its auspices, the law foresees that youth initiatives and entities shall be organised, and that the its youth centres shall be revitalised (Prime Ministry Official Website, 2021<sup>[2]</sup>).

Table 3.1 demonstrates that, across selected MENA governments, "youth affairs" are most commonly led by a dedicated ministry of combined portfolios, notably "youth" and "sports". Whereas, historically, the focus on "sport" has been more dominant in many countries, recent years have seen renewed efforts to elaborate National Youth Strategies and invest in youth programming (Chapter 2). Other than the name suggests, the Ministry of Youth in Jordan covers both youth affairs and sports.

**Table 3.1. Bodies with formal responsibility for youth affairs in selected MENA governments, 2021**

Country	Ministry	Entity within the Ministry
Algeria	<b>Ministry of Youth and Sports</b>	The General Directorate for Youth Affairs
Bahrain	<b>Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs</b>	Youth Empowerment Directorate
Egypt	<b>Ministry of Youth and Sports</b>	Youth Directorate
Iraq	<b>Ministry of Youth and Sports</b>	Youth, culture and Art Department
Jordan	<b>Ministry of Youth</b>	The General Directorate for Youth Affairs
Lebanon	<b>Ministry of Youth and Sports</b>	Youth Department
Mauritania	<b>Ministry of Employment, Youth and Sports</b>	General Directorate for Youth

Country	Ministry	Entity within the Ministry
Morocco	<b>Ministry of Youth and Sports</b>	Directorate of Youth and Children and Women Affairs
Palestinian Authority	<b>Higher Council for Youth and Sports</b>	The General Directorate for Youth Affairs
Tunisia	<b>Ministry of Youth, Sports and Professional Integration</b>	The General Directorate for Youth

*Note:* The principal entity responsible for youth policy and programme co-ordination in each country is shown in **bold**.

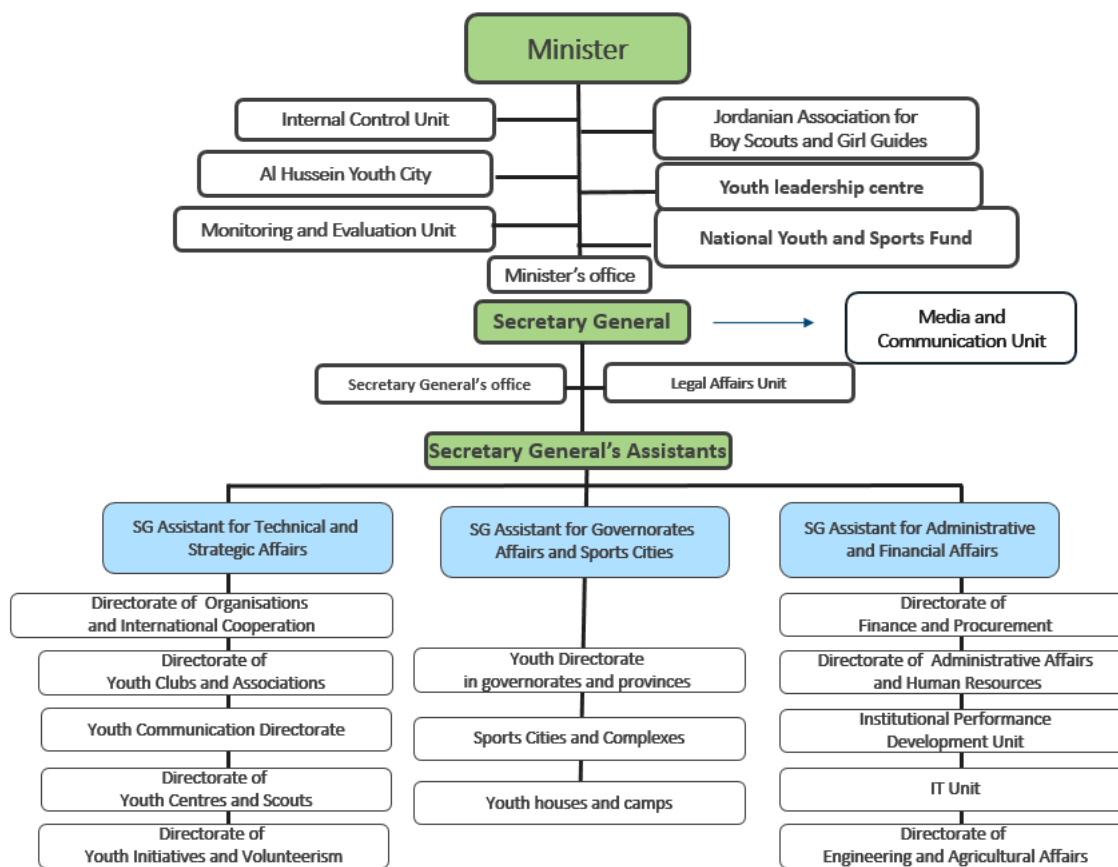
*Source:* (Youth Policy, 2021<sub>[3]</sub>), (Youth Policy, 2021<sub>[4]</sub>), (Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs, 2021<sub>[5]</sub>) (Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2021<sub>[6]</sub>), (Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2021<sub>[7]</sub>), (Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2021<sub>[8]</sub>), (Higher Council for Youth and Sports, 2021<sub>[9]</sub>), (Ministry of Youth, 2021<sub>[10]</sub>), (Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2021<sub>[11]</sub>), (Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2021<sub>[12]</sub>), (Ministry of Employment, 2021<sub>[13]</sub>)

In turn, OECD countries have adopted four different approaches to manage and coordinate youth-focused policies, programmes and services: (1) at the Centre of Government (CoG)<sup>3</sup> (i.e. Austria, Colombia and Japan); (2) in a dedicated ministry, often covering other portfolios such as education, sports and family affairs (e.g. Czech Republic, Italy and Germany); (3) in a department or office within a ministry in charge of combined portfolios (e.g. Sweden, Finland, France); or (4) through a mainstreamed approach, in the absence of a single national authority responsible for youth affairs such as in Denmark.

The most common form of organising youth affairs across OECD countries (19) is through a dedicated unit or department inside a ministry, primarily the ministry in charge of education (OECD, 2020<sub>[11]</sub>) (OECD, 2018<sub>[14]</sub>). The OECD report “Governance for Youth, Trust and Intergenerational Justice: Fit for all generations?” finds that countries in which the youth portfolio is located at the CoG find it less challenging to secure political commitment to co-ordinate and implement youth policy, programmes and services (OECD, 2020<sub>[1]</sub>).

Figure 3.1 displays the Organisational Chart of the Ministry of Youth in Jordan. Administratively, the youth and sports portfolios within the ministry are managed by two distinct directorates. Whereas the Directorate of Youth Clubs and Associations is in charge of “sports”, the Directorate for Youth Affairs is responsible for “youth”. Besides sports and youth programming, the Ministry of Youth manages five youth and sports cities and oversees the work of the Youth Directorates across Jordan’s governorates as well as in Petra. The work of the Directorate for Youth Affairs, the Institutional Performance Development Unit, all youth cities except for the Al Hussein Youth City, and the Youth Directorates in the governorates is formally overseen by the Secretary General.

Figure 3.1. Organisational Chart of the Ministry of Youth, Jordan, 2021



Note: The figure shows the legal entities of the Ministry of Youth, as stipulated in Article 3 of the regulation No. (78) Of 2016.

Source: OECD analysis based on available data provided by the Ministry of Youth in Jordan

The International Cooperation Department is the main interlocutor for projects that are implemented with the support of international partners. The Institutional Performance Development Unit is in charge of strategic planning, administrative and organisational development, services and operations development, as well as for monitoring and evaluating the National Youth Strategy<sup>4</sup>. It therefore plays an important role to ensure adequate administrative capacities and effective governance structures for the ministry to deliver on its mandate. In 2021, the Ministry elaborated the Strategic and Institutional Development Strategy (2021-24). Among the main objectives of the strategy, it identifies building institutional capacities inside the Ministry of Youth; increasing the skills and competencies of its staff; updating and developing legislation and manuals to provide more flexibility and decentralised procedures and simplifying procedures<sup>5</sup>.

In terms of strategic planning, the Minister is assisted and advised by the Committee for Planning, Coordination and Follow-up, which the Minister presides. It gathers the Secretary-General and the Directors of the National Youth and Sports Fund; Hussein Youth City, the Youth Leadership Centre and up to two directors (Official Gazette, 2016<sup>[15]</sup>)<sup>6</sup>. The committee is in charge of studying and submitting recommendations to the Minister on the plans, programmes and activities of the ministry, including for drafting laws and regulations and spending decisions, including the preparation of the annual budget and the definition of job descriptions.

Other important entities within the ministry include the National Youth and Sports Fund and the Youth Leadership Centre. The Youth Leadership Centre is in charge of organising and implementing trainings

and workshops for its employees to build capacity and enhance leadership skills. The Minister also supervises the Jordanian Association for Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, which was established in 1987 to educate the local community in the field of health awareness and education. The work of the Ministry is supported by departments in charge of administrative affairs, financial affairs, engineering and agricultural affairs, media, legal affairs and IT. As reported by the Ministry in 2020, it oversees the infrastructure and work of 190 youth centres (106 for young men and 84 for young women), 21 youth houses and hostels, 22 youth complexes, 7 youth camps, and 355 youth clubs.

The main role of Jordan's youth centres is to empower young people, promote resilient societies and assess the challenges and opportunities young people face. As defined by the NYS 2019-25, youth centers are "youth spaces" to activate their role in "attracting the local community, creating ways of real communication with young workers, building relationships with them to develop youth work and achieve the goal of empowering Jordanian youth (Chapter 4)." Another key role of youth centres is to encourage and institutionalise active, successful and influential youth initiatives (Ministry of Youth, 2019<sub>[16]</sub>).

## Building skills for youth-responsive policy making and programming

The development of the capacities of civil servants is essential to design better policies and regulations, to work effectively with citizens and service users, to commission cost-effective service delivery, and to collaborate with stakeholders in networked settings (OECD, 2017<sub>[17]</sub>). Ensuring that civil servants working for and with youth have the right skills and capabilities for an increasingly digital and globalised world is thus crucial to deliver inclusive policy outcomes and keep pace with national and international developments.

The National Youth Strategy 2019-25 points out that further investments in the skills and capacities of MoY's employees are needed, in particular among employees who are working directly with young people, notably staff in the youth centres (Ministry of Youth, 2019<sub>[16]</sub>). The interviews conducted by OECD with MoY officials and young people in the youth centres reaffirm the need for targeted training opportunities.

### ***Few MoY employees work on youth policy and programming***

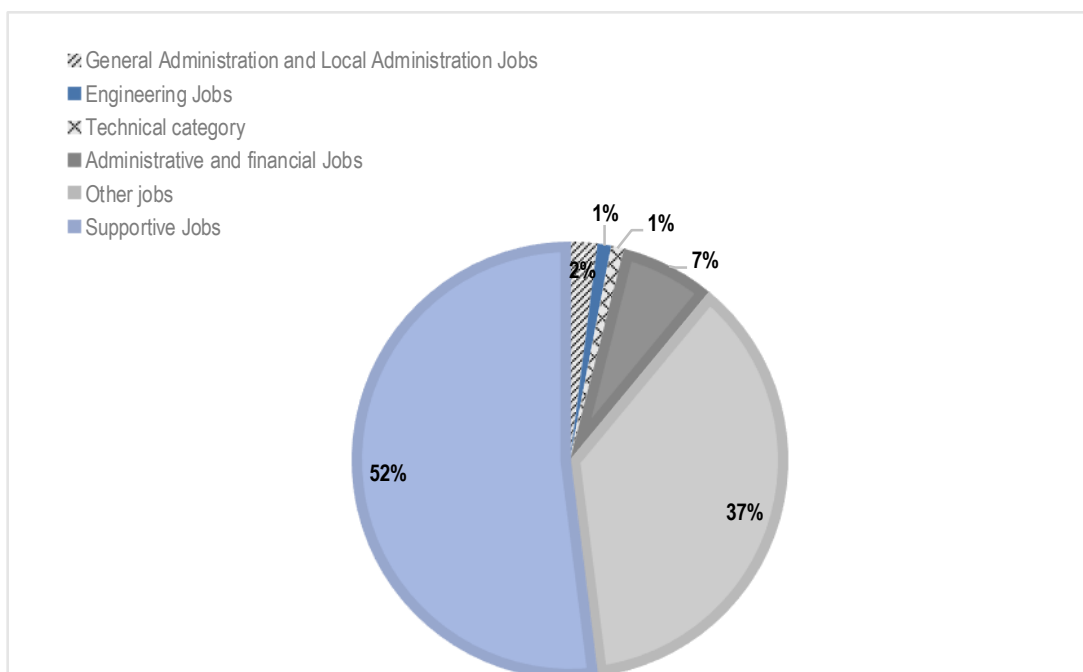
In 2020, the Ministry of Youth employed 1881 staff, including employees operating across its youth centres and youth and sports cities. The workforce is categorised along six job categories. Accordingly, the vast majority (52%) holds "Supportive Jobs", followed by "Other jobs" (37%), which are not further defined, and "Accountants" (7%). In turn, only 36 employees (2%) are considered part of the "General Administration and Local Administration", which covers senior managers and other senior positions with responsibility to design and run youth-focused policies, programmes and services (See Figure 1.2). The low share of employees with a background in policy making and youth programming is one of the main challenges faced by the ministry (Ministry of Youth, 2019<sub>[16]</sub>). In addition, the SWOT Analysis conducted by the Ministry of Youth as part of the Strategic and Institutional Development Strategy (2021-24) acknowledges the lack of qualified human resources as a weakness<sup>7</sup>.

As of 2020, only 35% of employees in the Ministry of Youth are women, down from 42% in 2018. This compares to a share of 50% of female government workforce (all civil servants) in Jordan (OECD, 2017<sub>[17]</sub>). The most significant gender gap exists in the job category "General Administrators and/or Local Administrators" as only 2 out of 36 employees are women (General Budget Department, 2020<sub>[18]</sub>).

In terms of age diversity, OECD survey results for Jordan from 2018 find that around 18% of the ministry's workforce at central level were aged 18-34 years, compared to 26% across the government entities in charge of youth affairs in OECD countries (2019). 43% of MoY's workforce in the youth centres were below 35 years. The relatively low representation of young people in the workforce and professional background of staff working in the youth centres are considered key challenges by MoY. According to the interviews,

a significant share of the employees has no university degree or prior experiences in the youth field. Younger (temporary) staff or consultants are primarily recruited through the collaboration with international partners, which raises questions about the sustainability of the workforce planning and accountability (General Budget Department, 2020<sup>[18]</sup>).

**Figure 3.2. Composition of the workforce of Ministry of Youth by job category, 2017-20**



Note: The graph shows the composition of the workforce of the MoY by category in 2020

Source: OECD work based on available information on Draft Budget Law of Government Units for the fiscal and Youth budget of the General Budget Department in Jordan: <http://www.gbd.gov.jo/Uploads/Files/gbd/law-gu/2020/en/1.pdf> (2020); <http://www.gbd.gov.jo/uploads/files/gbd/draft-min/2020/en/3050.pdf> (2020 in Arabic)

The Civil Service Bureau (CSB) is in charge of managing employment practices across the public administration in Jordan. Job seekers are invited to submit their application via the CSB website for an open recruitment process that is not linked to a specific position. Applications are examined and reviewed by the CSB once a vacancy in the public sector opens. The selection takes place based on candidates' skills and technical competences (Civil Service Bureau, 2020<sup>[19]</sup>) (OECD, 2017<sup>[17]</sup>). Selection criteria include the applicants' graduation year, grade, and experience, which advantages older candidates and has led to the phenomenon of young graduates queuing for public sector jobs. In this regard, in alignment with the results of the 2020 MoY work-life satisfaction survey and the recommendations of the summary report, the OECD Recommendation on Public Service Leadership and Capability holds that the recruitment, selection and promotion processes in public employment systems should be based on merit, transparency, accountability and the rule of law to guarantee fair and equal treatment (OECD, 2019<sup>[20]</sup>).

Interviews conducted by OECD suggest that workforce planning and management practices in MoY can also be strengthened with regard to the definition of job descriptions. They are considered vague, including for the higher management. Moreover, findings from the interviews suggest that a review of current compensation and performance management could be instrumental to strengthen workforce planning practices and foster a performance system based on merits and adequate incentives.

### ***Incentives and Training for Employees are needed***

The Youth Leadership Centre is in charge of running trainings for new staff in the Youth Directorates and youth centres. Available information suggests that the Centre has organised around five courses annually in recent years, which focus on life skills, internal regulations and the objectives of the National Youth Strategy 2019-25. In 2020, the Ministry allocated JOD 9000 to training activities (General Budget Department, 2020<sup>[18]</sup>). However, there is no training programme in place to build substantive capacities in the field of policy and programme design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation.

The lack of dedicated training programmes in this area tends to sustain a dependency of MoY on its implementing partners in delivering youth-focused programmes and activities.

Important steps have been taken by MoY to understand the parameters driving work-life satisfaction by running an online survey among its employees in 2020 (General Budget Department, 2020<sup>[18]</sup>). Led by the Institutional Performance Development Unit, the survey is disseminated among MoY staff every two years. Survey replies feed into a summary report that is presented to the Secretary General by. The survey measures staff satisfaction with the working arrangements and internal decision making processes. It also provided an opportunity to evaluate the ministry's performance in regards to internal management, communication, leadership, staff training and development, motivation and incentives, and the working environment.

Based on 366 replies, the results of the 2020 work-life satisfaction survey fed into a summary report, which outlines 15 recommendations to strengthen the internal operations and performance of the ministry<sup>8</sup>.

Internship schemes can offer young people the chance to gain skills and experience in public institutions. Governments can also proactively develop their workforce through longer-term, structured graduate programmes aimed at attracting, developing and retaining highly-qualified young talent through training, mentoring, job rotation and accelerated promotion tracks (OECD, 2020<sup>[11]</sup>). Structured programmes for graduates to join the public sector exist in 42% of the government entities in charge of youth affairs across OECD countries as of 2020 (OECD, 2020<sup>[11]</sup>). Box 3.1 presents the graduate programmes put in place by Ireland and Australia to attract and develop young talent in the public administration.

#### **Box 3.1. Graduate programmes: Attracting and developing young talent in the public administration**

##### **Ireland: Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service**

The Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service (IGEES) supports an integrated approach to policy formulation and implementation in the civil service based on economic and analytical skills. As a cross-government service, it has provided needed skills and competences to the public administration while attracting and developing the skills of young economics graduates. The recruitment process involves on average 20 graduates per year, with an increase in intake in recent years for a total number of 160 IGEES staff working across the departments as of 2020.

##### **Australia: APS Graduate Programs**

The APS Graduate Programs allow new graduates in Australia an entry-level pathway into the public sector. The graduate programs generally take 10 to 18 months to complete, with two to three rotations through different work areas, to give participants a range of skills, knowledge and experience at the start of their career. Participants normally follow face-to-face workshops, trainings and simulation

activities. Successful completion of the programs can give participants further opportunities of career development within the public sector as well as study assistance for further training.

Sources: (OECD, 2020<sub>[1]</sub>) (OECD, 2017<sub>[17]</sub>).

## Financial resources for youth programming are scarce

The budget allocated to the Ministry of Youth has increased by 43% over the last three years to reach JOD 33 million (around USD 46.6 million) in 2020, up from JOD 23 million (around USD 32.4 million) in 2017. This represents an increase in the share of the central government budget that is allocated to the ministry from 1.4% in 2017 to 2.7% in 2020 (General Budget Department, 2020<sub>[18]</sub>) (Figure 3.3).

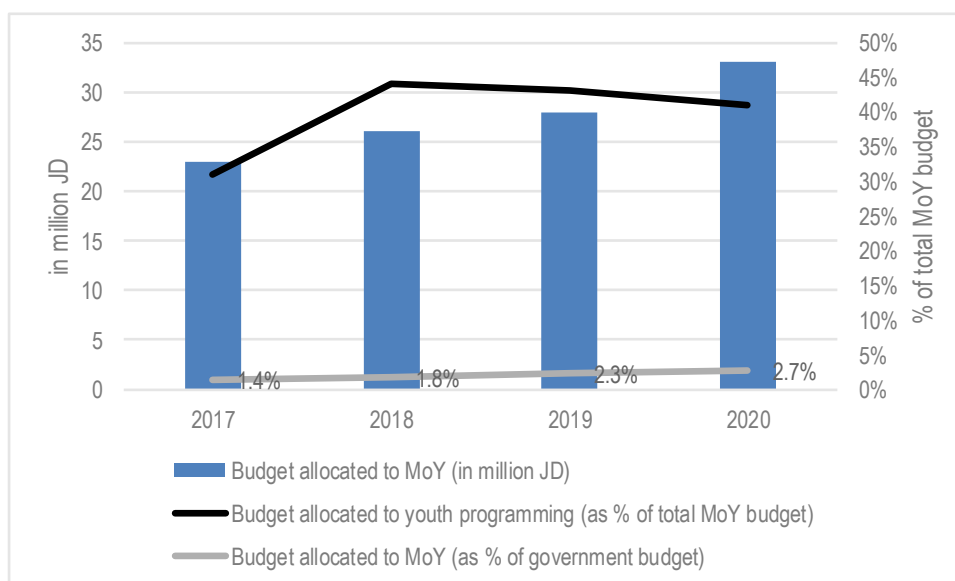
While the share allocated to MoY exceeds the share received by the Ministry of Youth and Sports in Morocco (1.0 %) and the Ministry of Youth and Sports in Tunisia (1.9 %) in 2020 (OECD, Forthcoming<sub>[21]</sub>), cross-country comparisons must be interpreted with caution as the mandate and responsibilities of each ministry vary. Available information across the OECD countries suggests that, as a share of total government expenditures, the share allocated to the entity in charge of youth affairs makes up less than 1% in most countries (not counting public expenditures on education, among others) (OECD, 2020<sub>[1]</sub>).

The expenditures of the Ministry of Youth in Jordan are classified according to three categories or “programmes” as per the terminology used by the General Budget Department Report: 1) Administration and Supportive Services; 2) Youth Development; and 3) Sport Development. The highest share of the ministry’s budget is allocated to youth affairs (41%), followed by an allocation of 34% to administrative and support services and 25% for sports development (General Budget Department, 2020<sub>[18]</sub>).

Since 2017, the share dedicated to youth programming increased from 31% (General Budget Department, 2020<sub>[18]</sub>) to 41% or a total of JOD 13.4 million (around USD 18.9 million) in 2020 (General Budget Department, 2020<sub>[18]</sub>), suggesting a shift towards a greater focus on supporting youth in their transition to an autonomous life.



**Figure 3.3. Budget allocation by the Ministry of Youth, Jordan, 2017-20**



Source: (Department, 2018<sub>[22]</sub>) (General Budget Department, 2020<sub>[23]</sub>) (OECD, 2017<sub>[17]</sub>) (General Budget Department, 2020<sub>[18]</sub>)

### **Only 16 % of the Youth Budget are non-infrastructure costs**

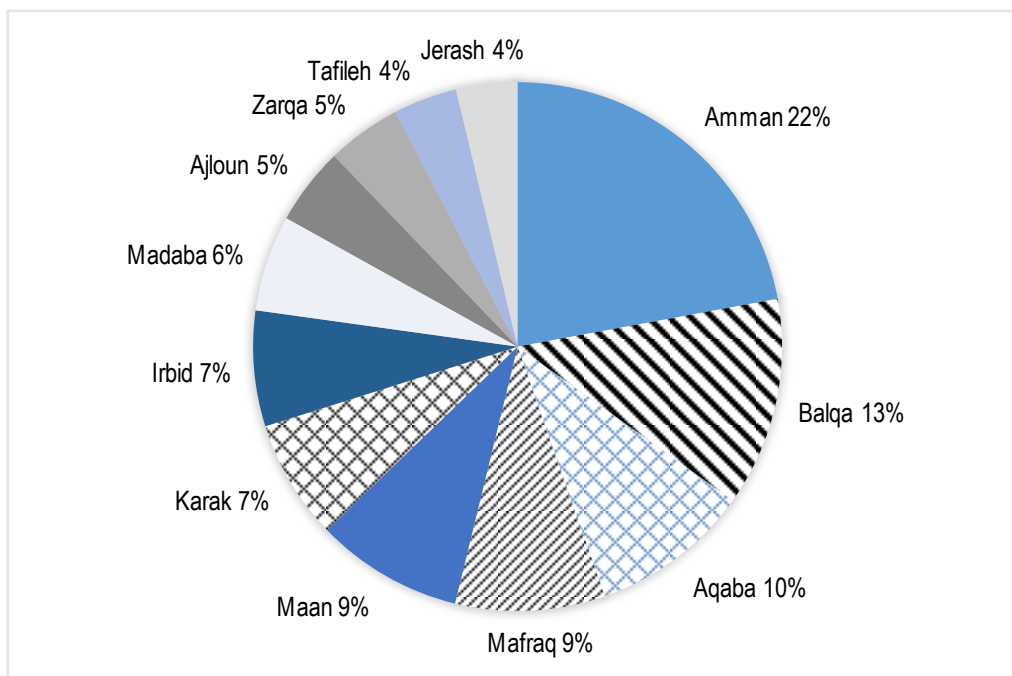
The analysis of expenditures in the “Youth Development” category demonstrates that a significant share is spent to maintain and renew the physical infrastructure owned by the ministry. In 2020, 84% of expenditures in this category were dedicated to the establishment and maintenance of playgrounds and sports facilities (JOD 4.4 million equivalent to around USD 6.2 million), the establishment of youth centres and youth houses (JOD 3.7 million equivalent to around USD 5.2 million), and to the management of youth development (JOD 3.2 Million equivalent to around USD 4.5 Million). In turn, as reported by the ministry, around JOD 500,000 (around USD 705,000) have been spent on the implementation of the National Youth Strategy 2019-25 as of May 2021.

Investments into the physical infrastructure are unequally distributed across different governorates. To some extent, this reflects different demographic realities, however, interviews conducted by the OECD also suggest that young people from remote rural areas often find it more difficult to access opportunities provided by MoY. For instance, JOD 1.8 million (around USD 2.5 million) of the total expenditures in the category “playgrounds and sports facilities” were allocated to Amman, which accounts for 42% of the total expenditures in this category (and hosts around 20% of the total population). Similarly, one fourth of the expenditures on “youth centres and youth houses” were invested in Amman, while significantly less than 1% were allocated to the Governorates of Al-Balqa (hosting 5 % of the total population) and Tafileh (hosting 1% of the total population).

From a public governance perspective, it is noteworthy that an estimated JOD 200,000 (around USD 282,000) is allocated to “enhancing the institutional capacities of the Ministry” and JOD 700,000 (around USD 987,000) to “establishing a new building for the Ministry of Youth” in the category “Administration and Support Services”. The vast majority (92%) in this category is allocated to current expenditures, including salaries, allowances and promotions, social security contributions, use of goods and services, and subsidies to public institutions (General Budget Department, 2020<sub>[18]</sub>).

Figure 3.4 displays the capital expenditures (i.e. expenditures allocated to goods and services, buildings and constructions, devices, machinery and equipment, and lands)<sup>9</sup> by the Ministry of Youth across the governorates in 2020. It illustrates that more than one third (35%) of the total capital expenditures were allocated to Amman and Balqa. Further research could analyse the allocation of capital expenditures over time and across governorates in comparison to their respective youth populations in order to identify trends and potential disparities.

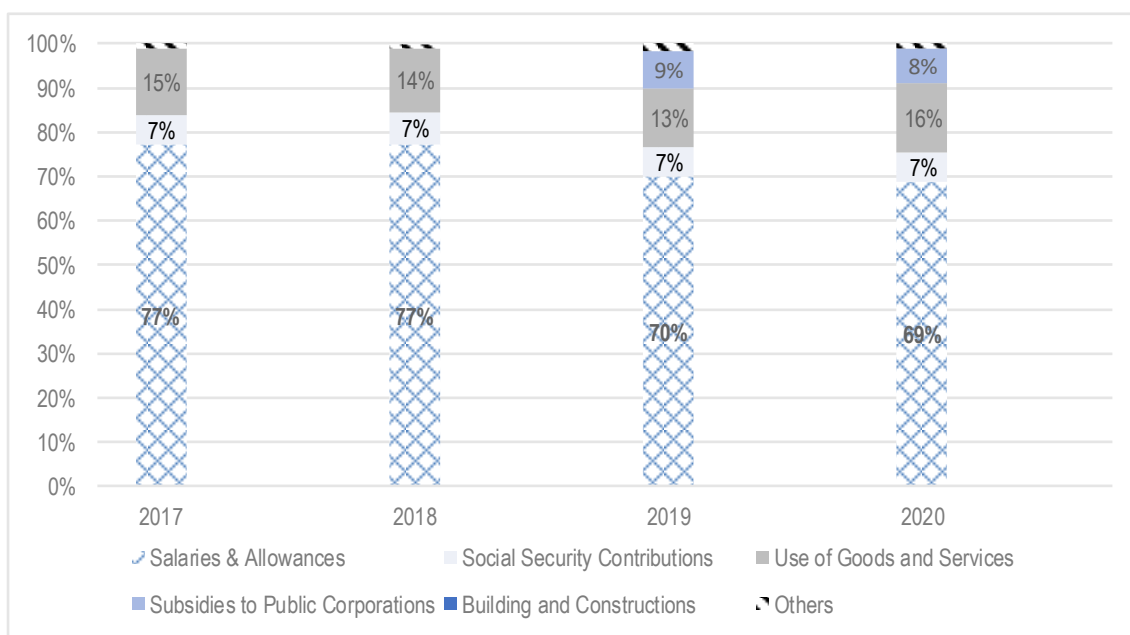
**Figure 3.4. Capital expenditures by the Ministry of Youth differ significantly across governorates in Jordan, 2020**



Source: OECD analysis based on available information on Youth budget of the General Budget Department in Jordan, <http://www.gbd.gov.jo/uploads/files/gbd/draft-min/2020/en/3050.pdf> (p.10).

In terms of current expenditures, the highest share is allocated to salaries and promotions. In 2020, 69% of the total expenditures by the Ministry of Youth were spent on salaries and promotions, decreasing from 77% in 2017 (General Budget Department, 2020<sup>[18]</sup>).

**Figure 3.5. Allocation of current expenditures by the Ministry of Youth in 2017-20**



Source: OECD work based on available information on Draft Budget Law of Government Units for the fiscal and Youth budget of the General Budget Department in Jordan: <http://www.gbd.gov.jo/uploads/files/gbd/law-min/2019/en/3050.pdf> (2019); <http://www.gbd.gov.jo/uploads/files/gbd/draft-min/2020/en/3050.pdf> (2020 in Arabic).

The availability of comparative data about the resources allocated to “Youth Development” sets Jordan apart from most OECD and MENA countries, in which such information is rarely publicly available. The information is published on an online platform to exchange fiscal data across ministries and departments, which was set up by the General Budget Department within the Ministry of Finance (General Budget Department, 2020<sup>[23]</sup>).

## Coordination across Ministries and Levels of Government

The cross-cutting nature of youth policy requires strong coordination mechanisms across governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. When youth policy and programmes are delivered in a fragmented way, young people find it more difficult to access important services for their transition to an autonomous life. A joint vision and effective co-ordination mechanisms are also critical to unite various stakeholders behind the same strategic and operational objectives based on a clear division of roles and responsibilities (Chapter 2).

Around half of all OECD countries have put in place an institutionalised mechanism for inter-ministerial coordination on youth affairs. As Box 3.2 illustrates, these mechanisms take the form of inter-ministerial or inter-departmental coordination bodies, working groups or focal points (OECD, 2018<sup>[14]</sup>).

### Box 3.2. Examples of horizontal co-ordination mechanisms for youth policy

**Inter-ministerial or inter-departmental co-ordination bodies** are composed of ministries with a responsibility to implement specific commitments of the national youth policy. The ministry with formal responsibility to co-ordinate youth affairs is always part of these structures and usually co-ordinates and prepares its meetings. For instance, Luxembourg set up an inter-department committee for this purpose. It is composed of representatives of the Ministers of Children and Youth, Children, Children's Rights, Foreign Affairs, Local Affairs, Culture, Cooperation and Development, Education, Equal Opportunities, Family, Justice, Housing, Police, Employment, Health and Sports.

**Working groups** are often established on an ad hoc basis and assume responsibility for specific topics. In principle, only ministries with corresponding portfolios are involved in the respective thematic working group. Inter-ministerial co-ordination bodies may be complemented by working groups in which line ministries may take the lead in co-ordinating its activities. In the United States, an Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs supports co-ordinated federal activities in the field of youth.

**Focal points** may be appointed to oversee the work on youth affairs within line ministries and coordinate youth-related programming with the entity in charge of youth affairs. In Slovenia, each Ministry has a dedicated youth focal point to facilitate co-ordination with the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth (URSM) and other ministries. In Flanders, Belgium, a contact point for youth exists in all agencies and departments.

Source: (OECD, 2020<sup>[11]</sup>)

Putting in place effective coordination mechanisms is particularly relevant in Jordan in which academic institutions, foundations, civil society organisations (CSOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) fulfil important complementary but often overlapping functions in the youth field.

The National Youth Strategy 2019-25 acknowledges the need for cooperation and coordination between public and private institutions to provide youth with relevant knowledge and skills. The SWOT analysis done by the NYS highlights the need for coordination between public and private institutions working in the youth field (Ministry of Youth, 2019<sup>[16]</sup>). It also highlights that the objective of encouraging young people's participation in public life shall be pursued alongside the work of official and civil institutions in this area.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the creation of a Steering Committee and Technical Committee to facilitate coordination in the implementation of the NYS 2019-25 marks an important step in this regard. On the other hand, available information suggests that the Steering Committee has not met frequently and that the Technical Committee is still not operational, which risks hampering regular dialogue and coordination among the different stakeholders. To address the coordination challenge, the Ministry of Youth could prioritise the full operationalisation of the two Committees.

Joint initiatives with other ministries are primarily coordinated through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs). MoUs are also frequently used by the ministries in charge of youth affairs in Morocco and Tunisia.

**Table 3.2. Inter-ministerial coordination in selected MENA countries, 2020**

Countries	Institution responsible for horizontal coordination	Departments responsible for horizontal coordination	Main coordination mechanisms
Jordan	Ministry of Youth	None	Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)
Morocco	Ministry of Youth and Sports	Directorate of Youth and Children and Women Affairs; the Directorate of Cooperation, communication and Legal Studies	Memorandum of Understanding (MoU); Institutional coordination bodies and committees; formal meetings
Tunisia	Ministry of Youth and Sports	The General Directorate for Youth; the Ministerial Cabinet	Memorandum of Understanding (MoU); Institutional coordination bodies and committees; formal meetings

Note: The table shows the entities responsible for the horizontal coordination of youth affairs and the main coordination mechanisms used in selected MENA countries.

Source: OECD work based on the replies received from ministries hosting the youth portfolio in Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia.

Practices from across OECD countries demonstrate that strong institutionalised links between the entity with formal responsibility for youth affairs and the Center of Government (CoG) can facilitate political buy-in. In Canada, for instance, until 2019, the Prime Minister also held the position of Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Youth. In Austria (Federal Chancellery), Colombia (Presidency of the Republic) and Japan (Cabinet Office), youth affairs continue to being coordinated by the CoG (OECD, 2017<sup>[24]</sup>). In France, the Director in the department in charge of youth affairs is also the Inter-Ministerial Delegate for Youth and in charge of chairing the meetings of the inter-ministerial committee for youth.<sup>10</sup>

Young government employees can also play a crucial role in fostering inter-ministerial communication and coordination. In the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the Emirates Youth Council (EYC) was created in 2017 to serve as an advisory body for the government and the Minister of Youth on national issues and engagement with governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. The EYC model has been adopted and replicated in six ministries to coordinate youth affairs between ministries and different stakeholders and to supervise the organisation of youth activities and programmes (Federal Youth Authority UAE, 2020<sup>[25]</sup>) (UAE Cabinet, 2017<sup>[26]</sup>).

## Youth Affairs at the Subnational Level

Effective co-ordination between the central and subnational levels of government is critical to translate the commitments and programmes set out in the National Youth Strategy 2019-25 into concrete programmes and activities on the ground. The first contact young people have with the public administration often takes place at the municipal or district level. The involvement of subnational levels of the government through regular upward (local to central) and downward (central to local) exchanges to inform strategic planning and prioritisation is therefore important.

The respective approach chosen by countries depends on the organisation of the state and determination of administrative and fiscal competencies (e.g. federal vs. unitary), among others. While Jordan is historically highly centralised, the country has undertaken legal and institutional reform efforts in favour of a more decentralised approach. With the adoption of the Decentralisation Law and Municipality Law in 2015, the government articulated the objective of reducing territorial disparities and encouraging a more participatory approach to the identification of local needs and priorities, in particular by establishing new elected councils at the level of governorates (OECD, 2017<sup>[17]</sup>).

The relationship between the central and subnational levels of government on youth affairs continues to be managed through a deconcentrated approach. Youth Directors represent the Ministry and oversee the work at the level of governorates, including in the youth centres. In reaction to the decentralisation reform, some of the prerogatives of the central level were delegated to Youth Directors in the governorates to facilitate the coordination and implementation of activities at local level according to the interviews<sup>11</sup>. However, their prerogatives continue to be focused on implementing the decisions and directions received by the central level. In addition, the SWOT Analysis conducted as part of the Strategic and Institutional Development Strategy (2021-24) acknowledges that institutional coordination between the central and subnational levels continues to be a challenge<sup>12</sup>. The allocation of financial resources is managed by the central level while certain approval procedures were assigned to the level of the governorates (e.g. signing financial agreements; establishing, moving and renting youth centres in accordance with the existing budgets and approved plans; and approving the maintenance of equipment and buildings related to youth affairs at local level as long as they do not exceed JOD 200). Similarly, certain approval procedures were facilitated in regards to youth clubs and entities, local administration, and youth affairs to facilitate the implementation of activities at local level. For instance, Youth Directors can liaise directly with partners, approve elections of administrative units in youth centres, and appoint trainers. To establish youth clubs, Youth Directors in the governorates require the approval of the central level.

A national dialogue<sup>13</sup> was held in 2019 by the Administrative Committee of the Parliament, in cooperation with the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs to assess and evaluate the implementation of the decentralisation law. The national dialogue identified the need to ensure better coordination between local actors and ministries and to merge the 2015 Decentralisation Law and Municipality Law into one law to set clear responsibilities between actors at municipal and governorate level. The ensuing draft Local Administration Law was presented to Parliament in 2020 (OECD, 2017<sub>[17]</sub>). As highlighted by the OECD report “Engaging Citizens in Jordan’s Local Government Needs Assessment Process”, the ongoing decentralisation process should “use the new momentum brought about by the new law to revamp initiatives at the local level, in particular to offer new opportunities for participation in the design and delivery of policies and services”. The need to improve communication, coordination, and cooperation between the central and local levels of government in order to ensure the effective delivery of services was also highlighted by the COVID-19 crisis (OECD, 2017<sub>[17]</sub>). This is reflected in the Strategic and Institutional Development Strategy (2021-24), which points out that legislation and manuals should be updated and developed to provide more flexibility and a more decentralised approach at local level<sup>14</sup>.

## Mainstreaming youth considerations in policy making and service delivery

To mainstream young people’s needs in policy making and service delivery, the systematic collection and use of age-disaggregated data, a participatory approach and the definition of youth-specific objectives and indicators across all policy areas are important elements (e.g. employment, education, social policy, housing, etc). Drawing on the 2015 OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life (OECD, 2015<sub>[27]</sub>), youth mainstreaming can be understood as all efforts to assess government action against the specific needs of young women and men from diverse backgrounds to ensure inclusive policy outcomes (OECD, 2020<sub>[1]</sub>).

Governance tools at the disposal for policy makers to mainstream a “youth” perspective in policy making and service design can take different forms. Young people’s engagement in the policy cycle; ex ante impact assessment of the anticipated effects new laws and regulations on youth (e.g. “youth checks”); or the analysis of public expenditure decisions on different groups in society, including youth (OECD, 2017<sub>[17]</sub>). While the opportunities for youth to participate in public and political life in Jordan will be discussed further in Chapter 5, this section will look at the role of “youth checks” and youth-sensitive budgeting.

### ***Youth checks: Anticipating the impact of regulation on youth***

OECD countries are experimenting with innovative governance tools to ensure the responsiveness of policies and services towards the diverse needs of young people. However, despite notable examples, the OECD report “Governance for Youth, Trust and Intergenerational Justice: Fit for all generations?” shows that the use of regulatory impact assessments (RIAs) to support youth-specific goals remains limited. A third of OECD countries use general regulatory impact assessments and provide specific information on the expected impact on youth, whereas 4 OECD countries apply ex ante “youth checks” to consider the impact of new laws and policies on youth more systematically (e.g. Austria, France, Germany and New Zealand). In addition, in Iceland, the Ministry of Education Science and Culture in charge of youth portfolio is in the process of developing a youth check in cooperation with the Office of the Ombudsman for Children (OECD, 2020<sub>[11]</sub>).

#### **Box 3.3. Youth checks in OECD countries**

Established in 2013, **Austria** was the first country to apply a “youth check” at the national level. The youth check provides for an outcome oriented impact assessment on the effects of policy measures on young people aged 0-30. Along five steps (i.e. problem analysis, defining aims, defining measures, impact assessment and internal evaluation), it obliges all ministries to assess the expected effects of each legislative initiative including laws, ordinances, other legal frameworks and major projects, on children and youth.

In **Germany**, the youth check (*Jugendcheck*) acknowledges that the life situation and participation of present and coming youth generations should be considered in all political, legislative and administrative actions of the Federal Ministries. It is considered to be an instrument to support the implementation of the New Youth Policy and a lens through which other relevant strategies (e.g. on demography and sustainability) should be regarded. Along 10-15 questions (e.g. *Does the action increase or alter the participation of young people to social benefits?*) and three central test criteria (e.g. access to resources and possibilities for youth to participate), it anticipates the expected impact of new regulation on young people aged 0-27.

Source: (Jugend für Europa, 2013<sub>[28]</sub>; OECD, 2020<sub>[11]</sub>)

In Jordan, efforts have been made recently by the government to set up a system for regulatory impact assessments in cooperation with the SIGMA Programme<sup>15</sup>. As a result, in 2020, an impact assessment policy guide was prepared and launched by the Institutional Performance and Policy Development Department at the Prime Minister’s Office in cooperation with the Jordanian Institute of Public Administration. The guide aims to build and strengthen the capacities of government institutions and decision-makers on the use and implementation of impact assessment instruments, based on an overview of good practices (MENA FN, 2020<sub>[29]</sub>).

### ***Youth-sensitive public budgeting***

The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Budgetary Governance characterises the public budget as the central policy document of government, showing how annual and multi-annual objectives will be prioritised and achieved (OECD, 2015<sub>[30]</sub>). It incarnates the contract between citizens and the state, showing how the resources are allocated by the government to turn plans and strategies into programmes,

services and support. The allocation of public budgets matter for youth but also for intergenerational justice and the fair distribution of benefits and costs across different age cohorts. When public expenditure decisions are communicated in a transparent way, they can be a powerful tool to restore citizens' trust in government (OECD, 2021<sup>[31]</sup>).

The OECD Youth Stocktaking Report (2018) describes youth-sensitive budgeting as a way to "integrate a clear youth perspective within the overall context of the budget process, through the use of special processes and analytical tools, with a view to promoting youth-responsive policies" (OECD, 2018<sup>[14]</sup>). Among the OECD countries, for instance, Canada considers youth-specific objectives in the framework of gender budgeting, including in its COVID-19 Economic Response Plan. In Spain, ministries are required to send a report to the State Secretariat for Budget Expenditures to analyse the childhood, youth and family impact of spending programmes in preparation of the General Budget. The Slovak Council for Budget Responsibility considers intergenerational fairness in connection with the long-term sustainability of public finances (OECD, 2020<sup>[11]</sup>). The analysis of public investments into children, adolescents and youth recognises that social services and other support structure at an early age do not only benefit individuals but society as a whole.

As demonstrated by some OECD countries, young people can also play an active role in the budget process itself. Governments can apply various innovative methods to disseminate budgetary information and data in a language that young people can understand; moreover, young people can engage directly in the allocation of financial resources (Box 3.4). Efforts to improve youth access to budget information have been undertaken in the last decade in Jordan, resulting in the creation of citizens budgets<sup>16</sup> since 2011<sup>17</sup>. However, it must also be noted that youth attitudes towards participating in the public budget process vary significantly with respect to educational background, family support and existing opportunities to engage. Therefore, additional efforts must be undertaken to ensure that youth from diverse backgrounds can participate in the process, including vulnerable and marginalised groups.

### Box 3.4. How to involve youth in public budgeting?

In Portugal, a participatory budgeting initiative was undertaken at the national level in 2017: people aged 14-30 had the chance to elaborate proposals in fields such as sport, social innovation, science education and environmental sustainability for a total amount of EUR 300,000. At the sub-national level, the Portuguese Municipality of Gaia is currently implementing a three-year participatory budgeting initiative dedicated to people aged 13-30 with a total budget of EUR 240,000.

Source: (OECD, 2020<sup>[11]</sup>)

In Jordan, the General Budget Department within the Ministry of Finance makes available on the website of the Ministry: (i) the general budget law approved by the parliament; (ii) detailed budget reports for all government units (including the MoY and Youth Support Fund); and the Citizen Guide to the Budget issued in 2015 (Ministry of Finance, 2021<sup>[32]</sup>).

With the support of the National Council for Family Affairs and UNICEF, the Government of Jordan implemented a child-friendly budgeting initiative to support the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Jordan (Chapter 5). In 2009, a child-sensitive budget analysis was conducted for eight ministries covering the ministries of health, education, social development, labour, justice, Islamic affairs, housing and the former Higher Council for Youth. In the first phase of the project in 2009, the



Ministries of Health, Labour, Social Development, and Education were selected to pilot the study and introduce child budgeting into their budgets and to develop Child Budget Engagement Strategies.

The initiative also worked on projections of the medium-term expenditure frameworks to monitor future allocations to child and social protection programmes. It found that spending allocated to children from 2008-2011 remained fairly constant for education, health and labour (93%, 37% and 10% respectively) and increased slightly for Family, Protection and Handicapped Affairs (from 13% to 15%) (National Council for Family Affairs, 2011<sup>[33]</sup>).

## Recommendations

- **Drafting clear job descriptions for each job category** and reviewing the incentive system for employees, introducing transparent performance measures and a merit-based reward system.
- **Setting up a training programme** to strengthen skills and knowledge in policy and programme design, project management, and monitoring and evaluation.
- **Adopting an evidence-based approach to identify the budget needs** of different youth directorates and youth centres to address geographical disparities and inclusive access for youth.
- **Strengthening institutional mechanisms and capacities for coordination** across ministries and with sub-national authorities and non-governmental stakeholders to deliver effective policies and services for young people.
- **Mainstreaming the concerns of youth in policy making and service delivery** by considering to apply governance tools in the rule making and public budgeting process.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> In Jordan, the Ministry of Youth and Sports was created in 1984 before it was replaced by the Higher Council for Youth in 2001. According to the National Youth Strategy 2019-25, the aim of the transformation was “to give a greater role and more flexibility to youth work by developing youth care and development processes”. The Ministry of Youth was established in 2016 in response to the directives of King Abdullah II, [http://moy.gov.jo/sites/default/files/jordan\\_national\\_youth\\_strategy\\_2019-2025\\_english\\_compressed\\_1.pdf](http://moy.gov.jo/sites/default/files/jordan_national_youth_strategy_2019-2025_english_compressed_1.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Regulation No. (78) of 2016 on “the administrative organisation of the Ministry of Youth” defines its organisational structure. The Regulation also stipulates the creation of the Committee for Planning, Coordination and Follow-up, which assists and advises the Minister in his functions.

<sup>3</sup> The CoG is “the body of group of bodies that provide direct support and advice to Heads of Government and the Council of Minister, or Cabinet”. The CoG is mandated “to ensure the consistency and prudence of government decisions and to promote evidence-based, strategic and consistent policies”. The CoG can play an important role in generating political will and leadership to pursue a cross-sectorial approach, both horizontally, across different ministries, and vertically, across different levels of government, <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/c3e5cb8a-en.pdf?expires=1620037610&id=id&accname=ocid84004878&checksum=BBD881B9FCF73F7B2F0ADE00256552BD>.

<sup>4</sup> According to the MoY, the Institutional Performance Development Unit is in charge of strategic planning (e.g. preparing and following up the implementation of the NYS in all its phases and operational action plans); monitoring and evaluation (e.g. on the progress of NYS implementation and action plans on a regular basis, and issue relevant reports; setting standards and mechanisms for performance indicators to measure the performance of the Ministry and its different units); administrative and organisational development; and for the development of services and operations.

<sup>5</sup> OECD analysis based on the Strategic and Institutional Development Strategy (2021-24)

<sup>6</sup> Article 5.A of the regulation No. (78) of 2016, which defines the administrative organisation of the Ministry. OECD analysis on available data provided by the Ministry of Youth in Jordan

<sup>7</sup> OECD analysis based on the Strategic and Institutional Development Strategy (2021-24)

<sup>8</sup> As reported by the MoY and the Survey results of 2020, the main recommendations are the following:

- Enhancing transparency, open and merit based processes, and equal opportunities among employees with regard to promotions, annual budget increases, rewards and incentives, trainings, among others;
- Adopting a clear and transparent work mechanism to ensure equal opportunities when hiring employees at the MoY;
- Adopting a clear mechanism to better evaluate the performance of employees and ensure the transparency of the results of the evaluation process;
- Ensuring regular surveys to measure employees’ satisfaction;
- Better integrate and involve MoY employees in the development of policies and methodologies related to human resource management;
- Better measuring the effectiveness of designing and implementing trainings and development programs;
- Developing training plans based on needs assessments;
- Ensuring regular communication among employees through regular meetings, especially with senior leadership/management;
- Providing clear employees’ job descriptions, which contain the responsibilities, tasks, qualifications and skills required.

<sup>9</sup> MoY total expenditures are divided into capital and current expenditures. Capital expenditures include the expenditures allocated to goods and services, buildings and constructions, devices, machinery and equipment, and lands, while current expenditures include salaries, allowances and promotions, social security contributions, use of goods and services, and subsidies to public institutions.

<sup>10</sup> OECD work based on the official website of the Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sports in France, <http://www.jeunes.gouv.fr/ministere/missions-et-organisation/organisation-du-ministere/article/la-direction-de-la-jeunesse-de-l>

<sup>11</sup> Based on available data provided by the Ministry of Youth in Jordan. In accordance with the Civil Service Order No. 82 of 2013 and its amendments and the order No. 33 of 2005 and its regulations, the central level delegated by a written statement some of their prerogatives to youth directors to facilitate the coordination and implementation of activities. Youth directors must report back to the central level on their decisions taken.

<sup>12</sup> OECD analysis based on the Strategic and Institutional Development Strategy (2021-24)

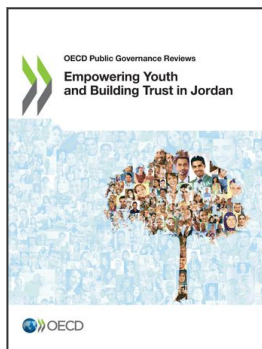
<sup>13</sup> 43 sessions were conducted as part of this national dialogue with the participation of 1,568 members of civil society, academia and public institutions from across all governorates.

<sup>14</sup> OECD analysis based on the Strategic and Institutional Development Strategy (2021-24)

<sup>15</sup> The SIGMA Programme is a joint initiative of the OECD and the EU, principally financed by the EU. It supported the formulation of the impact assessment policy guide, and will provide the needed advice and technical support during its implementation.

<sup>16</sup> The citizens' budget is an online document prepared by the government designed to reach and be understood by a large a segment of the population in order to provide citizens with a simplified summary of the budget and enhance their participation in the process.

<sup>17</sup> In Jordan, a citizen guide to the budget in Arabic has been published by the GBD since 2011.



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