

## **Professional Communities: Sharing Ideas...Finding Solutions...Building Businesses**

### **Challenges:**

A key to supporting Jordan's goals for economic growth is a vibrant and mature private sector that is making the transition from a Static, Product, and Process oriented mindset to a Dynamic, Customer, and Market oriented one. Key to this change is the human capital – the workers – residents in companies and in the public sector. The challenge is to find the right avenue for supporting the growth and development of Jordan's workforce.

### **Initiatives:**

USAID's Jordan Economic Development Program (SABEQ) reviewed a number of possibilities for the sustainable institutional transformation noted above and elected to help develop "communities of practice" now so prevalent in developed countries. These communities were designed to leverage existing human capital and provide a means for technical experts to better and more directly connect with, support, and make value-added resources and expertise available to a large number of Jordanian professionals, particularly those working for private sector companies. The concept of communities meeting regularly to share and exchange experiences dovetails well with the oral traditions of knowledge sharing within the Arabic-speaking world.

The Program began by gathering together a number of professionals from businesses associations and their member firms to develop a set of topics of interest around which "Professional Communities" were formed. Four initial topics later rose to 8 as interest grew, including Human Resources and Strategic Management.

Membership in these Professional Communities is free, and is open to qualified professionals working for private and public sector firms in Jordan. Members meet at regular intervals to foster building relationships, discuss common problems and introduce best practices and tools, and highlight local experiences and successes. Quarterly round tables include topics that are suggested by the members.

The Professional Community program also provides an online web portal dedicated for self growth, and acting as a platform of exchanging knowledge.

### **Results:**

Professional Communities started with 40 members, and have grown to over 450 participating in 14 different roundtables. Six different professional communities have been formed including Human Resources, Strategic Management, Trade and Export Development, Public Sector Policy, Service and Performance, and Media Economic Reporters.