

## **Addressing barriers to young people's participation in public life in Jordan**

Focus group discussions with young elected officials from the subnational level

*16 November 2023, Amman*

### **Context**

The project “Ma’an – Together for an accountable and transparent public administration in Jordan” (2022-25), supports the Government of Jordan in building effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at the national level. It is implemented by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and funded by the European Union. The overall objective of the Action is to improve public sector integrity and accountability in Jordan. The specific objectives of the Action are to support the Jordanian Public Administration by enhancing institutional and decision-making arrangements for integrity and accountability.

In this context, the project will deliver an in-depth peer-reviewed assessment of the capacity of the Government of Jordan to design and implement more responsive, transparent, and accountable policy outcomes and strengthen link between strategic policy objectives and their implementation. It will include a chapter on “Empowering young people to enhance integrity and accountability”, which will focus on:

1. Opportunities and barriers for youth to act as partners and watchdogs of government action to hold government to account for its commitments; and
2. Addressing barriers in relation to integrity and accountability for young people to be active in political life as voters, candidates, and elected officials.

### **Objective of the focus group discussions**

In Jordan, dissatisfaction with the integrity of elections is one of the most important reasons behind citizens' reluctance to participate in electoral processes. To inform the analysis in PGR chapter on government accountability towards young people, the OECD team will conduct a focus group discussion with elected officials from the subnational level below 40 years to discuss ways to strengthen integrity and accountability to encourage young people's participation in political life.

## Agenda

*Moderator/Facilitator: Rimaz Abu-Zeyad, Local consultant for the OECD project “Ma’an – Together for an accountable and transparent public administration in Jordan”*

*Interpretation: Consecutive interpretation in English and Arabic will be provided*

13:00-13:30	<b>Arrival and welcome coffee</b>
13:30-13:35	<p><u>Welcome remarks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Tonaina Ngororano</b>, Policy Analyst and OECD Project Lead, OECD Public Governance Directorate</li> </ul>
13:35-14:15	<p><b>Session 1: How do challenges to integrity and accountability impede young people from participating in political life?</b></p> <p><i>This session will discuss how challenges to integrity and accountability, such as wasta, bribery, vote buying and other forms of undue influence, discourage young people from participation in political life. It will discuss the (perceived) scope of young people’s exposure to such practices, the level of awareness among participants in institutional responsibilities, young people’s duties and rights as defined by relevant laws, and the awareness and satisfaction with current practices to address such challenges.</i></p> <p><u>Guiding questions:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In your opinion, are young people in Jordan aware of their civic rights and duties as defined by the law, and opportunities available to them to report being exposed to corruption as voters, candidates, and elected officials?</li> <li>2. In your opinion, what is the scope of the challenge of young people being exposed to wasta, bribery, vote buying and other forms of undue influence, in their roles as voters, candidates and elected officials? Are young people more vulnerable to such practices than older people? If so, why?</li> <li>3. In your opinion, what kind of practices of undue influence are young people most frequently exposed to in these different roles?</li> <li>4. In your opinion, do young people in Jordan know about the mandate and competencies of institutions such as JIACC, IEC and others as well as available complaint mechanism when being exposed to corruption?</li> <li>5. Are the current mechanisms successful? Where do you see the biggest gaps?</li> </ol> <p>Roundtable discussion.</p>

14:15-14:55	<p><b>Session 2: Building institutional capacities and empowering young people to enhance integrity and accountability in political life</b></p> <p><i>This session will seek to identify practical solutions and priorities to address the challenges identified in Session 1. It will encourage participants to share existing good practices, both in terms of institutional as well as youth-led efforts, to increase transparency, integrity and accountability in elections, political candidacy and in the context of young people taking on functions as elected officials.</i></p> <p><u>Guiding questions:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In your opinion, will the 2022 amendments to the Electoral Law and Political Parties Law encourage young people to participate more in political life (e.g. reduced minimum age, youth quotas in political parties)?</li> <li>2. How have tribes been responding to the political reform? Will the youth quotas provide a genuine opportunity for youth to engage in political life or is there a risk that they will be “captured” by their tribes’ interests?</li> <li>3. Are you aware of any institutional (led by government or independent institutions such as JIACC or IEC) or youth-led initiatives to raise awareness and address challenges to integrity and accountability in the context of young people’s political participation? Do you have any evidence on the outcomes and impact of these?</li> <li>4. What should be done to raise awareness among young people in their civic rights and duties?</li> <li>5. What should be done to strengthen reporting mechanisms? What should be done to ensure young people trust these mechanisms?</li> </ol> <p>Roundtable discussion.</p>
14:55-15:00	<p><b>Closing remarks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Tonaina Ngororano</b>, Policy Analyst and OECD Project Lead, OECD Public Governance Directorate</li> </ul>