OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
U.S. Agency for International Development

Mission's Changing Focus and Approach Make It Difficult To Measure Success of the Jordan Community Engagement Project

Office of Inspector General, U.S. Agency for International Development

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 23, 2017

TO: USAID/Jordan Mission Director, Dr. Jim Barnhart

FROM: Regional Inspector General/Frankfurt, James C. Charlifue /s/

SUBJECT: Mission's Changing Focus and Approach Make It Difficult To Measure
              Success of the Jordan Community Engagement Project (8-278-17-002-P)

This memorandum transmits the final report on our audit of USAID/Jordan's Community Engagement Project. Our audit objective was to determine if the project is achieving its goal to strengthen community engagement in the context of regional volatility and transition. In finalizing the report, we considered your comments on the draft report and included them in their entirety, excluding attachments, in appendix C.

We make two recommendations to help you improve project management. Although your comments did not state agreement or disagreement with the recommendations, we acknowledge final action on both. Please provide evidence of final action to the Audit Performance and Compliance Division.

We appreciate the assistance you and your staff extended to us during this audit.

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INTRODUCTION

The crisis in Syria has brought Jordan more than 650,000 refugees, and according to USAID officials, this exacerbated internal tensions and strained communities' resources.[1] In July 2012, with the Syrian conflict devolving into civil war, the United Nations opened the Za'atari camp in northern Jordan to house thousands of Syrian refugees. That September, as riots broke out over living conditions in the camp and concerns arose that unrest could extend beyond the camp, a USAID rapid assessment team evaluated conditions and provided recommendations to the mission. These assessments in part led to the Community Engagement Project.

In 2013, USAID/Jordan created a 5-year, $50 million project with a broad goal to "strengthen community engagement in the context of regional volatility and transitions associated with domestic policy reform, economic conditions, and demographic changes." At the request of the Jordanian Government, the project focused on Jordanians rather than on the challenges created by the influx of Syrian refugees. The award referred to the Syrian refugee influx only indirectly, as "rapid recent population shifts, especially near [the] Syrian border." USAID/Jordan's intent was to promote community cohesion and build resilience.[2]

The USAID Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducted this audit to determine if USAID/Jordan's Community Engagement Project was achieving its goal of strengthening community engagement. We also assessed whether implementation issues existed that could impede the project's ability to meet its goal in the long term.

To conduct our work, we interviewed mission staff and other officials, analyzed the mission's monitoring and evaluation, and reviewed internal control procedures such as grant selection methodology. We followed generally accepted government auditing standards. Appendix A presents our scope and methodology.

SUMMARY

The mission has reported completing many activities under the Jordanian Community Engagement Project, such as establishing 19 community engagement teams and issuing 96 grants and 42 procurements totaling approximately $21 million. In addition, Jordanian community members and mayors that OIG interviewed gave favorable feedback. However, we could not determine whether the project was achieving its broad goal of strengthening community engagement in Jordan because the mission did not establish definitive measures of success in an approved monitoring and evaluation plan. Further,

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[1] The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "Syria Regional Refugee Response," September 18, 2016 (accessed at http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=107 on October 21, 2016).

[2] USAID defines resilience as "the ability . . . to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth."

because of external pressure, the mission constantly made changes to the project. Even after the project began, the mission responded by frequently changing the project's focus and approach: expanding from 9 communities to 19, adding gender grants, establishing a pilot community in a politically unstable area, and shifting to large municipal grants. This resulted in confusion about what the project was aiming to achieve.

USAID/Jordan exceeded the cooperative agreement award's substantial involvement provisions. According to USAID policy, in a cooperative agreement, a mission's role is purposely limited to providing guidance. Nonetheless, the mission directed the implementer to perform work in additional target communities, even though the implementer had serious concerns that these additions would diminish focus on the original communities. The mission's excessive involvement had an impact on the implementer's ability to make progress in a number of ways, including stretching project resources, creating confusion about project focus, and increasing frustration among implementer management and staff.

We made two recommendations to firm up the project's focus and approach, as well as to reinforce the roles and responsibilities of mission officials on cooperative agreements. The mission took final action to address them.

BACKGROUND

USAID's rapid assessment team found that the influx of refugees was exacerbating problems that some municipalities and communities were already having with services: access to clean water, healthcare, education, municipal services, and the like. The team recommended USAID/Jordan work with a variety of local partners to mitigate stressors between displaced Syrians and their Jordanian hosts by addressing community-identified needs and showing quick results through "rapid start grants." The best award mechanism for this, the team said, would be a contract, which would allow the implementer to make grants to local entities and offer "speed, flexibility, and substantial involvement in developing, selecting, and overseeing" activities.

By January 2013, USAID/Jordan had designed the Community Engagement Project and, in April 2013, awarded it to the U.S.-based nonprofit Global Communities. USAID/Jordan awarded it as a cooperative agreement rather than a contract, thus limiting the mission's involvement in implementation per USAID policy.

The award language was vague because particular community problems, mitigating measures, and the exact vision of success were not identified during the project's design. To accomplish the broad goal of increasing community engagement, Global Communities was to meet three broad objectives:

- Expand nongovernment organization, community organization, professional association, and government efforts to build resilience and address cohesion-related challenges.

- Increase civil society-government-private sector cooperation in building resilience and addressing cohesion-related challenges.

- Strengthen skills and build other capacity relevant to community cohesion.

The award began with nine target communities: six in northern Jordan and three in southern Jordan. The criteria for community selection included demographic change, poverty, unrest, community and local government willingness to accept project help, stressors on local services, and the presence of other donors in the area.

MISSION'S CHANGING FOCUS AND APPROACH MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO MEASURE SUCCESS AND EXCEEDED THE AGREEMENT

We were not able to determine whether the project was achieving success. USAID/Jordan frequently changed the focus and approach of the project and did not finalize changes to measure project performance. This created confusion about what the project was aiming to achieve. In addition, USAID/Jordan exceeded the allowable limits of substantial involvement that are permissible according to agency policy and the award. This created conflict between USAID/Jordan and the implementing partner over the scope of the award and stretched project resources to meet the mission's changing requirements.

USAID/JORDAN FREQUENTLY CHANGED FOCUS AND APPROACH, MAKING IT DIFFICULT TO MEASURE PROJECT'S SUCCESS

After planning to focus in part on the problems faced by Syrian refugees and their Jordanian hosts, in April 2013, USAID/Jordan awarded a project treating Syrian refugee surges as one of several stressors creating challenges in Jordanian communities. Although community members and mayors we spoke to gave favorable feedback on the project, and the mission reported accomplishments—establishing 19 community engagement teams and issuing 96 grants and 42 procurements—we could not determine whether the project was having success in achieving its goal. The rapid and far-reaching changes the mission mandated led to confusion about the project's purpose and frustrated attempts to measure performance. Thus, while the project changed several times, the mission did not establish updated, complete, and formal measures of success.

The Government Accountability Office's "Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government" states that management should maintain consistency with requirements

and expectations and that this "consistency enables management to identify and analyze risks associated with achieving the defined objectives." If changes to requirements and expectations become necessary, Agency policy requires systematically using "data from performance monitoring, findings of research, evaluations, and analysis . . . to improve development outcomes."[3]

Although the broad project goal remained unchanged, the mission's focus and approach to implementation have changed significantly since its inception, as the following examples illustrate.

- In 2014, during the second year of implementation, the mission requested that Global Communities add 10 communities (9 in the north, 1 in the south) and 1 pilot community (Ma'an, a politically unstable community in the south) to the targeted communities.[4] These additions, requested by the Government of Jordan and approved by the mission, changed the number of targeted communities from 9 to 19 and stretched resources.

- The mission switched the focus from addressing community needs—projects prioritized by the communities themselves—to relieving community stress. The mission took exception to this statement in their comments on the draft audit report. However, during the audit, project officials provided a detailed explanation of the methodological shift from focusing on community needs to those of community stressors. One senior project official described this methodological shift:

  Initially, Global Communities conducted household surveys asking respondents to list out the top five community needs, ranked in order of importance. . . . This approach resulted in a wish list of projects rather than a deeper analysis of the challenges the communities were facing. In Year 2, we shifted to asking for the top five perceived stressors in the community, also ranked in order of perceived priority.

Project activities were initially planned as in-kind grants to communities and municipalities and grants to community-based organizations.[5] However, because the mission asked it to undertake larger awards and complex infrastructure projects, Global Communities shifted to using contracts, which provided more direct control over implementation. This change further stretched the project's budget because it required hiring more staff to manage complex contracts such as road rehabilitation and make equipment purchases.

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[3] Automated Directives System (ADS), Section 203, "Assessing and Learning" (2012). Effective September 7, 2016, USAID replaced ADS chapter 203 with revised chapters 200 and 201. However, ADS 203 was in effect during this audit.

[4] Ma'an was selected because of the population's sense of political disenfranchisement and growing unrest. Because it is a pilot community, activities there are limited in scope and focus on supporting improved municipal services, with a goal of developing a presence for possible future project expansion.

[5] In-kind grants are goods and services procured directly by project implementers and then provided to the grantee.

- The mission added a new type of specialized grant—gender grants—which focused on the "reduction of early marriage, human trafficking, child labor, and gender-based violence." These grants also included communities outside the target communities.

USAID/Jordan officials said some of the changes resulted from political pressures. Both the Government of Jordan and USAID/Jordan pushed the implementer to show rapid results, despite the many ongoing changes.

The constant churn of key implementer and mission personnel also contributed to project changes. From the time the project began to the time of the audit, Global Communities had two permanent and one interim chief of party (the project leader), and USAID had four agreement officer's representatives. New mission managers overseeing the project also brought different ideas about project implementation. This turnover caused stops and starts to activities and lowered staff morale.

The frequent changes resulted in confusion about what the project was aiming to achieve, according to mission and U.S. Embassy officials. For example, one mission official characterized the project as a "frankenbaby" because of its complex and changing nature. Another mission official doubted that there was a clear vision for the project, while an Embassy Amman official conveyed his confusion about the project's goals. The mission agreed that the project had morphed considerably over the years, but said the project's changing approach reflected the "'learning and adapting' approach . . . an example of good development projects." However, mission officials provided no documentation showing they modified the project systematically in response to lessons learned along the way. A mission official acknowledged the lack of documentation.

The changing focus and approach kept the mission from formally establishing measures of project performance and defining what constitutes success, making monitoring difficult. Important project management documents designed to facilitate project continuity and measure project success had not been finalized and approved at the time we completed fieldwork, including the project's updated monitoring and evaluation plan and the results framework.[6] In June 2015, mission officials asked the implementer to put the framework on hold until they finished the mission's democracy, human rights, and governance framework. A mission official commented on the seriousness of the monitoring and evaluation plan shortcomings, saying it was unusual that managers of a $50 million project could not clearly tell if it was meeting its objectives.

MISSION'S SUBSTANTIAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROJECT EXCEEDED THE AWARD'S PROVISIONS AND USAID POLICY

Under cooperative agreements such as the Jordanian Community Engagement Project, the Agency can provide the implementer limited project guidance, such as providing

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[6] According to ADS 201, Section 201 "Planning," (2014) the Results Framework graphically depicts the country strategy goal, development objectives, intermediate results, and performance indicators.

approvals, but cannot "direct or control performance."[7] Any "reasonable and necessary"[8] involvement by the mission—referred to as substantial involvement—must be described in the award and meet clear parameters, including collaboration with the award recipient or joint participation when warranted and tailored to support specific program elements. Further, the agreement officer must approve changes to the program description, and cannot delegate this responsibility.

The project award delineated three areas for substantial involvement by USAID/Jordan: (1) approving implementation plans, (2) approving key personnel, and (3) collaborating with the recipient. While the substantial involvement language provides for the mission to participate in community and grant selection, and monitor implementation to allow direction or redirection as needed, it does not permit an expansion of the number of communities without a modification.

Despite these limitations on its involvement, the mission directed the implementer to perform work in new communities prior to a formal modification. This included expanding into 10 new communities, which were informally approved in a March 2014 email, approximately 8 months before signing a modification. In October 2014, the mission issued a modification which provided the additional target communities. Also, email communication in May 2013 between the senior field project official and the mission showed that the implementer had concerns that the community additions without formal modification was outside the scope of the original award, would reduce project focus on the original communities, and would affect project resources.

According to mission and project officials, changes to the award occurred because of outside pressure from American and Jordanian stakeholders. As one official noted, the mission's Office of Acquisitions and Assistance could not keep pace with the modification requests, forcing project changes without an approved modification. Hence, we found that USAID/Jordan exceeded substantial involvement beyond what USAID policy permits because of external pressures to show results quickly.

Certain project changes, which we concluded amounted to excessive involvement by USAID/Jordan, affected the implementer's ability to make progress in several ways:

- It required the implementer to shift resources unexpectedly. The shift from using in-kind grants to using contracts, the doubling of target communities, and the requirement for substantially larger grants, all required additional staff and money.[9] To accommodate the mission's program changes, resources were stretched to support community expansion, large municipal grants, and gender grants; none of these were part of the original award.

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[7] ADS 304, "Selecting Between Acquisitions and Assistance Implementing Instruments" (2010).
[8] ADS 303, "Grants and Cooperative Agreements to Non-Governmental Organizations" (2006).
[9] The project was designed to provide small, community-focused grants up to $70,000, but the mission lifted the ceiling in the project's first year, tasking Global Communities to provide grants ranging from $400,000 to $1.5 million. These large grants were mainly for managing municipal solid waste.

- This level of mission involvement created deep frustration for the implementer, whose staff perceived it as detracting from the project's vision and focus. The disagreements regarding project changes and implementation escalated, and according to senior project officials, the frustration became serious enough that the senior field project official resigned. The departure created a temporary leadership void and, according to implementer executives, damaged morale.

CONCLUSION

Having started the Community Engagement Project, the USAID/Jordan officials are resolute that they will continue working with Jordanian communities on democracy and governance issues. By reflecting on their experiences to date, mission officials have the opportunity to put the project on a more stable footing and adopt a longer-term approach to development that takes into account the volatile nature of the Syrian refugee crisis and its potential impact on Jordanian governance structures. In particular, the mission can more clearly define what success means for this project and finalize performance measures in an approved monitoring and evaluation plan and results framework. Additionally, the mission has not always adhered to the terms of substantial involvement under a cooperative agreement. The mission can make sure its employees understand the limitations of a cooperative agreement and carefully consider under what circumstances it would be an appropriate mechanism for future awards in Jordan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that USAID/Jordan take the following actions:

1. Finalize and approve an updated Community Engagement Project activity monitoring and evaluation plan and results framework.
2. Issue a memorandum communicating to mission employees the limitations on substantial involvement in cooperative agreements.

OIG RESPONSE TO MANAGEMENT COMMENTS

We provided USAID with our draft report on December 29, 2016, and on January 26, 2017, received its response, which is included as an appendix to this report. While USAID's response did not state whether it agreed or disagreed with the two recommendations, we acknowledge that USAID took final action on both.

We reviewed additional information that the mission provided. While the mission characterized some disagreements as "factual errors," we responded to those comments in light of other information we collected and analyzed during the audit. Where appropriate, we also clarified a few statements, as described below.

- We clarified on page 4 that we meant the number of communities had increased rather than the budget.

- The mission disagreed with the statement that it switched focus from addressing community needs to relieving community stress. We maintain that the initial focus was on needs rather than stressors, as documented by the implementer's methodology narrative, process flow charts, and interviews. There was a significant methodological redesign during the project that shifted focus from identifying and ranking community needs to analyzing and prioritizing community stressors.

- The mission disagreed with a statement made on page 4 that it directed Global Communities to shift to using contracts instead of in-kind grants. We modified the sentence to clarify. The mission referenced the use of rapid grants, which were small and early in the award. Yet, by year two, there were much larger and varied types of awards going to communities and non-governmental organizations, one of which was over a million dollars and others were hundreds of thousands of dollars, thus they required more substantial management. This prompted Global Communities to also use contracts, which offered more rigid structures and controls than grants. As a result, this change required the hiring of additional staff, which necessitated additional resources.

- USAID/Jordan disagreed with the fieldwork dates provided in the report. According to OIG policy, fieldwork begins on the date of the entrance conference and concludes upon the exit conference, where we formally present our findings and potential recommendations, which occurred in March 2016. Exit conferences are distinct from informal departure debriefings.

- The mission stated it did not plan a project focusing on problems faced by Syrian refugees. However, during our audit we documented the events that led to the Community Engagement Project. The project was clearly spurred in part by concerns involving Syrian refugees. For example, following the Rapid Assessment Team's evaluation of the Syrian refugee crisis in northern Jordan, USAID officials drafted a proposed award scope that in part addressed refugee issues. In October 2012, a discussion between USAID/Jordan and the Office of Transition Initiatives occurred, in which the mission requested assistance stating, "USAID Jordan would

like to move forward with the scope of work that was proposed by the Rapid Assessment Team." However, concerns expressed by the Government of Jordan to the mission caused the focus of the award to shift from Syrian refugees. In an email sent on December 18, 2012, a senior USAID mission official explained to another USAID official, who was drafting the project's design, "the Program Description is written in a way that excludes references to refugees due to political sensitivities with the government and their concern that using bilateral funds will limit their ability to obtain additional funds related to refugees."

The mission requested that we remove the language "outside the original award scope" found on pages 4 and 6. This request was based on the premise that the mission discussed in the award the potential of adding additional communities, and thus the addition was within the scope of the award. We clarified that the mission directed the implementer to perform work in additional target communities—expanding from 9 to 19 communities—prior to a formal modification. Unlike the original target communities, the additional communities were not identified in the original award or agreed to in the year 1 implementation plan. Further, the addition of several new communities was a point of major disagreement between a senior project official and the mission beginning as early as 1 month after the initial award was signed. In October 2014, the mission issued an award modification identifying the new communities. This action indicates that the mission concluded a modification was needed to add them.

APPENDIX A. SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

We conducted our work from October 2015 through December 2016 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

The audit objective was to determine whether USAID/Jordan's Community Engagement Project was achieving its goal to strengthen community engagement in the context of regional volatility and transition "associated with domestic policy reform, economic conditions, and demographic changes." The award focused on engagement and cohesion in selected Jordanian communities. As of December 2015, a total of approximately $23.7 million had been disbursed.

In planning and performing the audit, we assessed significant controls that USAID/Jordan used to manage the program, including project implementation plans, monitoring and evaluation plans, project updates to the mission, site visit reports, and grant-tracking processes.

The scope of the audit was from the inception of the project in April 2013 through December 2015. To understand the history of the award's concept and design, we also reviewed documents developed before award solicitation, including assessments of northern Jordan done by the Office of Transition Initiatives and the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation, USAID/West Bank and Gaza, and USAID/Jordan, and resulting award draft documents. We conducted audit fieldwork from November 28, 2015, until March 14, 2016, visiting USAID/Jordan and implementer offices in Amman and project activity sites in Irbid, Mafraq, and Tafelah, Jordan.

To determine whether USAID/Jordan's Community Engagement Project was achieving its goal, we interviewed USAID/Jordan officials, the agreement officer's representative, implementer personnel, an official with the U.S. Embassy Amman, and an official with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. We also examined key documentation, including project reports, tracking spreadsheets, project expenditures, process overviews, meeting notes, monitoring and evaluation documents, site visit reports, concept papers, project approval memos, and email correspondence.

We performed document reviews and interviews to understand how the target communities were selected. We also reviewed documents and performed interviews to determine if the grants were having any measurable impact as analyzed by the project officials. Additionally, we reviewed whether project officials maintained a monitoring and evaluation database and other required design and implementation procedures, in keeping with project and Agency requirements.

We selected a judgmental sample of six communities that had been involved in project activities. The sample selection was based on the site locations, the length of time the community had been participating, and the nature of the grants provided to the community. The geographical scope of the audit included each of the three governorates in which the project has activities.[10] We did not include the pilot site in our sample because the pilot had been operational for only 6 months at the time of the audit and had security restrictions. Within the 3 governorates, we visited 6 of 19 project communities and interviewed 8 of the 19 community engagement teams that were operating as of December 2015. We also interviewed mayors of five municipalities in those governorates. During these site visits, we solicited feedback from local citizens and implementing staff assigned to those areas on project performance.

In answering the audit objective, we considered, but did not rely extensively on, computer-processed data. We relied instead on evidence from interviews, document reviews, questionnaires, and site visits. Since we judgmentally selected sites, the results are limited to the tested items and areas and cannot be projected to all of the project's target communities. However, we believe our substantive testing was sufficient to support the audit's findings.

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[10] Governorates are the geographic administrative districts for the Government of Jordan. Jordan has 12 governorates.

APPENDIX B. MANAGEMENT COMMENTS

USAID | JORDAN
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

January 27, 2017

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

To: **Acting Regional Inspector General/Frankfurt, Saiming T. Wan**

From: **USAID/Jordan Mission Director, Jim Barnhart, Ph.D /s/**

Subject: **USAID/Jordan's response to the performance audit of the Community Engagement Project**

Reference: **OIG Task No. 8-278-17-00X-P**

USAID/Jordan appreciates the Regional Inspector General's (RIG) efforts in conducting the performance audit of the Community Engagement Project (CEP) and providing the mission with the draft audit report for comment, shared on 29 December 2016. USAID/Jordan reviewed the draft report and prepared the below comments for consideration by the RIG as it finalizes its report. In addition, the mission has already taken actions to address the RIG's recommendations, as described in this document.

Issues Identified

A. USAID/Jordan notes four factual errors in the draft report. Each error is described below and documentation is attached as supporting evidence.

1. On page 4, the draft report inaccurately states under the first bullet that the size of the award was doubled due to the addition of communities. The size of the award has not changed and consistently remains at $50 million from the signing of the cooperative agreement to date. The mission provides Annex A, copies of the signed pages of the cooperative agreement and modifications 3 and 7, which enacted phases two and three. Modification 3 specifically added the additional communities, but did not change the size of the award. The mission respectfully suggests replacing language about doubling the size of the award in the draft report on page 4 to changing the number of targeted communities.

2. Similarly on page 4, second bullet, the draft report states that the mission switched focus from addressing community needs to relieving community stress. This is incorrect, as can be seen on pages 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22, and 23 of the cooperative agreement where

the agreement clearly states that the project will identify and address stressors in communities. The mission provides Annex B, copies of each cited page of the cooperative agreement.

3. On page 4, the third bullet states that the mission directed Global Communities to shift to using contracts instead of in-kind grants. This is incorrect as the mission only directed Global Communities to increase the amount of rapid grants awarded to small NGOs from ($3,000-$5,000) to ($3,000-$10,000) under page 3 of modification 1, but did not direct the implementing partner to switch to using contracts instead of in-kind grants. In addition, the cooperative agreement's budget line items include a contracts and sub-awards line, indicating that the project would use contracts in addition to grants for implementation. Under modification 5, the mission realigned the budget to comply with mandatory standard provision 20, "Limiting Construction Activities" by separating Construction Activities from Contracts & Subawards. The mission added a new line item called Construction Activities for $3,288,422 and reduced the Contracts & Subawards line item by the same amount ($3,288,422).

The mission provides Annex C, modifications 3 and 5, and page 5 of the cooperative agreement with the line items of the budget.

4. On page 8 under Appendix A, the draft report states that the audit fieldwork was conducted from November 28, 2015 to March 14, 2016. However, the fieldwork concluded in mid-December, with the auditors providing the mission an outbrief on December 16, 2015 and departing within one to two days thereafter.

B. The mission would like to make a clarification on the first sentence of the last paragraph on page 3, "*The project planned to focus on problems faced by Syrian refugees and their Jordanian hosts...*" Per the Project Appraisal Document (PAD), Annex D, the mission did not plan a project to focus on problems faced by Syrian refugees and instead planned a project with the overarching goal "*to strengthen community and national engagement in the context of regional volatility and transitions associated with domestic policy reform, economic conditions and demographic change.*" (page 5). In order to achieve this goal, the project will focus on three sub-purposes:

1. "*NGO, community organization, professional association and government efforts to build resilience and address cohesion-related challenges expanded;*
2. *Civil society-government-private sector cooperation in building resilience and addressing cohesion-related challenges increased; and*
3. *Capacity relevant to community and national cohesion strengthened.*" (page 5).

The PAD has no mention of Syrian refugees but rather describes activities and benefits for communities in Jordan. Likewise, the cooperative agreement mentions the influx of Syrian refugees on page 17 but does not describe a project that sought to focus on problems faced by Syrian refugees.

C. Pages 4 and 6 of the draft report indicate that the mission requested Global Communities to expand the number of target communities, which resulted in "stretching resources" and going "outside the scope of the project." Per the PAD (page 16), the mission anticipated that additional communities would be added to the project: *"The initial award will be for three years for a total of $21 million...USAID will include provision for a second phase that would extend the project for two years beyond the initial three-year project life in order to ...(ii)* **roll-out on-going activities to additional communities***, and/or (iii) expand the range of support being provided to municipalities...The second phase is budgeted at $29 million."*

As such, the mission included similar language in the cooperative agreement to allow for the expansion to additional communities. On page 8 of the cooperative agreement, it states, *"As the program may engage* **additional communities** *as it progresses, base line information for communities should be provided 30 days after the program engages a new community."* Also on page 25, the cooperative agreement states, *"The field offices will also allow CEP to easily* **add additional communities** *within target governorates as the program progresses, and the field office model could also be replicated in other governorates utilizing MEMCC and NGO partner offices."*

The expansion into new communities was in line with the scope of the cooperative agreement. Furthermore, the expansion into the new communities was completed with the agreement of Global Communities. Since USAID/Jordan anticipated and included language to allow for the inclusion of additional communities, the mission respectfully requests the RIG to remove language on pages 2 and 6 of the draft report stating, "outside the original award scope."

The mission provides page 16 of the PAD, and pages 8 and 25 of the cooperative agreement as Annex E.

Recommended Actions

The RIG recommended two actions for the mission to undertake. USAID/Jordan is pleased to describe actions already taken to satisfy the recommendations and thus request that these recommendations are closed upon issuance of the report.

1. Finalize and approve an updated Community Engagement Project activity monitoring and evaluation plan and results framework.
    a. USAID/Jordan notes that in the year after the initial RIG debriefing, the mission has taken several actions to address issues raised during the debriefing, including this recommendation. USAID/Jordan finalized and approved an updated CEP activity monitoring and evaluation plan and results framework on **27 April 2016.** The approval letter is attached as Annex F.

2. Issue a memorandum communicating to mission employees the limitations on substantial involvement in cooperative agreements.

    a. USAID/Jordan issued this memorandum on January 23, 2017, attached as Annex G. Furthermore, the mission has taken action to hold periodic refresher courses on project management responsibilities to ensure USAID staff understand their roles and responsibilities regarding the management of contracts and cooperative agreements. The mission organized a series of mandatory sessions in December 2015 for Contracting/Agreement Officer's Representatives (C/AORs) to discuss responsibilities that fall under the C/AOR designation. USAID/Jordan also hosted the "Acquisition & Assistance 201 (A&A for COR/AOR Supervisors)" and the "Enhanced COR/AOR Skills (A&A 202)" training courses on March 2–10, 2016. Finally, the mission hosted two sessions of the "AOR Refresher-Reboot Workshop" on January 22–26, 2017.

APPENDIX C. MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS REPORT

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