

---

# **Girls' Right to Education in Jurf Al-Darawish Village – Tafilah**

*Islamic Charity Center Society*

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

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



<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) Article 26 Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit. <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

<sup>3</sup> 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

Achieve or protect the right to free and compulsory primary education for the girls of Jurf Al-Darawish area, as stated in the Education Law No. (3) of 1994.

### Human Rights–Based Focus Area<sup>1</sup>

Protection / Accountability – (UDHR – Article 26<sup>2</sup>)

### Scope of Advocacy

Local: Jurf Al-Darawish village, Tafilah Governorate

### Advocacy Action Areas<sup>3</sup>

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 The Girls' Right to Education in Jurf Al-Darawish Village – Tafilah demonstrates the following tactical aim:

- intervention

### Campaign Period

May 24, 2017 – January 31, 2018

## **Brief Summary**

This campaign marked the first time for the Islamic Charity Center Society (ICCS)<sup>4</sup> to work on a rights-based issue rather than charity work. This is considered a paradigm shift in the life of ICCS. This shift emerged as a result of the ICCS's participation in the USAID Civic Initiatives Support Program (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, the ICCS launched the *Girls' Right to Education in Jurf Al-Darawish Village/Tafilah Governate* campaign.

Girls in Jurf Al-Darawish village are denied their right to finish their primary education for several reasons, most notably the lack of primary school grades beyond the sixth grade in the Western Neighborhood School. The distance between the Western Neighborhood and the school in the Eastern Neighborhood which provides education up to grade eight is 3-5 KM. Parents have refrained from sending their daughters in the age group of 12-17, as they do not want their daughters to walk that distance to the Eastern Neighborhood school to complete their education. This is due to the parents' fear for their daughters to walk the significant distance of 3-5 KM in the transportation and population-free area back and forth to school. In addition, most of the villagers cannot afford to provide any means of transportation for their daughters. As a result, families have chosen to keep the girls at home to help their mothers with household chores and herding. This situation has often led to early marriage for the girls.

Through a USAID CIS grant, the ICCS initially conducted a field research documenting the scale of the problem and the reasons behind it, such as its social and cultural dimensions in the village. The ICCS utilized and trained the campaign team and people from the village on gathering information. Moreover, ICCS formed a community-based Committee to follow up the campaign, participate in activities, and communicate with decision-makers. The campaign team and the Committee met with several official entities, including the Directorate of Education in Tafilah, which was the key focus of the campaign and ultimately the solution provider.

One of the Committee members, who was fully aware of the details of the case, won a seat in the Governate Council in the decentralized elections to represent Jurf Al-Darawish. His presence facilitated the representation of the case and its dimensions to the Governate Council. This resulted in the allocation of JOD 500,000 in the Governorate Council's budget for the years 2019/2020 to build a primary school in Jurf Al-Darawish.

To address the barriers and avoid the denial of girls from attending school, the ICCS took action on some direct and immediate temporary solutions:

---

<sup>4</sup>The ICCS was founded in 1963 and was registered at the Ministry of Social Development in 1965 by a group of Jordanians who dedicated themselves to charitable work. Such work involved providing relief to the poor and the needy, supporting the educational process, establishing institutes and schools and providing the country with qualified people in most specialties, namely distinguished medical and nursing staff. The ICCS has also sponsored orphans and carried out diverse charitable programs of all kinds.

- **Provided transportation:** ICCS provided transportation for girls from the Western Neighborhood to the Eastern Neighborhood. They succeeded in assisting twenty-one (21) girls, either by bringing them back to school or by preventing them from dropping out.
- **Facilitated re-enrollment:** ICCS reached out to the Directorate of Education to facilitate three girls undergoing placement examinations that qualify them to re-enroll in education because they had been out of school for more than three years.
- **Sought private sector support:** ICCS communicated with a private sector company to request the support for two caravans to be used as temporary classrooms in the Western Neighborhood until the classroom problem can be solved permanently (currently unattained). ICCS learned that constant networking with private sector companies is necessary to reach such a solution.

This campaign advocated for girls' right to education under the Jordanian constitution and the international conventions that obligate the signatory states to provide education. First, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 26 (1): "Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages."<sup>5</sup> Second, the convention on the Rights of the Child, 1990, Article (28) stipulates: "States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular: make primary education compulsory and available free to all; and take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of dropout rates."<sup>6</sup> Finally, the Jordanian Constitution, Article 6 (III) and the Education Law No. 3 of 1994 which state: "The Government shall ensure work and education within the limits of its possibilities, and it shall ensure a state of tranquility and equal opportunities to all Jordanians."<sup>7</sup>

This campaign held official authorities accountable for their failure to provide an adequate education for all the students of Jurf Al-Darawish, and particularly to address girls' right to education.

## Achievements

The Islamic Charity Center Society (ICCS) made significant gains in achieving their campaign goal – Enrollment of girls in the age group of 12-17 in Jurf Al-Darawish - Western Neighborhood in education by adding the 7th and 8th grades at the beginning of the school year (2017-2018). Key successes of the campaign took place in the mobilization of the community and engaging decision-makers.

The ways in which ICCS mobilized the community ensured an accurate understanding of the problem and the development of appropriate solutions that could be offered to decision-makers.

**Community participation:** ICCS conducted a study of the educational situation in the community using participatory research methods. The study was conducted by a research team made up of members from within the local community as well as outside the community (see Research). The research team engaged male and female students as a source of data for identifying the true causes for dropping out of school and listened to their suggested solutions. As a result, the research formally documented the problem which was instrumental in holding decision-makers accountable. Community participation was greatly

---

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.claiminghumanrights.org/udhr/article\\_26.html#at28](http://www.claiminghumanrights.org/udhr/article_26.html#at28)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.kinghussein.gov.jo/const\\_ch1-3.html](http://www.kinghussein.gov.jo/const_ch1-3.html)

enhanced when ICCS created a Committee which consisted of the most influential people in the community – tribal leaders, teachers, a leader of a civil society organization, and a member of the Governorate Council.

Engagement of informal and formal decision makers: As the village has only two tribes, it was necessary to engage their dignitaries in the initiative to ensure the cooperation of the people in the research process. The support extended from tribal leaders assisted ICCS in persuading parents to enroll or bring their daughters back to school, or enroll them in ICCS’s training program. ICCS gained the recognition and engagement of the Ministry of Education, as the responsible governmental body, to find a solution. The presence of one Committee member that had won a seat in the Governorate Council to represent Jurf Al-Darawish was especially significant. The governorate council issued a decision to build a primary school in the Western Neighborhood in the year 2019/2020 budget.

Direct impact on girls’ access to education: The employment of two girls from the community led to the campaign’s success by gaining community support, advancing the community’s knowledge of the reality of the situation and development of appropriate solutions. ICCS succeeded in actually enrolling girls in education. They provided transportation for twenty-one girls to attend school and collaborated with the Directorate of Education to bring three girls back to school. The three girls were able to sit for a placement exam to determine the appropriate class based on their academic performance. This enabled them to return to school according to the rules of the Ministry of Education.

Samiha’s story: *“In one of the visits [to the Director of Education], student Samiha accompanied us. Samiha finished 10th grade and there is no secondary school in Jurf Al-Darawish due to the new Ministry of Education law, which stipulates that there should be at least 10 students to open a class for them. In case the number of students is less than 10, they shall be transferred to another school if they have access to transportation. During the visit, Samiha presented her problem to the Director of Education in Tafilah. She expressed her desire to complete her secondary education in the same area of residence to ensure her parent’s consent. The Director made an exception for Jurf Al-Darawish in relation to the secondary grades and instructed that two classes (11th grade and 12th grade “Tawjihi”) be opened at the beginning of the first semester of the school year 2017/2018.”*

- Fawaz Al-Mazra’wi, Project Development Director, ICCS

## Key Lessons

### Advocacy Action Areas<sup>8</sup>

The Advocacy Action Areas in this campaign constitute challenges and lessons learned about the experience of the ICCS in the implementation of the advocacy campaign for the girls’ right to education in Jurf Al-Darawish.

### Internal Capacity Building

ICCS 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). ICCS identified the problem as: *The Girls’ in Jurf Al-Darawish in Tafilah are deprived of their right to primary education due to lack of primary school grades beyond the sixth grade in the Western Neighborhood School and the lack of transportation for female students to get to the Eastern Neighborhood*

<sup>8</sup>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.

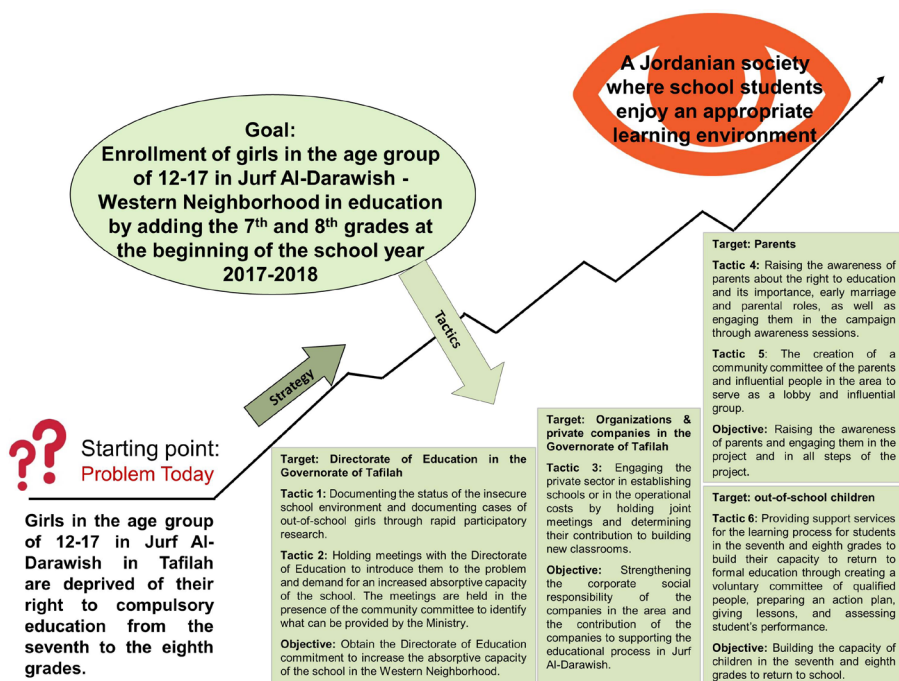


Figure 1: Islamic Charity Center Society's strategic path.

where the seventh and eighth grades are available. 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). The ICCS's campaign team was also trained on lobbying and the tools used in that context, skills that would benefit the ICCS not only in the case of advocating for the rights of girls in Jurf Al-Darawish but also in any rights-based issue of importance to ICCS.

A campaign team was formed and included the campaign manager, a field coordinator, a monitoring and evaluation officer, and a data entry staff. A job description was developed for each member of the

team. To facilitate the campaign, the team members included two young women residents from the area where the initiative was implemented, namely, the field coordinator and the data entry staff. After the creation of the main team, a technical support team of development experts was created within ICCS to support the campaign team to achieve the desired objectives. A community-based Committee, that was knowledgeable of the case and its dimensions, was created to communicate with decision-makers. This Committee had a significant impact on transforming the issue from an ICCS organization initiative to a community supported advocacy campaign.

## Research

The field research was conducted to find out the causes of the problem. The study adopted the methodology of rapid participatory research. For this purpose, a research team was formed of 20 members representing the local community and also included members from outside the community. The team ensured gender representation in this team, although this was difficult in the beginning due to the conservative nature of the village.

The main researcher and the research team made sure the voices of both male and female students were heard. They engaged the students as a source of data and listened to their suggested solutions. The research provided the true causes for dropping out of school and the identification of the status of education and the school environment. This information formed the core for other advocacy issues that the organization could work on. This process helped in empowering the research team with the rapid participatory research mechanism and assisting the people to identify the problems of their area.

## Mobilization

In the beginning, through the ICCS – Tafilah Branch, some residents of Jurf Al-Darawish were invited to attend a presentation on the campaign issue. After that, the community-based Committee was created. The Committee consists of 13 people (11 men and 2 women) who are the most influential in the community – tribal leaders, teachers, a leader of a civil society organization and a member of

the Governorate Council.

The campaign team and the community-based Committee carried out field visits and contacted by phone the parents of the out-of-school girls to enroll their daughters in the alternative training program. The help of existing organizations in the area was sought to mobilize the women of Jurf Al-Darawish and invite them to a training that included: parental care, the right to education and the concerns regarding early marriage. It was essential to reach the women of the village to increase their knowledge on these topics and to attract their attention to the importance of education. They are important allies to support the family's decision to educate their daughters and prevent them from dropping out of school.

### **Engagement with Decision Makers**

The ICCS held periodic meetings with the Directorate of Education as the main authority responsible for the educational process in the village and with the mandate to provide solutions to ensure male and female students' access to education in Jurf Al-Darawish. Despite the clarity of this responsibility, the Ministry of Education stated that it would be difficult to build classrooms because the school is in a rented building. It added that if there is a donation to build classrooms or caravans, it would be ready to provide the teachers. This led ICCS to pursue private sector companies for the possibility of providing the needed resources. Until this support for school facilities is realized, ICCS has temporarily provided transportation for female students to enroll and attend school.

The creation of the community-based Committee had the greatest impact in communicating with the Governorate's Municipal Council and lobbying the Governorate Council. This resulted in a decision to construct a school in the Governorate's budget for the year 2019/2020.

It is important that ICCS is aware of its role, as a civil society organization, and the role of the responsible party, the Directorate of Education, to protect this right to education. It can support finding alternatives and gradual solutions; however, it is important that the responsible party does not relinquish its mandated responsibility. While significant advancements have been made, continued advocacy is required for a final solution based on the human and legal rights perspective.

### **Organizational Impact of Advocacy**

The ICCS' team noted the importance of engaging stakeholders, people whose rights were violated, with talking to decision-makers. Such engagement had an impact on achieving the objectives and results of the advocacy campaign. Perhaps this is the most important impact of this campaign on the ICCS, the change from the needs/charity-based approach to the rights-based approach adopted by the organization. The head of the Program Unit said that the advocacy grant opened a new horizon for ICCS to look at their initiatives from a different angle and adopt a rights-based approach that would facilitate the design of future initiatives and thus achieve the organization's objectives.