Enhancing Community-Driven Legal Aid Services to the Poor (P128689)

Key Dates

**Key Project Dates**

- Board Approval date: 12-Oct-2011
- Effectiveness Date: 04-May-2012
- Planned Mid Term Review Date: 02-Sep-2013
- Actual Mid-Term Review Date: 06-Nov-2013
- Original Closing Date: 08-Aug-2015
- Revised Closing Date: 31-Aug-2016

Project Development Objectives

Project Development Objective (from Project Appraisal Document)

The development objective is to support the legal empowerment of the poor and other vulnerable persons by improving access to justice sector services based on demand-side priorities of poor communities and supported by community-driven implementation.

Has the Project Development Objective been changed since Board Approval of the Project Objective?

No

Components

Name

- Capacity-Building of Legal Aid Institutions: (Cost $0.18 M)
- Provision of Enhanced Legal Aid Services: (Cost $2.19 M)

Overall Ratings

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Previous Rating</th>
<th>Current Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Implementation Progress (IP)</td>
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Implementation Status and Key Decisions

Component 1
Activity 1 – Develop work policies and standards

JCLA developed preliminary policies and guidelines to regulate its work, as well as to incorporate and institutionalize the best practices and experiences as its operation expanded.

Under this first activity considerable progress has been made in developing internal operating procedures guiding all aspects of delivering legal services to beneficiaries. Policies, practices and procedures that have been developed, revised and are being implemented by JCLA ensure effective management of resources and accountability, provide clear guidance for those involved in the provision of services and are designed to serve as the foundation for institutionalization of these operational procedures on a national level by the state-funded legal aid system, once it is in place.

Specifically, JCLA developed and is implementing guidelines regarding: the processes for intake and review of requests for legal aid, conducting a preliminary analysis of the merits of the case, the eligibility criteria for beneficiaries, case referral from partner organizations, termination of services, case documentation, and file management including automated case management procedures.

An expert consultant had reviewed these guidelines and discussed them with the management, staff and beneficiaries of JCLA. Also, wide stakeholder involvement in the development of selected policies and procedures has been ensured by a number of individual consultations, focus groups and roundtable discussions, as well as a National Conference on Legal Aid organized by the JCLA in June 2013. Participants of these engagements included government officials from the Ministry of Justice, members of the Bar Association, justices of Sharia and regular courts, public prosecutors, academia, and civil society representatives (including other legal aid organizations). Coordination meetings with international organizations working in the justice sector (EU, USAID, UNDP) have also taken place to ensure wider support for proposed processes. Future consultations envision the inclusion of members of the Parliament.

All staff is provided with an Operational Manual that has been developed within the Project and contains all policies and procedures outlined. JCLA lawyers are trained following such guidelines to ensure that a quality service is offered. Training is provided at different stages. First, all lawyers joining JCLA receive an orientation program, where they are trained on how to provide services according to JCLA established standards. This also allows the transmission of more senior lawyers’ experiences to the new recruits. Second, all lawyers from legal aid clinics across the country are brought to JCLA headquarters in Amman, where they receive further training. Finally, JCLA senior staff (executive director, program manager and two supervisor lawyers) visits legal aid clinics to directly supervise the work of lawyers and provide “on the job” training.

The Operational Manual is a “living document” and feedback from lawyers during these training sessions, as well as other input from stakeholders and beneficiaries during consultations or daily operations, are continuously incorporated into the guidelines.

The grant proposal also envisioned the development of guidelines to set up a cost sharing mechanism between legal aid providers and beneficiaries. Such mechanism would be important to develop a sustainable legal aid service mechanism at the national level. Yet, JCLA informed that establishing clear and commonly agreed guidelines to determine the contribution of beneficiaries based on income level has not been possible yet. At the beginning of the project, JCLA came under criticism for proposing to establish a system where the requirement for a financial contribution, depending on the ability of clients to pay, would have been introduced. These payments would have been accumulated into a fund to support cases of those clients that are not in the position to contribute financially. Originally, the entire model did not receive support from the state counterparts and was then put on hold. Recently, there was an agreement reached between the Ministry of Justice, the Bar Association and JCLA on the development of such a model. JCLA recruited a consultant to work on the design of a cost-sharing model. Once ready, the model will be shared with the Ministry of Justice and the Bar Association.

While it is unlikely that JCLA would benefit from putting this model into practice in their operations, it is a positive sign that government stakeholders became more open to the idea, and JCLA are exploring other mechanisms to implement the model. For example, the Ministry of Justice is willing to set up a legal aid unit that would utilize such cost-sharing mechanism, and JCLA may contribute the establishment of this legal aid unit.

Activity 2 – Improved Case Management and Statistics

JCLA is in the process of contracting with a software development company to design and program additional functions to be added to the existing automated case management system, which at present covers only basic functions of a legal aid system.

A local IT consultant had conducted an initial evaluation of JCLA’s existing case management system, and prepared the technical specifications to be used in a Request For Proposals (RFP) document. JCLA also conducted consultations with community organizations that refer cases to JCLA, to better understand the kind of information that would be helpful to collect through the case management system. JCLA has finalized the RFP and the ToRs [attached], and they are now starting the procurement process of the new case management system. The objective is to start the development of the new system during the first quarter of 2014.

One of the reasons for the delay in this activity has been JCLA’s priority focus on reaching out to communities to increase the uptake of their legal aid services, as well as strengthening its capacity (in terms of expanding its legal aid clinics and human resources) to respond to such demand. Another important aspect has been JCLA’s willingness to fine tune the new case management system to ensure that all the relevant and useful information will be collected. It is particularly important to use such information in the future to demonstrate the impact of legal aid and ensure that the legal aid services continue to be provided after the Project ends.

While this is a logical sequencing of the process, the Bank team and JCLA discussed the importance of speeding up the process of establishing a more sophisticated CMS, as advocacy will be of increasing relevance during the remaining stages of the project. Also, the Bank team offered to review the RFP and the initial designs of the new case management system, and will follow up on the implementation of this activity in the coming months.

Activity 3 – Quality Assurance and Institutionalizing Feedback from Local Communities

Three main sub-activities were envisaged at the project design stage: (i) regular monitoring of JCLA lawyers’ performance by the management, (ii) development of a quality assurance framework, and (iii) establishment of a hotline to allow beneficiaries to submit suggestions and complaints to JCLA.
management.

(i) Regular monitoring of JCLA lawyers’ performance by the management:
JCLA management receives a monthly report with performance information of individual lawyers. Those monthly reports include information such as the number of beneficiaries attended, the number of consultations provided, the number of representations, active cases, etc. Also, two senior lawyers work as supervisors to ensure the quality of other staff members’ work.

(ii) Development of a quality assurance framework:
Regarding the quality assurance framework one consultant has recruited to develop the framework. This framework will establish the roles and responsibilities of JCLA staff and the quality process (planning, assurance and control).

(iii) Establishment of a hotline to allow beneficiaries to submit suggestions and complaints to JCLA management:
With regard to the setting-up of a hotline to receive beneficiaries’ feedback, a hotline development expert was hired to explore the different possibilities. The expert provided recommendations, in particular suggesting that the most cost effective option would be to outsource the operation of the hotline. Yet, JCLA wants to make a more thorough assessment of the potential use of the hotline, as well as the costing of different alternatives, before establishing the hotline. In the meantime, JCLA has established other tools to collect communities’ suggestions and complaints about their legal aid services. For example, beneficiaries and citizens in general can call JCLA headquarters. If the call relates to a complaint regarding a JCLA lawyer, the call is directly transferred to either the director or the project manager who will deal with the issue. In addition, JCLA centers’ have a complaints system that includes written anonymous submissions by legal aid clients, participants of awareness sessions and/or referral partners to complaints boxes placed outside of legal aid centers. Considering the number of suggestions and complaints received and the costs associated with running or outsourcing a hotline, it was not deemed a priority at this stage of the project implementation. Yet, JCLA explained that they will continue considering the setting up of hotline, not only to receive suggestions and complains but also to offer ideally 24-hour assistance, if it becomes an efficient solution later on, which appears to be the correct approach in the current circumstances.

Component 2
Activity 1 – Establishment of a Comprehensive Legal Aid System for the Most Poor and Vulnerable
Three main sub-activities were envisaged at the project design stage: (i) Rollout of Legal Aid Clinics; (ii) Staffing (Pro bono lawyers), and (iii) Legal Services.

(i) Rollout of Legal Aid Clinics:
Six new Legal Aid Centers (LACs) have been opened by JCLA, two in the north of Jordan (Jerash and Irbid) and four in the south (Maan, Tafelah, Aqaba and Karak). Another new legal clinic is planned to be opened before the end of the year in the north, in Balqa Governorate. Together with the four LACs JCLA operated prior to the JSDF grant, LACs are now spread through almost every governorate of Jordan, addressing the gap in provision of legal aid services outside of Amman.

(ii) Staffing (Pro bono lawyers):
The expansion of JCLA’s pro bono lawyer and volunteer network has proved more difficult so far. Currently, there are 45 lawyers in JCLA’s pro-bono network but only 6 cases have been served by pro-bono lawyers. There are a number of challenges mentioned by JCLA to explain this difficulty. First is that discussions with the Jordan Bar Association on development of a pro bono lawyers network are ongoing. Second, JCLA has received several complaints from beneficiaries about the way they were being treated by pro-bono lawyers. Specifically, on several occasions, pro-bono lawyers refused to follow JCLA’s operational procedures and policies and did not show sufficient commitment to their cases by not following-up on important issues concerning their clients. Other lawyers see the pro-bono work as first step to get a job as a JCLA lawyer, or they ask to be paid for their services. JCLA is also exploring other mechanisms to work more closely with law schools. For example, several highly experienced lawyers volunteer their time and contribute by participating in JCLA’s strategy discussions on complex cases, they consult JCLA lawyers and review documents drafted by them. JCLA is also exploring other mechanisms to work more closely with the Bar Association to team up in providing legal aid services.

Recognizing the importance of developing the culture of volunteering, JCLA conducted two outreach meetings at the law school of the Jordan University, the largest law faculty in the country. The meetings generated a lot of interest in JCLA’s work among law students. In order to discuss law students’ participation in JCLA’s activities, JCLA organized several meetings with the school’s Dean. JCLA also drafted and presented the University with a policy paper on practical ways to involve students in its activities. By law, legal services can be provided only by lawyers. However, law students can be involved in conducting legal research and assisting during legal awareness sessions. While a MoU with the University has not yet been signed, with a recent appointment of a new Dean to the law faculty, there are positive indicators that there is sufficient interest to pursue this model. In addition, JCLA is trying to establish partnerships with law schools. For example, they are building a program to recruit fresh graduated lawyers from Jordan University and Yarmouk University. Law schools require graduates to complete a two year unpaid internship. Some young lawyers will do their two year apprenticeship with JCLA, and if they work successfully, they will be hired as full time JCLA lawyers after this period. JCLA has already started to
recruit 15 apprentices and 6 of them were later hired JCLA lawyers. In addition, JCLA has recruited 3 interns from Jordan University.

(iii) Legal Services:
JCLA, through the JSDF-funded activities started in May 2012, has provided legal counseling services to more than 3400 beneficiaries and legal representation, involving representation by a lawyer in court proceedings, to more than 1480 beneficiaries. JCLA is now the single largest provider of legal aid services in Jordan.

Activity 2 – Enhanced Legal Awareness
JCLA prepared an awareness plan that includes, among other topics, the groups of people that are targeted, the topics that will be covered by the sessions, the selection criteria for the trainers, as well as some guidelines on how to conduct the sessions.

According to JCLA, this plan has been amply consulted with partners and stakeholders, and is constantly updated to reflect communities’ feedback. For example, civil society organizations explained that during their regular meetings with communities the need for more information on how to deal with issues related to drug abuse and crimes was expressed. This was also mentioned during awareness sessions conducted by JCLA, so this has been included as one of the key topics of current sessions. During the site visit to JCLA legal aid clinic in Aqaba, the team attended an awareness session on drug related issues delivered to around 15 women by a colonel of the Public Security Department.

Feedback from participants during these sessions has also been important to design more operational aspect such as the right time to deliver the sessions or different dissemination mechanisms. For example, through consultations and experiences JCLA staff noted that certain days of the week women would not attend the sessions. In certain areas of the country water is brought to different neighborhoods on different week days. Women tend to stay at home on this day to collect the water that their household will use for the rest of the week. In these days, they would not be able to participate in the awareness sessions, so now JCLA makes sure that those sessions are arranged when women are available to attend. JCLA has also developed other innovative tools resulting from their continuous engagement with communities, such as an android app, attendance certificates or brochures adjusted to the taste of the youth attending awareness sessions. JCLA’s track record with awareness sessions has been very successful in responding to peoples’ expectations, but also in terms of number and reach. At the time of this review, JCLA reported that they have conducted more than 275 awareness sessions, with more than 6,800 participants. These sessions have covered topics such as labor, sexual harassment, women rights, criminal procedures, drugs and narcotics, child rights, personal status, violence against women and lord/tenant law.

Activity 3 – Building Partnerships with Local Communities
There are two main types of collaboration mechanisms: hosting agreements and referral agreements. Through hosting agreements, JCLA is co-hosted in the facilities of a community organization to provide its services to those in the community that need legal aid services. The referral agreements are two-tiered: referral to JCLA and referral by JCLA. Organizations covering gender issues, human rights entities, and societies supporting children, juveniles and the underprivileged would refer to JCLA cases that require legal aid. Concurrently, individuals seeking JCLA’s assistance who require psycho-social support or other types of social support would be directed to relevant partner organizations.

In order to expand its partnership network, JCLA has two outreach coordinators that visit communities to find potential partners. Thanks to the partnership with JCLA, community organizations can expand the range services they provide to the communities in which they operate. At the same time, these partnerships allow JCLA to access the community and gain the trust of potential beneficiaries.

At the time of the review, 54 memorandum of understanding (MoU) have been signed with civil society partners. Among these, 19 are hosting MoUs (Annex the list) and 35 referral MoUs (Annex the list). This is well beyond the target of 45 MoUs established for the project, and some of these MoUs are strategic, such as the one signed with Public Security Directorate or the Hashemite Fund. The latter has 50 community centers across Jordan, and therefore this MoU increases JCLA’s reach significantly.

None.

Results

Project Development Objective Indicators
Enhancing Community-Driven Legal Aid Services to the Poor (P128689)

**Intermediate Results Indicators**

1. **Poor persons accessing legal counseling and representation are able to exercise their legal rights and/or resolve disputes (Number, Custom)**

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<td>22-Oct-2015</td>
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**Overall Comments**

This indicator covers the number of MoUs signed by JCLA with implementing partners

2. **Poor communities are more aware of their legal rights and the mechanisms for exercising and enforcing them (Number, Custom)**

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<th>Baseline</th>
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<tr>
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<td>22-Oct-2015</td>
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3. **Legal aid services are delivered to the most poor and vulnerable Jordanians in a comprehensive, coordinated and efficient manner (Number, Custom)**

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**Data on Financial Performance**

**Disbursements (by loan)**

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Key Dates (by loan)

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Cumulative Disbursements

Restructuring History

There has been no restructuring to date.

Related Project(s)

There are no related projects.