

 Pillar 3.
INTEGRATION

JORDAN RIVER FOUNDATION

Aligning interventions with the UN Agenda 2030

- **Country:** Jordan
- **Number of staff:** 627
- **Year of incorporation:** 1995
- **Type:** Operating foundation
- **Endowment:** No
- **More information:** jordanriver.jo

The Jordan River Foundation (JRF) is a private foundation established by Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah, who is also the chairperson of the board. The Foundation has four programmes: Community Empowerment, Child Safety, Social Enterprises and Training to Success. JRF implements several capacity-building and awareness-raising projects in Jordanian communities, with emphasis on the needs of women and children and with an increasing focus on Syrian refugees. One of the Foundation's main strategies is to boost the potential of vulnerable people to become entrepreneurs or employees of choice. Through small grants, JRF helps communities start their own businesses and connects beneficiaries with job opportunities.

Sustainability goals have been present in several JRF interventions and individual projects for many years. In 2006, JRF co-led a project to promote organic farming with support from the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation¹ and the Jordanian Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation. In 2010, in collaboration with the Jordan Ministry of Environment, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and the Global Gender and Climate Alliance, JRF collaborated to implement components of a programme for

¹“Towards a Green Economy: A Scoping Study”, Envision Consulting Group (EnConsult) Jordan, 2011,
https://www.greengrowthknowledge.org/sites/default/files/downloads/resource/Green_Economy_Jordan_UNEP.pdf

mainstreaming gender in climate change efforts in Jordan². More recently, climate change and sustainability concerns have progressively spread across the Foundation's different programmes. Fundraising opportunities and the leadership's awareness were important triggers for this.

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In a country like Jordan, our carbon footprint is quite small. If we really want to make a difference in the world, we have to do it through global collaboration and shared commitments.”

– HER MAJESTY QUEEN RANIA AL ABDULLAH³, FOUNDER AND CHAIRPERSON OF THE BOARD OF JRF

An area of growing interest and demand has been water management related projects. Despite good sewage and water supply coverage, Jordan is the second most water-scarce country in the world⁴. In support of the implementation of the country's National Water Strategy 2016-2025⁵, JRF helped implement efforts such as the Water Innovations Technologies (WIT) project, funded by USAID. The project convened almost 400 awareness sessions to advance the adoption of water-saving technologies and leverage the capacity of community-based organisations to facilitate household water savings across farmlands, households and local communities.

There are several other examples under JRF's Community Empowerment Programme. The Mobile Social Innovation Incubators, implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Youth, supported projects led by young entrepreneurs. One of them promotes equal access to job opportunities for women in agriculture and started a training centre to empower women working in the industry, particularly in hydroponics⁶. The centre offers training in workforce readiness, technical know-how and employability skills. Another example is the Water Conservation project in the city of Madaba which promotes the adoption of water rationing technologies in households and schools across communities, as well as advocating for the socio-economic and environmental benefits of conservation technologies. More initiatives are also supported under JRF's Green Business Entrepreneurship training programme.

²“Programme for mainstreaming gender in climate change efforts in Jordan”, International Union for Conservation of Nature, 2010, https://www.climatelinks.org/sites/default/files/asset/document/2010_IUCN_Climate-Change-Gender-Action-Plan-Jordan.pdf

³“Jordan's Queen Rania calls for 'global collaboration' on climate crisis”, ITV News, 2021

<https://www.itv.com/news/2021-11-16/jordans-queen-rania-says-global-collaboration-key-to-climate-crisis>

⁴Water, sanitation and hygiene, UNICEF, <https://www.unicef.org/jordan/water-sanitation-and-hygiene>

⁵“National Water Strategy of Jordan, 2016 – 2025”, FAO,

<https://leap.unep.org/countries/jo/national-legislation/national-water-strategy-jordan-2016-2025>

⁶Hydroponics, also called aquaculture, nutriculture, soilless culture, or tank farming, is the cultivation of plants in nutrient-enriched water, with or without the mechanical support of an inert medium such as sand, gravel, or perlite, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/hydroponics>

Aligning interventions with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Although JRF does not yet have a plan to mainstream climate into its strategy, the team has been debating how it can more explicitly link its work to the SDGs as an integral part of its strategy. JRF's operational sustainability journey started in 2007, as they were one of the first civil society organisations in the Arab world to issue a sustainability report reviewed by the Global Reporting Initiative. Although the Foundation stopped following the official reporting standard, it continued to adopt sustainability principles in its work, including in its operations.

JRF depends on international donors and partners to expand its work and recently realised that aligning its work more strongly and explicitly with the SDGs could also be useful for increasing its capacity to foster global partnerships.

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It was very important for us to link our strategy with the SDGs. The vision has been there since 1995. But how do we translate the vision into actions that support the SDGs?”

– WALAA AYASRAH, PROGRAMME QUALITY AND RESEARCH SENIOR MANAGER AT JRF

The Foundation became a signatory of the UN Global Compact and re-evaluated its strategy based on this commitment to contribute to the SDGs. An idea in the pipeline is to expand JRF's work on climate adaptation so that it is relevant to Jordanian communities and reinforces sustainability as a cross-cutting issue.

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