

Navigating change: Innovative approaches to dissemination and advocacy

CASE STUDY

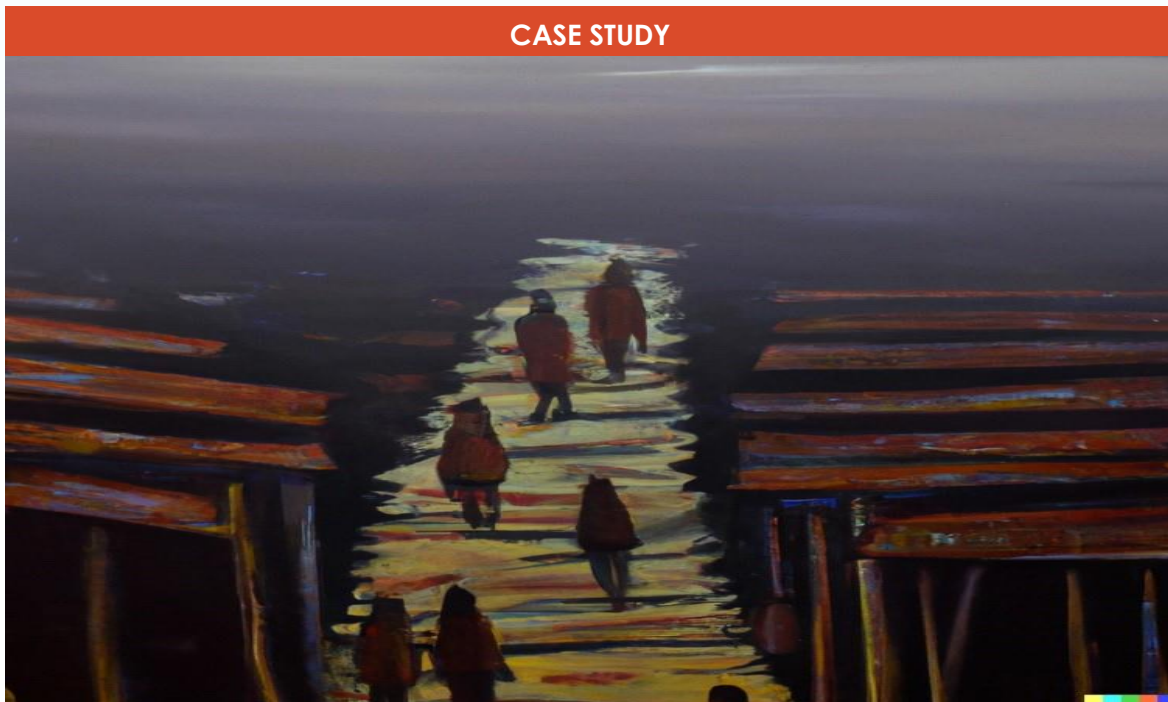


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SUMMARY

This case study reflects on the strategies for disseminating research on human rights violations against Egyptian migrant workers in Jordan. It explores collaborative initiatives with NGOs and the Jordanian government as well as policy papers and advocacy campaigns.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Migrant workers must be involved in advocacy to ensure their priorities reflect their real-world experiences and needs.

In Jordan, using international legal frameworks can be a pathway towards government engagement.

Research findings must be tailored to journalists for effective storytelling. It piques audience curiosity and promotes a better understanding of the issues.

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Addressing challenges: Approach to disseminating research on Egyptian migrant workers' rights

Research on migrant rights and human rights violations is a complex landscape where the pursuit of knowledge collides with formidable challenges. Beyond the inherent difficulties of disseminating research, the study of human rights abuses introduces an added layer of sensitivity. The delicate nature of these issues, coupled with political resistance and the shrinking space for civic discourse in different countries, amplifies the hurdles faced in conveying critical findings to the public. Nevertheless, recognising the transformative potential inherent in disseminating such research, the Information and Research Center King Hussein Foundation (IRCKHF) committed itself to navigate these complexities. This case study reflects on how IRCKHF addressed these intricate challenges in the context of their 2022 research, [published as a working paper](#), on Egyptian migrant workers in Jordan. The case study underscores the significance of advocacy and systemic change in this demanding terrain.

The research outlined the statutory laws that govern Egyptian workers in Jordan and provided insights into the difficulties they face during their time in the country. The research also revealed widespread instances of violations and exploitations experienced by Egyptian migrant workers in Jordan. The paper also identified important shortcomings in the legal framework that unintentionally exploit migrants, making them vulnerable to forced labour.

Research findings must be shared to raise awareness, inform policies and improve society. However, this process faces obstacles such as lack of accessibility because of the use of technical language, paywalls, the difficulty reaching and engaging the target audience and information overload in a saturated environment. The challenges increase if research findings are related to human rights violations due to political sensitivities surrounding human rights issues, the reluctance of authorities to acknowledge and address the violations and the shrinking civic space in most developing countries. Nevertheless, dissemination of such findings is crucial for raising awareness and fostering a collective understanding of the prevalent violations,



Government representative from the Prime Ministry, July 2023, photo credit: Bara'a Al Shabatat

thereby contributing to a broader societal consciousness. Dissemination plays a pivotal role in advocating for policy changes and legal reforms, influencing national discourse aimed at safeguarding human rights.

Recognising the pressing need for advocacy and systemic change to enhance the living conditions of migrant workers, IRCKHF took proactive measures to leverage the research findings effectively. To maximise impact, we meticulously developed a diverse array of tools for disseminating these crucial findings. This case-study aims to provide a detailed overview of the tools we implemented. In what follows, we provide an overview of the strategic approaches we employed to ensure the successful dissemination of research insights, thus contributing to the ongoing efforts to bring about positive change for migrant workers.

Egyptian workers in Jordan

IRCKHF's research delved into the migration dynamics of Egyptian workers in Jordan. The consequent working paper shed light on various facets, including the prevailing economic landscape, historical trends, and the legal framework governing their migration. Egyptian migrant workers are drawn to Jordan by the promise of enhanced economic opportunities and improved living standards. This is driven simultaneously by the challenging economic and social conditions in their home country. Cultural elements, such as customs, traditions, and social standing, further contribute to their motivation to migrate.

Egyptian workers face various challenges, particularly the negative impact of illegal contract trading and the involvement of multiple intermediaries. This has resulted in escalated travel costs and heightened hardships, placing migrant workers in vulnerable positions due to a lack of awareness about their situation in Jordan. Under the existing policies and legislation, Jordanian employers possess significant authority, enabling them to prohibit Egyptian migrant workers from seeking employment with a different employer. Additionally, they can impede their ability to return to Egypt for short vacations. Furthermore, there is a lack of effective measures in place to guarantee that these workers receive their complete entitlements.

Due to the affordability and accessibility of work permits in the agriculture sector, the majority of Egyptian migrant workers are employed in this field. However, their preference lies in the construction or service industries, where potential earnings are higher. The research findings reveal that working conditions for Egyptian migrant laborers are often deplorable. This is partly attributed to the perception of employers in Jordan that Egyptian workers are more tolerant of difficult labor conditions and willing to accept lower wages.

Universal Periodic Review

[The Universal Periodic Review \(UPR\)](#) stands as a pivotal international mechanism within the UN Council of Human Rights, dedicated to promoting and safeguarding human rights globally. This comprehensive review process involves all 47 members of the Council thoroughly examining the human rights situation of the country under review. Essential to this evaluative process is the wealth of information contributed by diverse stakeholders, ranging from NGOs and activists to research centres. Their inputs, including findings, recommendations and insights, play a crucial role in shaping the review's outcomes. As a collaborative effort, the UPR exemplifies the collective commitment of the international community to fostering human rights, ensuring transparency, and holding nations accountable for their human rights records.

Leveraging the opportunity presented by the UPR 4th cycle review of Jordan in January 2024, IRCKHF strategically employed the research findings to draft a powerful [UPR submission](#). To amplify the submission's impact, a groundbreaking collaborative effort was undertaken by jointly drafting it with [Tamkeen for Legal Aid](#), a prominent NGO dedicated to promoting and safeguarding the rights of migrant workers. This joint submission marks a historic milestone, representing the first of its kind in advocating for the rights of Egyptian migrant workers in Jordan. The submission delivers a comprehensive set of recommendations aimed at putting an end to exploitation, discrimination, and hardships faced by Egyptian migrant workers. The report was referenced in the [Summary of Stakeholders Submissions on Jordan](#), which was compiled by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights for the UN Human Rights Council Working Group during the 45th session of the Universal Periodic Review. The citation highlighted concerns about the inability of migrant workers to change jobs without their employers' permission, which leaves them vulnerable to potential penalties, detention, and deportation.

Significantly, the summary also included various recommendations for the report, such as advocating for modifications to the Agricultural Workers Law to include all individuals employed in the agricultural industry. Furthermore, the report highlighted the crucial need to enhance the capability of labour inspectors for consistent surveillance of working conditions and a strong enforcement mechanism to



UPR event with the Government of Jordan, photo credit: Bar'a Al Shabatat

guarantee the efficient execution of sanctions for infringements on workers' rights.

Upon the conclusion of the Jordan review process, the UN Human Rights Council will issue the "outcome report," a document that encapsulates the recommendations put forth by participating states for Jordan. The critical report serves as a roadmap for the subsequent five years, during which the government of Jordan is tasked with implementing the approved recommendations. This period of implementation sets the stage for progress and improvements in the human rights landscape of Jordan, including the rights of migrant workers, culminating in the subsequent 5th UPR cycle. The outcome report, therefore, not only signifies the international community's collective input but also serves as a catalyst for tangible and positive changes in Jordan's human rights practices.

The adoption of this approach by IRCKHF is rooted in its strategic recognition of the significant importance accorded to the UPR process by [the government of Jordan](#). This recognition is substantiated by the issuance of [multiple circulars by the Prime Minister](#). They serve as official documents that contain specific guidance for all ministries and public entities to implement the UPR-approved recommendations.

The UPR submission was presented during a collaborative meeting with the human rights units at the Prime Ministry, attended by representatives from key ministries, including Interior, Labour, and Foreign Affairs, along with other relevant entities. This strategic engagement aimed to ensure that the findings and recommendations reached a broad spectrum of government departments responsible for crucial aspects related to migrant workers' rights.

On 10 January 2024, the Government of Jordan endorsed 11 recommendations pertaining to the issues raised in the UPR submission during the interactive session at the UN Human Rights Council. These recommendations call for ensuring that migrant workers can exercise their labour rights effectively by facilitating access to competent authorities to lodge complaints or grievances against employers. This includes enhancing access to justice for migrant workers by strengthening protections against exploitation and abuse, improving working conditions, and enforcing regulations on fair recruitment practices. Additionally, there are calls to increase inspection visits to guarantee worker protection and provide a safe and healthy work environment. Measures to ensure collective bargaining rights for migrant workers and criminalizing discrimination by law enforcement and public officials against migrants and refugees are also highlighted.

Jordan has a five-year timeframe to implement the recommendations and the implementation will be assessed afterwards in the 5th UPR Cycle. During this period, NGOs and activists will have the opportunity to monitor progress and remind the government of its obligations towards migrant workers. If tangible improvements are not observed on the ground, stakeholders will advocate for necessary action to be taken to fulfil these obligations effectively.

Collaborative policy paper

Following the productive meeting with the Human Rights Unit at the Prime Ministry, IRCKHF took a proactive step by drafting a comprehensive [policy brief](#) that encapsulates key recommendations. The brief focuses on addressing critical challenges confronted by Egyptian migrant workers. While preparing the paper, IRCKHF prioritised maintaining open communication with a group of Egyptian workers actively engaged on social media platforms and involved in unorganised initiatives to support the broader Egyptian community in overcoming problems and challenges. Additionally, a validation session was conducted with a group of migrant workers to address the concerns raised in the paper and formulate alternative policies aimed at improving the overall state of workers' rights. The sessions emphasised issues such as families, contract trading, exploitation by intermediaries, abusive practices by Jordanian employers and the mobility of migrants between Egypt and Jordan. These specific topics were selected in response to the expressed concerns and priorities of migrant workers.

Moreover, recognising the strength in unity, IRCKHF strategically formed [a coalition](#) by partnering with three prominent NGOs in order to validate and disseminate the policy brief. This included NGOs which specialize in labour rights, economic rights, and migrant workers: Tamkeen for Legal Aid, Workers Home, and Phenix Center for Economics & Informatics Studies. This collaborative approach enhances the policy paper's impact, leveraging the esteemed reputation and standing of these NGOs in their respective fields.



A coalition meeting, August 2023. Photo credit: Bara'a Al Shabatat

IRCKHF implemented a thoughtful strategy to garner the support of the Jordanian Government by establishing a critical connection between the rights of Egyptian migrant workers and Jordan's global reputation concerning contemporary forms of slavery and anti-human trafficking efforts. This strategic move was informed by various international reports evaluating legislative frameworks and operational procedures related to migrant labor, forced labor, modern slavery, and human trafficking. Notably, the [Global Slavery Index](#), a prominent source, ranked Jordan 23rd in 2023 for incidences of contemporary enslavement, with a prevalence rate of 10 per 1,000

individuals. Additionally, the 2022 [Trafficking in Persons Report](#) by the U.S. State Department categorized Jordan under Tier 2, signifying the government's ongoing efforts while noting that it is not meeting all minimum standards to eliminate human trafficking.

This approach piqued the interest of both the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the policy recommendations. During the [launch](#) of the policy paper in December 2023, attended by the Ministry of Labour, the Assistant Secretary General at the Ministry of Labour made assurances that labour inspectors would receive instructions to investigate abusive and arbitrary practices by Jordanian employers. Furthermore, the Ministry committed to a thorough examination of the other recommendations outlined in the policy paper. This positive engagement reflects a promising step toward addressing the challenges faced by Egyptian migrant workers in Jordan.

Networking and collaborative initiatives

Egyptian migrants face significant restrictions in the public domain in Jordan, including limitations on organisation, union activities, and the prohibition of any informal gatherings. Thus, it was challenging to connect with a group of Egyptian workers who could organise any structured group. Turning to social media enabled us to reach Egyptian activists in Jordan who manage Facebook pages and groups related to the Egyptian community in Jordan while also being active on their personal pages.

During our research, we found Mr. X¹ a young Egyptian who came to Jordan to work and improve his economic situation 14 years ago. Driven by the dream of travelling outside his country, much like any young person seeking to secure their future, he initially intended to work in Jordan for a year or two and then return. However, he found himself compelled to stay in Jordan to provide a decent life for his family. Working in various places, his involvement with a local radio station in Jordan and his awareness of the problems facing the Egyptian community motivated him to launch an initiative to assist his fellow Egyptians.

This initiative took the form of a Facebook page, aptly named "The Egyptian Community," aiming to serve as a link between Mr. X and his followers. The page allowed followers to inquire about any topic and provided a space to voice their complaints and share experiences, especially since many Egyptian workers are unaware of their rights and obligations. Understanding legal complexities is often challenging for this semi-skilled workforce.

Throughout the course of the year, our collaboration with Mr. X proved highly fruitful, culminating in the development of multiple outputs aimed at garnering essential support. This collaborative effort played a pivotal role in the careful selection of issues that hold paramount importance for Egyptian workers, ensuring that our initiatives are aligned with their pressing concerns. Furthermore,

¹ In this paper, the pseudonym (Mr. X) is employed to refer to the Egyptian worker mentioned, with the intention of safeguarding their privacy.

Mr. X's extensive network facilitated meaningful connections with other organisations, earning him invitations to various events focused on Egyptian migrant workers.

Initially, our plan was to conduct interactive sessions directly through social media, envisioning a dynamic engagement strategy. However, circumstances prompted a strategic shift. This alteration was implemented to circumvent potential restrictions or threats to Mr. X's continued stay in Jordan, thus demonstrating our commitment to adaptability and the safety of our collaborators. In navigating these challenges, we remained steadfast in our dedication to fostering open dialogue and advocating for the rights of Egyptian workers.

Additionally, Mr. X actively contributed to a workshop designed for a group of journalists, offering valuable insights into the major issues confronting Egyptian labour in Jordan. This interactive session not only served as an educational platform but also strengthened our outreach efforts, empowering journalists with the knowledge and perspective needed to amplify the voices of Egyptian workers. Through these diverse initiatives, our collaboration with Mr. X has been instrumental in advancing our collective mission toward improved conditions and rights for Egyptian migrant workers in Jordan.

Media engagement

Experienced journalists specialising in human rights issues fulfil a vital role in bringing attention to matters that could be overlooked or marginalised. Their proficiency allows them to unravel the intricacies of human rights violations, ensuring that these critical narratives are not overlooked. Through amplifying the voices of the marginalised, fostering public awareness, and holding authorities accountable, these journalists serve as advocates, educators, and catalysts for positive change. Their contributions extend beyond reporting news; they actively engage in the advancement of human rights by championing ethical reporting, providing nuanced perspectives, and promoting international collaboration. In essence, their work plays a pivotal role in shaping a more informed and compassionate global society.

Recognising the limited media coverage of Egyptian workers and the unique challenges they face, IRCKHF strategically engaged journalists to raise awareness about the research findings. This multifaceted approach involved a training workshop where IRCKHF shared key research insights with journalists, emphasising crucial issues impacting Egyptian workers. Notably, the workshop featured direct interactions between journalists and Egyptian workers, allowing first-hand expressions of struggles and concerns.

Following the workshop, IRCKHF launched a journalism competition to motivate journalists to delve deeper into topics related to Egyptian workers in Jordan. The competition garnered [17 submissions](#) from journalists eager to contribute to this vital discourse. A panel of three experienced arbitrators in human rights journalism was appointed to review and evaluate the submissions, ultimately selecting the top three articles. This comprehensive strategy aimed to foster informed and impactful journalism, shedding light on the challenges faced by Egyptian workers

and promoting a nuanced understanding of their experiences in Jordan.

The submissions in the journalism competition covered a range of legal issues and diverse social stories. Articles covered labour violations, termination disputes and non-payment of wages by employers. They also delved into concerns regarding intermediaries, such as permit issuance and termination notices, in addition to addressing problems related to contract trading.

The [first-place-winning report](#) cast a spotlight on the conditions faced by Egyptian workers in the agriculture and construction sectors. It underscored the myriad challenges they encounter, including deficiencies in public safety and health systems, a lack of protective measures, diminished wages and the withholding of crucial documents like passports. Moreover, the report delved into legal gaps and loopholes that impede workers from accessing their fundamental rights.

In second place was a [report](#) which explored the reality of day labourers and contract trading in Amman. This article highlighted the phenomenon of Egyptian workers congregating at specific traffic signals, where they are recruited for various tasks offering a daily wage. These tasks spanned from concrete placement and removal of construction debris to kitchen painting and leak repairs.

The [third-place-winning report](#) concentrated on a social and legal issue concerning the educational opportunities for the children of Egyptian workers residing in Jordan. It addressed the challenges encountered in schools, such as cultural and linguistic disparities, alongside financial burdens, particularly evident when students aspired to pursue higher education in Jordan. In this context, university tuition fees, already high, posed an even greater hurdle for non-Jordanian students.



Competition winners, December 2023, photo credit: Bara'a Al Shabatat

Digital platforms

Digital platforms play a pivotal role in today's interconnected world, serving as the backbone of our global information and communication infrastructure. These platforms enable seamless connectivity, fostering collaboration and communication on an unprecedented scale. From social media networks that facilitate real-time interactions, IRKHF is

leveraging digital platforms to mobilise knowledge for positive social change. IRCKHF's work can be accessed on our main [website](#), [Haqqi](#), our resource portal, and other social media platforms [Meta](#), [LinkedIn](#), [X](#) and [Instagram](#).

Haqqi

Haqqi is a website created by IRCKHF for all to access information on legislation, research and media about human rights issues and the Sustainable Development Goals in Jordan. Haqqi means 'my right' in Arabic and is used to symbolise education others about their human rights. The dissemination of articles on the Haqqi platform to mobilise knowledge represents a transformative initiative for social positive change. By extending the reach of Haqqi's content to mobile devices, the platform taps into the ubiquity of smartphones to bring enlightening articles directly to the fingertips of a diverse audience. This strategic dissemination strategy not only amplifies the impact of Haqqi's content but also ensures accessibility for individuals across various demographics. This approach can serve as a catalyst to empower individuals with knowledge that can drive positive societal transformation, making information a catalyst for meaningful change on a global scale.

Social media campaign

The centre initiated a social media campaign titled "[Haduta Masreya](#)," translating to "Egyptian Tale," to spotlight the challenges faced by Egyptian migrant workers in Jordan. The campaign delved into critical issues such as the "Kafala" sponsorship system, the role of intermediaries, discrimination, restrictions, family reunion and healthcare insurance. Mr. X presented awareness messages for Egyptian workers within the campaign. Unfortunately, due to the ongoing war in Gaza, only three posts were shared, prompting a temporary pause. The campaign is slated to resume when the timing is deemed more suitable.



Cleanness certificates facilitate exploitation.



Egyptian migrant workers



Limitations to change occupations



Refused home visits



Sponsorship/Kafala



Lack of occupational safety



Lack of social security and insurance



Jordan denies entry to worker's family



Red Sea ports (Nuweiba-Aqaba) are the only entry and exit points to Jordan.

Moving forward: podcasts and storytelling

Sayed Zahran, a vibrant storyteller and Egyptian migrant worker, possesses a fervent dedication to elevating the narratives of marginalised communities. His invaluable support played a pivotal role during the research conducted by the IRCKHF on Egyptian migrant workers. Now, Sayed is poised for an exciting collaboration with [Podcasti](#), a prominent podcast company, to create a show uniquely tailored to the rich and diverse experiences of Egyptian migrant workers in Jordan. This endeavour promises to shed light on their journeys, challenges and triumphs, amplifying their voices and fostering a deeper understanding of their lives within the broader context of migration. Together, Sayed and Podcasti aim to weave a compelling narrative that resonates with audiences, fostering empathy and awareness surrounding the unique perspectives of the Egyptian community.

IRCKHF's inventive method of sharing research findings on Egyptian migrant workers in Jordan emphasizes the crucial convergence of knowledge, advocacy and systemic transformation. IRCKHF effectively addressed the challenges posed by human rights violations, political sensitivities and limited opportunities for civic engagement. We employed a strategic approach that involved inclusive advocacy, utilized international mechanisms such as the UPR, collaborated with NGOs, utilized social media platforms and empowered journalists. The diverse methods of spreading information, such as a policy paper, journalism competition and a mobile knowledge platform, demonstrate a thorough approach to tackling the difficulties encountered by Egyptian migrant workers. Partnerships such as the podcast featuring Sayed Zahran, emphasise a dedication to amplifying voices, promoting comprehension, and generating long-lasting influence on the frequently neglected accounts of migrant communities. Our work demonstrates the significant impact that innovative methods can have on research related to migrant rights. It highlights the importance of involving various stakeholders in order to bring about positive transformations.

Partners

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(2024) Jordan: MIDEQ
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Coventry University, 2024

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