

SAMAH GOUSSOUS

PROFILE

30+ years managing donor-funded programs across education, health, governance, and humanitarian sectors in Jordan and the MENA region. Expertise in localizing impact through strategic partnerships with government, donors, and CBOs. Skilled in community empowerment, policy alignment, capacity building, and multi-stakeholder collaboration.

EXPERIENCE

INDEPENDENT EXPERIENCE

Community Empowerment and Livelihood Development Programs 2015 - Present

- **Amna Refugee Healing Network & The University of Virginia Humanitarian Collaborative (UVA HC) - Jordan and Lebanon**
 - Leading research and evaluation efforts to assess the effectiveness of community-based mental health, well-being, and psychosocial support (MHPSS) programs for refugees and host communities.
 - Overseeing data collection, analysis, and reporting while ensuring alignment with safeguarding protocols.
 - Coordinating with in-country researchers and stakeholders to adapt research methodologies based on community needs.
- **RTI International - Jordan**
 - Providing in-country support for proposal preparation related to USAID Project.
- **Project Manager with INTEGRATED to implement a baseline study for World Vision's Protection, Education, and Renewable Energy (PEARE) Project**
 - Managed Project baseline study, evaluating its impact on community livelihood programs.
- **Oxfam & Save the Children**
 - Conducted research on country ownership in development initiatives.
- **Civil Society Facility (EU Program) - Tunisia**
 - Developed and conducted training for community and youth development initiatives.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER

Integrated international (INTEGRATED)

2021 - 2025

- **USAID Makanati – Integrated Team**

- Led the Policy Lab Community Learning Agenda and M&E, ensuring strategic alignment with USAID Makanati's goals.
- Designed and developed Scopes of Work (SOWs) for research on gender equality, economic empowerment, and community resilience.
- Managed partnerships with USAID and other key stakeholders.
- Oversaw financial reporting, budget management, and compliance across all project phases.

- **Integrated - Let's Live in Harmony Project** (*USAID-FCDO Early Grades Reading & Mathematics Initiative, Ministry of Education*)

- Provided technical oversight, supporting educational initiatives to enhance early-grade literacy and numeracy.

- **Expertise France – Social Protection Initiatives**

- Provided technical leadership, strengthening civil society engagement in social protection programs in collaboration with Expertise France and MoSD.
- Coordinated capacity-building efforts for 78 grant-supported projects, benefiting 17,000+ individuals (73% female).
- Engaged 700+ CSO representatives and 100 MoSD staff in training on crisis management, gender inclusion, and early intervention.
- Served as a technical focal point for gender, disability inclusion, and crisis management collaborations with key government entities.
- Supported the Social Innovation Challenge, engaging 300+ youth participants (65% female participation) with a 97.5% satisfaction rate.

- **Mathematica - Jordan Refugee Livelihoods Development Impact Bond (DIB) Project** (funded by IKEA Foundation)

- Oversaw quantitative data collection in collaboration with Mindset, a Jordanian research firm.
- Conducted qualitative data collection and analysis from beneficiaries and stakeholders to support project evaluation.

- **Short-Term External Evaluations & Research:**

- Conducted impact evaluations of the Madrasati Program, improving youth development outcomes in schools.
- Contributed to Political Economy Analysis for Jordan's education sector in collaboration with DAI, Integrated International, and the UK government.
- Managed the Generation for Peace capacity-building project, enhancing the Ministry of Youth (MOY) team and supporting youth centers across Jordan
- Researched youth empowerment and community development initiatives for the British Council and Mercy Corps.

TECHNICAL ADVISOR

DT Global – USAID/Jordan Education and Youth Office (EDY),**2019 – 2020**

- Advised the Ministry of Education (MOE) on policy reforms, aligning the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) with USAID priorities to enhance extracurricular education (ECA) programs and youth engagement.
- Led strategic policy discussions, assessing frameworks, identifying gaps, and institutionalizing the ECA Strategy across Jordan's education system.
- Strengthened MOE institutional capacity, providing professional development and technical support for sustainable education reform.
- Expanded extracurricular programming nationwide, engaging CBOs, NGOs, and private sector partners.
- Optimized USAID-funded education initiatives, integrating data-driven approaches from DEEP, RAMP, ESMP, CISLE schools, and Youth Power.
- Revitalized and led the MOE/ECA Technical Committee, defining its Terms of Reference (ToR) and strengthening policy influence.
- Prepared MOE leaders for global knowledge exchange, guiding their participation in the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP).

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TEAM LEAD**ABT Associates – USAID Health Service Delivery****2017 – 2019**

- Designed and executed a strategic community engagement framework to increase demand for reproductive, maternal, newborn, and child health (RMNCH) services, directly supporting USAID's Health Service Delivery objectives.
- Led a multidisciplinary team to deliver impactful community outreach initiatives, ensuring alignment with project goals and measurable health outcomes.
- Provided technical and managerial oversight, fostering partnerships with community associations to promote sustainable behavior change and increased utilization of integrated RMNCH services among women of reproductive age and children under five.
- Strengthened collaboration with the Ministry of Health, NGOs, and private sector stakeholders to enhance capacity-building efforts and improve service delivery responsiveness.
- Coordinated cross-functionally to integrate community engagement efforts with other Health Service Delivery Activity components for maximum impact.
- Developed strategic plans, quarterly progress reports, and annual impact assessments, ensuring data-driven decision-making and continuous program improvement.
- Optimized data collection and reporting to meet USAID and program performance requirements, ensuring accountability and evidence-based program adjustments.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND GENDER MANAGER (*Remote for Syria*)

Led community engagement and gender integration for the \$45M Syria Essential Services (SES) II program, funded under a USAID contract, to enhance the stability of communities and strengthen local governance in southern Syria by restoring essential services and livelihoods.

- Engaged Syrian partners, and recruited and hired local staff, specifically including Syrian women in the design, selection, and implementation of interventions.
- Managed five officers working in civil society engagement, livelihood activities, training, and governance; coordinated remotely with a growing team of Syrian staff members across three southern governorates.
- Built the capacity of 20 Syrian civil society organizations (CSOs) and 90 local councils to engage their communities equitably and improve livelihoods.
- Led training-of-trainers (TOT) for members of Syrian civil society in community engagement, youth inclusion, governance, and finance.
- Advanced gender mainstreaming by engaging male civil society leaders in promoting gender inclusion.
- Managed capacity-building initiatives for local women's council to enhance community governance structures.

PROGRAM MANAGER

Peace Corps – Community & Livelihood Youth Development Program

2014 – 2016

- Designed and led the strategic direction of implementing the program, ensuring alignment with Jordan's national development priorities and Peace Corps objectives.
- Established and implemented a robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework, enabling data-driven decision-making and measuring program impact on youth engagement and community development.
- Developed and delivered capacity-building programs, equipping Peace Corps Volunteers with the technical expertise, cultural competency, and leadership skills needed to drive sustainable community change.
- Strengthened multi-sectoral partnerships, collaborating with government ministries, NGOs, and local stakeholders to leverage resources and enhance program sustainability.
- Led youth mobilization efforts, empowering young people to take active roles in community-led initiatives that support economic resilience and social inclusion.
- Designed and facilitated regional trainings in project management, M&E, and youth engagement, enhancing the effectiveness of both Volunteers and local counterparts.
- Authored strategic guidance documents, including manuals and handbooks, to institutionalize best practices in community engagement and ensure program continuity.

PROJECT MANAGER

International Relief & Development (IRD) | USAID CISLE (Cultivating Inclusive & Supportive Learning Environments) **2014 – 2014**

- Led the design and implementation of community mobilization and M&E activities, enhancing learning environments in communities serving both Syrian and Jordanian families.
- Provided technical guidance to educational stakeholders and trained staff, ensuring the adoption of best practices in community engagement and long-term project sustainability.

COMMUNITY MOBILISATION ADVISOR

Zaatari Camp - UNHCR Community Centers Project **2013 – 2013**

- Supported community development and capacity-building in Zaatari refugee camp, fostering strategic partnerships to deliver inclusive services for both refugee and host communities.

PROGRAM MANAGER

USAID CMP II (Community Mobilization for Partnership in Schools) **2008 – 2013**

- Managed the \$3.8M USAID CMP II project, overseeing the development of community-school partnerships across 67 communities, promoting sustainable educational outcomes.
- Strengthened local governance by training community leaders and securing Ministry of Education recognition for community-driven education reforms.

DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER

Young Women's Christian Association (YMCA) **1998 – 2008**

- Led initiatives advancing youth and women's rights, leadership, and vocational education, driving social impact through targeted empowerment and capacity-building programs in Jordan.

PROJECT COORDINATOR

Save the Children & Jordan River Foundation **1989 – 1997**

- Led community empowerment initiatives, driving livelihood generation and economic development to enhance financial independence and social mobility for vulnerable groups.
- Advanced women's socio-economic empowerment, implementing skills development and income-generation programs to strengthen their roles in the community and workforce.
- Managed sustainable community development projects, improving access to education, healthcare, and vocational training for disadvantaged populations.

EDUCATION

BA, Agricultural Engineering and Nutrition | Damascus University | 1979 – 1984