
Agriculture Without Risk/Northern Jordan Valley

Damj for Communities Empowerment Co.

Jordanian Civic Activists Toolkit II: Case Studies of Jordanian Advocacy Campaigns

Civil Society Capacity Building in Jordan
USAID Civic Initiatives Support Program
2013 – 2018



¹ Source: The information related to these four areas of rights are adapted from and found in Discover Human Rights: A Human Rights Approach to Social Justice Work, The Advocates for Human Rights (<http://bit.ly/1TmOp6v>). The New Tactics Method utilizes: safety and security; non-discrimination; participation; and protection-accountability. NOTE: The rights listed in these four "categories" may be placed in any area depending upon the context where the right is being violated. For example, Article 23: Right to join trade unions might be placed in "Safety and Security" rather than "Participation" where organizing or joining a union is dangerous.

² Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) Article 22: Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality. <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

³ The identification of the four action areas outlined in the Legacy Tool comes from the advocacy experience of Mr. Faisal Abu Sondos, former Executive Director of The Royal Conservation Society of Jordan (JREDS). Mr. Abu Sondos has been a New Tactics Method Trainer since 2010 and Lead Method Trainer since 2011. While using the New Tactics Strategic Effectiveness Method in his own organizations' advocacy efforts and coaching other civil society organizations in using the Method he identified these four action areas to assess progress. The benefits and drawbacks regarding the use of technology in each of these advocacy action areas needs examination in relation to the appropriateness for the intended target groups and goals of an advocacy campaign.

Overview

Advocacy Issue

A society where farmers enjoy business sustainability and growth through receiving compensation if natural risks like frost occur

Human Rights-Based Focus Area¹

Safety and Security (UDHR – Article 22²)

Participation

Scope of Advocacy

Local: Northern Jordan Valley as an entry point followed by the national application of the result.

Advocacy Action Areas³

A challenge for many civil society organizations is distinguishing between being busy with activities and implementing tactical actions that strategically advance an advocacy effort. In order to help organizations better assess how to expend precious resources, the Legacy Tool offers four action areas that are needed to conduct any advocacy campaign: internal capacity building, research, mobilization and engagement with decision makers. This case provides insights into all four action areas:

- internal capacity building
- research
- mobilization
- engagement with decision-makers

Tactical Aim

New Tactics in Human Rights has identified four primary human rights-based tactical aims: prevention, intervention, restorative and promotion. This advocacy for agriculture without risk demonstrates the following tactical aim:

- intervention

Campaign Period

May 25, 2017 – March 24, 2018

Brief Summary

This campaign helped Damj for Communities Empowerment Co. (Damj)⁴ to work on a rights-based environmental, health, well-being and livelihood issue that helped build trust between civil society organizations, the local community, and the government bodies. This emerged as a result of the Damj's participation in the USAID CIS Advocacy Support Fund grant process. A primary component of the grant process included an advocacy training using the New Tactics in Human Rights Program's **Strategic Effectiveness Method** which facilitates the collective identification of locally-defined priorities. As a result, Damj launched the *Agriculture Without Risk/Northern Jordan Valley* campaign.

In the recent years, it was observed that a significant number of farmers left the agricultural sector. This is due to the increasing financial burdens resulting from the occurrence of various agricultural risks and their lack of knowledge of the proper scientific means to avoid said risks. Although a special fund for agricultural risk management exists, the lack of procedural clarity, especially related to the calculation and distribution of compensation, reduced the reliability of this fund as a source to mitigate risk for the farmers.

These reasons caused Damj to organize an advocacy campaign to defend the rights of affected farmers. The campaign focused on identifying gaps in the agricultural compensation process and targeting the Agricultural Risk Management Fund to adopt the proposed solutions. Damj involved farmers and stakeholders in the process and ensured that their proposed solutions and actions were heard. The highlighted achievements of this campaign were significant for the farmers for the following reasons: first, the development of a model for field detection of the affected crops by frost; and second, the development of a procedural guidebook that organizes the compensation process for farmers affected by frost, starting from the announcement of risk till the distribution of compensations.

There are several reasons behind the success of the campaign. This issue is a crucial, humane issue which impacts a significant proportion of the Jordanian society. Damj was able to develop a detailed analysis of this issue which helped identify the weak areas and accordingly, provide proper solutions. Another significant factor in the success of the campaign was the diverse and complementing experiences of the team members to implement the different activities of the campaign. Finally, Damj was able to obtain the supportive position of the Director of the Agriculture Risk Management Fund. The Director appreciated the role of civil society organizations which helped strengthen the collaboration between the two. For example, he took the feedback constructively which shifted the relationship with decision-makers to a collaborative and participatory one.

Achievements

This campaign raised great interest in its cause within the Northern Jordan Valley and surrounding areas. Damj mobilized support from all stakeholders.

⁴ Damj for Communities Empowerment Co. is a human rights development organization. It was established in 2013 as a non-profit organization in the Irbid Governorate; however, their business scope includes the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. In its work, Damj targets individuals, official and local institutes, and civil society organizations as it aims to develop a cohesive and strong society in every societal, economic, and cultural aspect where everyone enjoys their human and legal rights.

This mobilization and engagement of decision makers resulted in the campaign achieving its main goal – to **Activate Article 4 from Agriculture Risk Management Fund Law #5 of 2009 during 2017**. The success of the campaign and the enforcement of Article 4 manifested in several ways:

Built cooperative relationship with the relevant government agency: From the beginning of the campaign, Damj was able to build a cooperative relationship with the relevant and responsible government agency. This relationship with the Agriculture Risk Management Fund made it possible to develop and amend the procedure to establish fair standards to compensate affected farmers by frost.

Increased accountability and capacity of government staff to implement the law: A critical aspect of the implementation of Article 4 in the law has been the approval by the Agriculture Risk Management Fund to adopt the proposed procedure guide. This guide helps to facilitate a fair and clear compensation process to affected farmers by frost. Although the campaign started in the Northern Jordan Valley, training of employees of directorates in different governorates, under the Ministry of Agriculture, on the implementation of this procedure has begun.

Increased farming skills and awareness of farmers of their compensation rights: Farmers were trained on the ways to predict frost, how to mitigate damage (frost prevention), and their compensation rights according to the specified cases in the Agriculture Risk Management Fund guide.

Damj developed as a human-rights based advocacy entity: Damj was enabled to pursue human rights-based advocacy issues in their community by developing its internal procedures. This strengthened their internal capacity which helped them attract attention from official and non-official entities and influencers. This advocacy experience provides Damj with a good foundation to lead similar human rights-based campaigns in the future.

Key Lessons

Advocacy Action Areas⁵

The Advocacy Action Areas in this campaign provide insights into the challenges and lessons learned from the experience of Damj throughout the implementation of the *Agriculture Without Risk/Northern Jordan Valley* campaign.

Internal Capacity Building

Damj built their internal capacity through the USAID CIS sponsored advocacy training using the New Tactics in Human Rights **Strategic Effectiveness Method**. The five-step method begins with a collective process to identify a clear and focused problem statement. This foundational step is critical for any campaign (see Research). Damj identified the problem as: *farmers in the Northern Jordan Valley do not enjoy the right to develop their businesses due to the lack of clarity in the Agricultural Risk Management Fund procedures and the mechanisms for calculating and the distributing compensations in case of risk occurrence*. The Strategic Effectiveness Method provides a step-by-step process to develop a strategic path – or journey of change. This strategic path helps to also track and monitor progress (see Figure 1). Damj's campaign team was also trained on lobbying and the tools used in that context, skills that would benefit Damj in future rights-based issues.

⁵ The identification of the four action areas outlined in the Legacy Tool comes from the advocacy experience of Mr. Faisal Abu Sondos, former Executive Director of The Royal Conservation Society of Jordan (JREDS). Mr. Abu Sondos has been a New Tactics Method Trainer since 2010 and Lead Method Trainer since 2011. While using the New Tactics Strategic Effectiveness Method in his own organizations' advocacy efforts and coaching other civil society organizations in using the Method he identified these four action areas to assess progress. The benefits and drawbacks regarding the use of technology in each of these advocacy action areas needs examination in relation to the appropriateness for the intended target groups and goals of an advocacy campaign.

An analysis of agricultural risks and terms of the technical requirements to conduct the campaign activities highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of the team (see Research). Based on that, Damj recruited experts in specific fields. This led the team to become more diverse with complementing experiences and capacities. For example, the campaign manager is an expert in law, the coordinator is an agriculture engineer, and another person is a media specialist. Furthermore, local individuals contributed to the campaign's success due to their knowledge of the issue, the farmers' situations, the means to contact them, and facilitated in presenting this reality to the decision-makers in the targeted area.

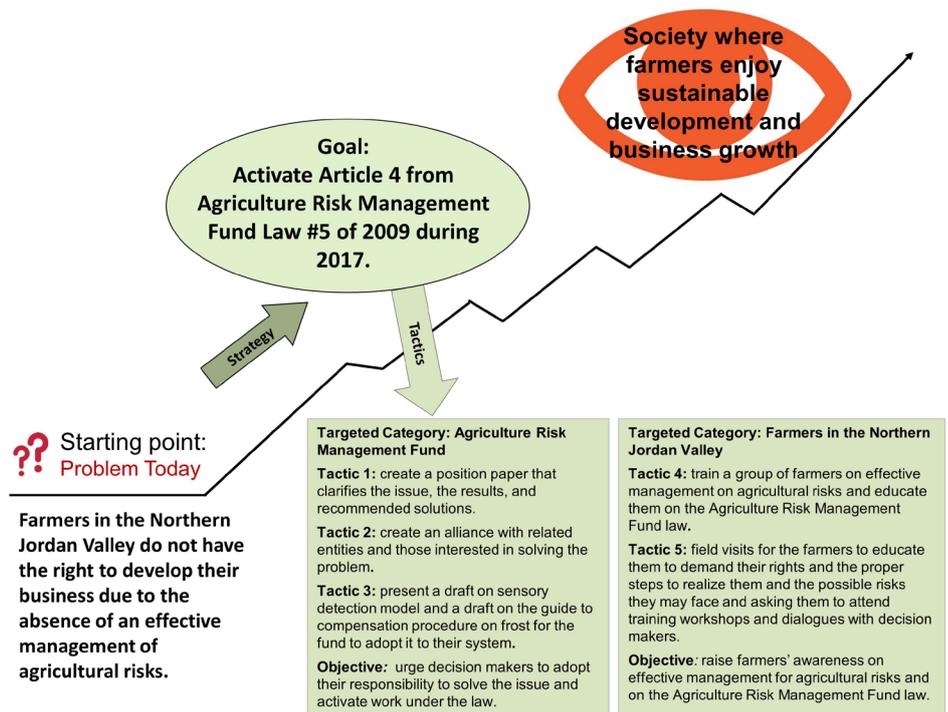


Figure 1: The strategic path developed by the Damj for their campaign.

Damj ensured the engagement and consultation of affected farmers and agriculture engineers in the meetings during the campaign. This, in turn, contributed to identifying, amending, and developing the information and gaps in the Fund's procedures. This resulted in reaching clear and detailed recommendations for the procedural guide on the compensation process of affected farmers by frost.

The precision of the campaign's goals ensured minimum navigation from the set track. The direction was clear during the campaign's timeline even when members implementing the campaign changed due to different circumstances.

Research

Studying the issue in detail, and aligning it from a human rights-based perspective, helped prepare a clear, direct, and detailed position paper. This enabled Damj to better analyze the reality of the situation and reach appropriate recommendations. This precision saved time, effort, and helped properly utilize the resources when it was time to present this position paper to the related entities.

The initial research stage included field visits to affected farmers. Damj subsequently analyzed the procedures and tools of the compensation process. The participation of the affected farmers helped Damj in identifying the gaps in the process. These gaps were highlighted in the position paper to lobby decision-makers to take necessary measures to guarantee the rights of affected farmers. Then, in turn, the recommendations were used to intervene to restructure the process and develop the procedure guide of the compensation process for the affected farmers by frost.

Mobilization

This campaign introduced and raised farmers' awareness of their rights. This was done either through the various meetings and trainings that were held in collaboration with the Agriculture Risk Management Fund or through individual

"It is also worth noting that when we applied for the USAID CIS grant, we were not aware of this level of detail that we reached after researching the issue."

– Ihab Beshtawi, Director of Damj and the Manager of the campaign

“The campaign shifted from lobbying decision-makers to collaborating with them.”

– Ihab Beshtawi, Director of Damj and the Manager of the campaign

“We thank Damj for their cooperation with us. Their campaign helped us develop the compensation procedure on frost risk. It was a fruitful collaboration.”

– Mohammad Al-Awaidah, Director of the Agriculture Risk Management Fund

field visits. Farmers’ participation greatly contributed to the success of the campaign due to the increased transparency and their increased awareness of the process that guaranteed the application of the compensation procedure.

The campaign helped build trust between farmers on one hand, and civil society organizations and decision-makers on the other. The Agriculture Risk Management Fund responded immediately to the demands of the position paper. They showed initiative in establishing a clear compensation mechanism that ensures the rights of affected farmers equally.

Significant media coverage increased the campaign’s direct impact on the agricultural community that encompasses significant numbers of citizens. Damj’s campaign was able to garner high attention of the issue through television, newspapers, radio stations, and social media sites that showcased the issue, possible solutions, and the way to collaborate to solve it.

Engagement with Decision Makers

The Agriculture Risk Management Fund’s position on the issue, and its apparent support, helped shift the campaign from lobbying to dialogue and solutions brainstorming on the compensation case of affected farmers by frost. Initially, it was assumed that the Fund’s management would oppose the campaign’s goal. However, they positively responded during dialogue and requested support to develop the procedural guide that facilitates their work. Therefore, Damj responded with flexibility and adaptability in amending their tactics to coincide with the actual position of the decision-makers. This was crucial for the success of the campaign.

Organizational Impact of Advocacy

Perhaps the most important impact of this campaign on Damj for Communities Empowerment Co. is the training of the campaign team members on advocacy techniques and the numerous ways to run advocacy campaigns. Damj became a crucial resource to interested parties in the Northern Jordan Valley area. This campaign also helped Damj build trust and collaboration between them and the Agriculture Risk Management Fund producing a collaborative model between a government agency and a civil society organization.