



6 Minutes: Community Organizing in Amman, Jordan

In December 2015, Nisreen Haj Ahmad, co-founder of Ahel, a community organizing institute, reflected on the learning retreat her organization had hosted earlier in the year. The event was attended by human rights activists from Jordan, Palestine and Lebanon who had been invited by Ahel to gather and share their community organizing campaign experiences with one another. It was also a chance for Ahel to assess its *alrrafqat hamla* or campaign companionship—the term it used to describe the assistance and guidance (coaching) Ahel provided to its client organizations during their campaigns—and to consider future improvements to its own processes. Though Haj Ahmad was interested in learning about all of them, few were as dear to her as those affecting the residents of Amman, Jordan.

A Palestinian who had grown up in Amman, Haj Ahmad was an attorney who served as a legal advisor for the Palestinian Negotiations Support Unit, focused on settling the Palestine/Israel conflict. But after six years of fruitlessness, she had become frustrated with her work. She was ready for a change and in 2007, she enrolled in the mid-career program at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Out of curiosity, Haj Ahmad registered for Professor Marshall Ganz's course on community organizing. "Before that, I did not have any idea what community organizing was," she said.¹ During the course, Haj Ahmad and her fellow students learned about a framework for building civic leadership capacity (see **Exhibit 1** for a brief description). "I heard Professor Ganz talk about community organizing campaigns in a way that builds individuals' power but also uses it for a common cause. That course created space for me to reflect on my own journey," said Haj Ahmad. She immersed herself in organizing at the Kennedy School and even recruited Harvard students to commemorate the 60th anniversary of The Nakba.^a It was the year of a U.S. presidential election and the excitement energized Haj Ahmad. "I saw Americans mobilized all over the country," she said.

In mid-2008, Haj Ahmad returned to Amman and a short time later she received an e-mail from Ganz requesting she take his place introducing the concept of public narrative at a leadership workshop in Qatar. After the

^a The Nakba—"the catastrophe" in Arabic—marked the 1948 displacement of more than 700,000 Palestinians and the establishment of the Jewish state following the Israeli War of Independence.

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workshop, Haj Ahmad realized that she had found her calling. Still, she needed paying work and took a job with the Columbia University Middle East Research Center. But even as she was acclimating to the new role, Haj Ahmad remained committed to community organizing and on her own time, began to explore ways to develop civic capacity in Jordan. “Every time I had vacation I would use the time to run trainings on community organizing and work with activists,” she said.

In the summer of 2009, Haj Ahmad met Samar Dudin, a cultural activist, educator and theater artist, at a panel discussion about youth empowerment. A few months later Dudin was named Regional Director and head of programs for Ruwwad Al Tanmeya (Ruwwad), a nonprofit community development organization based in Amman that worked with youth in marginalized neighborhoods through civic engagement education and grassroots organizing. She had been researching community organizing and suggested the approach to Ruwwad’s chairman. “I recommended to Ruwwad’s chairman [that the organization adopt] the key objective of finding ways to organize and engage the community, to build their power around issues that concern them such as education, drug abuse and domestic violence,” said Dudin.²

In January 2010 their paths crossed again and Dudin and Haj Ahmad began discussing the possibility of operationalizing Ganz’ framework. Dudin invited Haj Ahmad to conduct a community organizing workshop for her Ruwwad team in April 2010 to introduce the community organizing methodology. After the workshop, Haj Ahmad decided to make a more significant commitment. She quit her job, tapped her savings—\$20,000—and gave herself six months to learn everything she could about community organizing. “I decided I would do this work and if it brings me income great, and if not, I have six months,” she said.

In June 2010, Haj Ahmad coordinated a three-day community organizing workshop sponsored by the Amman Institute of Urban Development, a non profit “think and do” tank focused on urban governance and sustainable community development. Haj Ahmad recruited 30 of the most influential leaders in the city—including Dudin—to train as community organizing coaches. “I attended the workshop to train as a coach because I wanted to learn the methodology of using social movement tactics and strategies to launch campaigns,” she said. Soon after, Dudin and Haj Ahmad decided they would work together to launch a campaign. “We said, ‘Let’s put this to practice,’” said Haj Ahmad.

Community Organizing in Jabal Al Natheef

Jabal Al Natheef was an urban community in Amman of 54,000, many, Palestinian refugees. The community faced significant challenges, including crowded living conditions and substandard housing, a high rate of youth unemployment, a 17% school dropout rate, higher than average illiteracy rates, widespread drug abuse, and domestic violence. Indeed, in 2005 Jabal Al Natheef lacked key public services, including a police station, a medical center, a post office, and recreation areas for children. After its founding in 2005, Ruwwad began to offer services and support to the community; In the late 2000s, Ruwwad partnered with a local law firm to offer free legal aid services to the community and lobbied the Jordanian government to establish a local police station and set up a post office. “Ruwwad enabled the establishment of absent services for the community,” said Dudin.

Though in Jabal Al Natheef—as in Amman and Jordan generally—citizens traditionally first turned to their families and tribes for social support, the community had become reliant on a service system that encouraged them to

be passive beneficiaries—which the Jabal Al Natheef community had come to expect Ruwwad to provide. The organization’s leadership wanted to “seed” a process that would allow the community to more fully participate and help address wider social issues and problems by building its own grassroots leadership and capacity for collective action. “Ruwwad needed a methodology that could enhance community participation in defining and creating social change,” said Dudin.

Choosing a Campaign and Establishing the Core Team

In October 2010, Haj Ahmad and Dudin launched a community organizing campaign in Jabal Al Natheef. Haj Ahmad served as campaign coach and Dudin recruited community members and Ruwwad employees to serve on the core team—the leadership team that would oversee the entire campaign (see **Exhibit 2** for a list of the core team members).

Dudin recruited the core team through one-on-one meetings with prospective members, a community organizing tactic intended to build relationships, learn of individual and community needs, resources, and challenges, and identify potential leadership. To ensure development of constituency capacity, Haj Ahmad advised that the majority of those recruited be part of the Jabal Al Natheef community rather than employees of Ruwwad. Accordingly, the core team was comprised of two mothers, one male school principal, one female school principal, one librarian and four Ruwwad employees, including Dudin, who served as campaign coordinator. They each agreed to attend weekly meetings, participate in trainings and initiate the campaign launch. In the meantime, Dudin began working to secure funding for the campaign.^b

The core team met to discuss the challenges facing the community. “You don’t ask, ‘What is the issue?’ You ask, ‘Who are the people in pain?’” said Dudin. “We did an initial assessment of the problems in the neighborhoods, mainly addressing the high rate of school drop outs,” said volunteer core team member Mais Iqrsusi, then Program Manager of the Arab Education Forum with a deep background in youth activism.³ Iqrsusi noted that upon receiving poor grades, many students left school, frustrated. “Part of the problem was that up through the 5th grade, students were automatically advanced from one grade to the next, even if their reading and writing skills were very poor,” she explained. There was concern within the community that the government’s policy of automatically promoting students regardless of their academic achievement was eroding literacy rates. “The policy is meant to keep kids in school. To keep them from dropping out to work,” said Haj Ahmad. “The source of the problem of illiteracy is the system itself and to solve it, you either need to change the policy of the government, hold the teachers accountable or collaborate with the community to find a solution,” she said.

^b Only later, in early 2011, was Dudin’s funding proposal to launch a reading for pleasure campaign accepted by the Anna Lindh Fund—an early supporter of Ruwwad’s Child Literature Project. “Nisreen and I organized colleagues and gained their commitment before any financial support for the activities came through,” said Dudin. “The work we did was a result of the trust and belief in the power of the methodology and the urgency in addressing the issue as framed by the community itself,” said Dudin.

While conducting their research, they also learned that illiteracy was an intergenerational problem: many parents hadn't gone to school or had dropped out at an early age. "Jabal Al Natheef is a very poor neighborhood in Amman. People have low incomes so they often work in handicrafts or labor," explained Irqsusi. "Women are usually housewives who left school early because the society is traditional," she said.

Over the years, various non-profit- and government-sponsored initiatives had been launched to try to improve the literacy rate, particularly among children. Public and private libraries were opened by the government, philanthropists and corporations and both the government and public schools held reading competitions to provide children with an incentive to read. Ruwwad, too, had developed a children's literature project to address the issue but it focused largely on creating library-based activities and providing funding for books.

In November 2010, Haj Ahmad and Dudin held a campaign conceptualization workshop (originally titled Story, Structure, Strategy workshop) designed to help the core team articulate a story of why the campaign mattered, develop the strategic objectives of the campaign, and design an appropriate campaign structure. Those on the team shared their [personal] narratives, then, created a 'story of us'—of those in the room—and a "story of now," detailing the opportunity for urgent action which became the public narrative for a literacy campaign in Jabal Al Natheef (see **Exhibit 3** for a translation of the narrative).

The public narrative told the story of Jabal Al Natheef, rooted in the community's values, diversity, challenges and aspirations. Team members reflected on their own experiences with reading, some positive, some not. "In many homes, child abuse is related to studying. [Parents may] hit their children because they need to study for an exam, for example. So reading a book is not connected to pleasure—it is connected to tension between parents and children," explained Irqsusi. The core team wanted to make reading enjoyable and believed that parents would support the goal because they valued academic achievement for their children. "Their main concern was that their children had weak reading and writing skills and would drop out of school if they didn't have more support," said Dudin. She cited research that related literacy development to reading for pleasure and noted the importance of engaging with a caring adult in conversations about reading. "If parents enjoy reading for themselves and spend time reading aloud with their children, the children will be motivated to read. We knew we had to focus on the joy of reading to enable the development of a culture of reading," she said. Accordingly, their public narrative contained a clear call for action: to create a community of readers so that their children would develop the joy of reading and learning.

The 6 Minutes Campaign

The core team developed a theory of change^c for its campaign: that for children to be motivated to read, parents themselves should read, thereby becoming role models. The campaign would be designed to bring people together to collaborate to transform the reading habits of their community.

^c Theory of change is a description of how and why an entity believes it can create social change.

The core team adopted 6 Minutes as its campaign title, derived from its chief goal: to encourage the families of Jabal Al Natheef to commit to reading for six minutes each day.^d “It sounded interesting to focus on time as key investment in changing a habit,” said Dudin.

After identifying the problem, a possible solution and theory of change, the core team set overall campaign goals and tactics. “The main tactic of the campaign was to ask people to sign a pledge that they would read six minutes per day, for pleasure,” said Irqsusi (see **Exhibit 4** for a translation of the pledge). They set a strategic goal of obtaining 5,000 pledges: “We wanted to get about 10% of the community to pledge,” said Irqsusi.

The core team designed the 6 Minutes Campaign to have four campaign peaks (milestones), each of which would create the capacity to build to the next peak, culminating in a final peak (see **Exhibits 5** and **6** for a campaign timeline and campaign peaks, respectively). This approach enabled them to develop the resources to achieve their final goal even as the work of the campaign was unfolding—paving the road while walking on it—and each peak (and the focused energy needed to achieve it) took the campaign to a new level of capacity. The plan was to begin with a foundation period, then a kick-off to launch the campaign followed by the achievement of several goals along the way and concluding with a large-scale celebration—the final peak. Each core team would have a set of metrics to track progress toward measurable outcomes including the number of participants they would recruit, the number of sub-teams they would form, and the quantity of signed pledges they would collect. This would enable them to evaluate their progress at each peak, learn from their successes and failures, adapt their tactics, and celebrate their achievements.

Key to the organizing framework for the campaign was the use of a “snowflake” structure, which called on the core team to form constituency teams (first tier); subsequently, the first tier teams would form sub-teams (second tier) which would in turn create third tier sub-teams and so on. This was part of the community organizing framework of leadership to “enable others to achieve shared purpose under conditions of uncertainty” (refer again to **Exhibit 1**). This structure posed a cultural challenge in that it decentralized power and decision-making in a cultural setting in which leadership was traditionally conceptualized as residing with one person, most often male, who told others what to do.

Consequently, the core team recruited five first tier constituency teams: a male teachers team, a female teachers team, a librarians team, a mothers team and a youth team. The core team members were each assigned to coach and/or coordinate a first tier constituency team. While some coaches had been part of the original core team and had participated in the campaign conceptualization workshop, others had joined later and had no previous experience with the campaign or with community organizing. To improve their coaching skills, they completed coaching training so they could better provide strategic, skill-based and motivational coaching to their team.

Each member of the core team was responsible for recruiting at least five members to serve on their first tier constituency team. Once recruited, first tier constituency team members were invited to participate in a two-day

^d The six minute target was a length of time initially inspired by a widely quoted but ultimately erroneous statistic that said that outside of school, on average, an Arab child read for pleasure only six minutes per year.

community organizing training in January 2011 to prepare them to create a sub-campaign to mobilize members of their constituency. Each team's coach helped members—called organizers—learn the community organizing pedagogy.

At the training, each constituency team learned to design their own campaign story, strategy and structure. They asked themselves, first, why did they care, why should the community care, and why is action needed now—thereby developing their public narrative. Then they devised their strategy by asking themselves why their community was not reading, how their community would look different if they were reading, what resources they had, and how they could turn those resources into the power they needed to achieve their goal. In other words, what needs to happen for reading to be part of the daily culture and social life of those in Jabal Al Natheef?

The Mothers' Team

I felt we created a sisterhood. At first I was shy and timid, but the team encouraged me and gave me hope. When they started reading, I wanted to have the courage to read. When they started writing, I wanted to start writing.

—Leila Thiyab, Member of the Mothers Team

The mothers first tier constituency team (mothers team) was comprised of seven mothers from Jabal Al Natheef and coached by Dudin. At the community organizing workshop, each mother shared her 'story of self,' a narrative of her challenges with reading, where she got her hope that she could do something about it, and why she cared enough to join the campaign (see **Exhibit 7** for an example). Many of their stories reflected painful experiences with reading and shame about not having finished school. Some said their lack of self-worth and self-value inhibited them from reading to themselves and to their children. At the same time, the mothers valued education and reading and said they felt the best way to instill a love for reading was to model and experience reading with their children. Their children, they said, fueled their hope.

The mothers then brainstormed: what type of activity would create a safe environment and give them the confidence to become model readers for their children? They decided that each member of the mothers team would recruit five to seven mothers who would meet once a week over Arabic coffee at someone's home to discuss their favorite weekly readings. Each mother would also create her own reading collection, a documentation of her own readings that would later be compiled into the Mothers Reading Collection. The reading collection would serve as documentation of the reading they had completed. Their goal was to get 1,000 pledges signed. "Did they know it would be hard to achieve? Yes," said Haj Ahmad. "There is a psychological barrier to public activism here. And there is inhibition by the women themselves. But I didn't develop the tactic—they did," she said.

Challenges

The mothers team began recruiting organizers through one-on-one meetings for their second tier sub-team, and holding weekly meetings. Almost immediately, the mothers faced their first challenge: their lack of experience with formal communication. Most of the mothers had a small social network because their relationships were limited to their neighbors and family members. Also, most mothers did not have experience participating in formal meetings, setting and following an agenda, or facilitating and evaluating key learning during a meeting. The moth-

ers also had difficulty understanding some of the community organizing concepts which necessitated additional training.

The mothers were also faced with a social dilemma: in Jabal Al Natheef it was considered ill mannered to enter a stranger's home, but the campaign was based on moving from one mother's home to another to conduct the coffee meetings. "This is a conservative society in that you cannot invite a stranger to your home," explained Irqusi. "It was a taboo," she said. To resolve the problem, the mothers decided to pair two women who knew each other with two who did not know one another, to visit a home together. Once acquainted, the mothers welcomed one another wholeheartedly. After that, the mothers started building new tiers and training them in conducting the 'coffee readings.'



A mothers team "coffee reading" meeting. Source: Ruwwad Al Tanmeya. Used by permission.

To create a safe reading environment for the mothers—whose reading levels and educational backgrounds varied greatly—they established a meeting framework that encouraged the women to form personal relationships. For example, each meeting began with the mothers sharing personal updates about their lives. Then, the women would take turns sharing a portion of a reading they had completed and lead a brief discussion. Each meeting concluded with a frank evaluation of the session: what went well and what could be improved during the next meeting.

By July 2011, the mothers team had collected 730 signed pledges and had 73 organizers. More than 350 mothers had attended coffee readings. More importantly, the women developed time management, meeting facilitation, coaching and relationship building skills and formed strong, personal bonds. One mother said, “I have found a new sisterhood.” Indeed, the campaign allowed women to meet other women beyond their own families or neighbors—some, for the first time—and gain support and encouragement from these new friends. “What the campaign achieved on a social level for the mothers was of higher value than what it achieved on a literacy level,” said Iqrsusi. Dudin agreed and told the story of one team member:

When she told her story of self, [one mother], Um Salah, shared how at age 15 she slept one night with her school bag under her pillow and she woke up the next morning to be told that she could not go to school. Now, a mother of 3 boys, she was afraid to show her incompetency in reading in front of her children which made school follow up very difficult for her. By the end of the campaign, Um Salah emerged not only as a leader in the mothers team but as the catalyst for the expansion of the mothers team to many mothers who related to her story and who were able to transform their fears to action.

Results

On January 15, 2012, 73 organizers from the mothers’ team gathered for their final peak to celebrate their accomplishments. By the end of the campaign they had collected signed pledges from 1,739 people who collectively read 3,400 articles and books. Throughout the campaign, the teams had collected inspirational writings that the mothers produced. They turned the collection into a booklet and asked the team members for one final commitment: to distribute five booklets to five mothers who were not part of the campaign. In total, 350 books were distributed with the hope that it would encourage those mothers to read. “The mothers team was the most successful, the most expanded,” said Iqrsusi. “They developed a strong tactic.”

Female Teachers’ Team

The female teachers first tier constituency team (female teachers team), coached by Noor Awwad, a Ruwwad employee, was comprised of six women—five teachers from a local primary school and one mother.

During the training, the team had decided that encouraging reading for pleasure should be the dual responsibility of parents and teachers and agreed that if there were a collaborative effort between mothers and teachers to create an environment that encouraged reading, then children would practice reading for fun at school and at home. They planned to design a campaign that would employ interactive mother-child activities and a reading competition to encourage reading.

They recruited and organized thirty mothers and teachers into four sub-teams and set an ambitious goal: get signed pledges from 700 adults and a promise from 150 children to read six minutes a day for pleasure through the end of the school year. Each team would also be responsible for designing an activity.

First, though, they needed to understand why the children of Jabal Al Natheef did not read for enjoyment and what reading activities would be most effective in inspiring reading. Ruwwad hired Dr. Hala Hammad, an early childhood education and parenting expert, to help the mothers team understand why reading for pleasure

was essential for literacy development. Together they created three key campaign tactics. First, mothers would be invited to visit the primary school to read books to their children's classes. Second, mothers would be encouraged to take their children for weekly library visits to read and borrow books and participate in art activities. Third, the team would sponsor a reading competition where students would be asked to read books and answer quiz questions composed by the mothers. All three activities were structured as competitions to provide the children with an incentive to participate.

Challenges

As the teams formed, tensions between the teachers and mothers flared. Although the teachers had requested the mothers' involvement, the teachers were reluctant to have the mothers playing an active role in the campaign. They asked: "How could a mother who never graduated from high school come in the classroom and read for the class? How could a mother write questions for the reading competition quiz?" The mothers became defensive and felt they could not stand up for themselves, fearful that the teachers would retaliate against their children.

Over time, as the mothers and teachers got to know each other during the weekly meetings, tensions eased. Mothers and teachers took turns facilitating the meetings, modeling a collaborative—rather than authoritative—leadership style. In addition, the mothers received specialized training on how to read a story to a classroom and how to write reading comprehension questions, which increased the teachers' confidence in the mothers' ability to participate in the campaign.



The female teachers team, meeting at a neighborhood school. Source: Ruwwad Al Tanmeya. Used by permission.

Results

All three campaign tactics were successful. Mothers attended their children's classes and shared stories with their children. The students were ecstatic, eager for their mothers to come to class and read. The students also participated in the reading competition, helped each other read, read at home with their families and documented all their readings. Lastly, mothers and students visited the library and reflected on the reading together by doing arts and crafts projects.

When the campaign concluded on June 5, 2011, the team had met all of its goals—700 adult pledges signed, 150 students signed promises to read and more than 50 mothers participated. Beyond the numbers, the team felt it has successfully empowered children and their mothers. For example, a second grade student who struggled with reading begged her teacher to invite her mother to read to the class. Though her mother was illiterate, the teacher extended the invitation and welcomed the mother, who told the class a folk tale. Her mother's attendance encouraged the student to participate in class readings.

The female teachers team completed its campaign before the other constituencies' teams, so they met to consider whether to re-strategize and scale the campaign or end their efforts. After reflecting on the success of their campaign, they decided to try to expand. But as a newly-formed mothers team began recruiting new members, there was immediate resistance from the original team members, who felt they had fulfilled their commitment. Re-launching the campaign would also mean training new teachers in community organizing and the team lacked both the time and capacity. After much deliberation, the team decided that they would not scale the campaign, but would continue inviting mothers to read in classrooms and continue with the reading and library activities in the new school year. Though the teachers did not expand the campaign, their commitment to continuing the reading programs signaled their success and affirmed the importance of the mother-teacher relationship to encourage children to read for fun.

Male Teachers' Team

The male teachers first tier constituency team (male teachers team) was comprised of three male teachers, one mother and one Ruwwad employee. Eager to contribute to the success of the overall campaign, the teachers hypothesized that children did not read for pleasure in school because teachers and parents were too busy to create enjoyable activities and readings. They decided to create a "Reading for Fun" toolkit that would provide teachers and parents with interactive activities and methods to develop children's love of reading. To meet its goal, the team wanted to recruit 30 teachers who could encourage 400 students to use the "Reading for Fun" toolkit.

Challenges

The male teachers team was fraught with challenges from the start. The teachers did not want to use the community organizing framework and complained that they were too busy to attend regular weekly meetings, preferring to meet only when 'things needed to be done.' Some members also disrupted the meetings by arriving

late and using mobile phones during the meetings—clear violations of the campaign’s norms.^e They also objected to the methodology for recruiting others into the campaign; when asked to do so, the teachers objected, saying that because they themselves did not live in the Jabal Al Natheef community they did not know people to recruit. Finally, though the teachers were adamant about developing a toolkit, they were hesitant to involve people from the community which effectively turned the campaign into a service project.

Results

After considering a recommendation from the coaches, the core team decided that the male teachers team should be dissolved due to their resistance to the community organizing framework and the difficulty of recruiting new members—though they were offered the opportunity to continue on as volunteers with the campaign. “The male teachers were waiting for someone to give them instructions on what to do. They didn’t understand that they needed to create the activity and make it happen,” said Irqsusi.

Librarians Team

*This campaign pushed me to pick up a pen and write a story.
It proves that it is not about education, but about creativity, knowledge and the thirst to learn.*
Nader Al Kout, Member of the Librarians Team

Two librarians, two Ruwwad employees and a mother were recruited to form the librarians first tier constituency team (librarians team). The team grappled with several questions: ‘Why don’t children read for pleasure at the library?’ ‘Books are available, so how do we get their attention?’ ‘How can we make reading fun?’

The team concluded that if reading was interactive the children would be more likely to enjoy it. They wanted to do more than simply host a library event; they felt that a community dimension was critical for the campaign, and wanted to create interactive activities that the children and mothers could work on together.

Immediately, they realized they were a resource-rich team: between them, they could offer skills in sewing, writing, acting and poetry. Given these skills, for their campaign, the team decided to produce a series of interactive theater productions. They planned to organize 30 people into four sub-teams comprised of mothers, librarians and youth and challenge them to select or create literature that could be transformed into performances. They also aimed to gather 500 pledge signatures and to create a reading collection. The campaign would have three peaks: to recruit 25 new members for the first peak of the campaign, to prepare performances to present to an advisory committee and to stage a full day event of 12 performances for the general public.

Challenges

At the beginning of the campaign, the librarians team realized that many questions needed to be answered before they could begin staging performances: How long would it take to create a single play? Should each play be

^e A key element in launching a team is deciding on its shared purpose, determining roles, and deciding on governing norms. These are the “rules” the team members agree to follow.

6 minutes long? Should they transform existing stories into plays or should they create their own stories? After a long discussion, the team decided that the sub-teams would be responsible for their own plays and they should have the autonomy to answer those questions themselves. Giving the teams this autonomy empowered and encouraged the sub-team members.

Each sub-team member worked on a clear and specific task, such as identifying a story, writing a play or creating a puppet. Each recognized the importance and significance of his or her work and realized that if he or she didn't complete a task, it would slow down the entire team.

In March 2011, the librarians team held a puppetry and shadow theater workshop to teach sub-team members how to create puppets, tell stories and bring them to life. Each sub-team then read children's literature and explored each story's potential to be turned into a play. Soon after they began writing their plays and preparing their performances. They held initial performances at local libraries to start to pique children's interest and to further refine the plays.

By the campaign mid-point, on July 11, 2011, the librarians team has 35 organizers in five sub-teams, and 260 signed pledges in hand. But the librarian team had come to question whether it was using appropriate tactics to encourage reading for pleasure. They asked themselves a difficult question: Would the performances be enough to influence children to read? Was reading—or the performance—playing the central part in the campaign? Was the campaign too complicated? After a candid discussion, the librarians team decided they doubted that children would read simply because they had transformed stories into plays. Upon reflection, they realized the 'ask' or commitment was missing; they needed mothers and their children to continue reading and creating plays at home.

Though they agreed to change the strategy, the team members were slightly demoralized by the need to change their plan. However, they realized that their work and effort would be in vain if they did not engage the mothers and ask for a commitment from the audience afterward.

Results

The sub-teams created 12 plays that were performed for and evaluated by theater professionals in the first half of the campaign. The quality of the scripts and the performances themselves were uneven and the librarians team noted it was a key challenge throughout the campaign. They wanted to bring in more experts, but time was running out.

On July 27, 2011, an audience of 120 mothers and children filled Amman's Al Balad Theater to watch the plays. After the curtain closed, the librarians team members distributed children's stories with instructions on how to create hand puppets so the mothers and children could read and perform plays at home, together. They asked the audience to sign up to perform the plays at the local library. Fourteen mothers signed up and, after the librarians team followed up with them, 12 of the mothers joined the campaign.

In November, 2011, the librarians team reached their final peak, performing plays at three different locations in Jabal Al Natheef; more than 400 children attended. Later, the librarians noted an increase in library visits and books borrowed and that children were reading a greater variety of books.

Youth Team

This campaign has taught me so much about commitment, teamwork, how to benefit from resources, how to build community... I now have skills I can use, how to learn from one another, evaluate.

--Balqees Nowar, Member of the Youth Team

Five youths were recruited to form the first tier constituency youth team (youth team) for the youth campaign; three were Ruwwad volunteers or scholarship recipients, one was employed in the community but was not a resident and one was a resident of Jabal Al Natheef. Kefah Adnan, a Ruwwad employee, coached the team.

During his story of self, the Jabal Al Natheef resident shared his perspective: “We must prove that the future generation of Jabal Al Natheef is a productive, advanced generation that is educated and desires knowledge and learning.” Reading, he believed, was one way to start.

During their initial training, the team members asked themselves why they—and by extension the youth of Jabal Al Natheef—did not read. They agreed that reading was not perceived as a positive habit but as more of a chore, often associated with schoolwork. They also acknowledged that they did not have role models who encouraged them to read. Some said they had been teased for reading or had a poor experience reading because of a school teacher.

They believed that if they could organize community events featuring public role models admired by their peers, it would encourage other youth to read for pleasure. They decided to recruit 100 organizers who in turn would recruit a total of 700 youth who would sign the 6 Minutes reading pledge and attend three community events featuring local celebrities.

Motivated and eager to begin, the youth rapidly recruited their friends into the campaign—though they had not yet articulated a clear vision of what the peak events would look like, nor how they would contribute to improving reading. They also had not considered what team structure would be needed to implement the events. Rather than planning the tactics for the entire campaign up front, the youth planned the campaign one stage at a time. They felt they should first decide who would best serve as role models.

Each week Ruwwad hosted a youth gathering, Dardashat, where guest speakers addressed topics of interest to youth. Youth team members attended a Dardashat gathering where they were able to recruit new members, distribute pledge forms and, after talking with the youth in attendance, identify potential role models for their own events. They selected a prominent socio-political cartoonist, Emad Hajjaj, and two Arab writers and launched a public Facebook group to promote their campaign.

Challenges

Despite their enthusiasm, the youth team struggled to commit to the campaign; some members skipped the weekly meetings, forcing their coach to intervene and remind them that they had agreed to attend the meetings. She also led discussions on the meaning and importance of commitment and conducted one-on-one meetings to support and encourage the team members.

Even as they struggled to overcome the commitment challenge, the youth team created a tier of three sub-teams. Youth team members worked in pairs to lead each new sub-team. As their organization grew, strategic questions emerged: How will we structure the teams?

For the team structure, they had to decide whether each of the three sub-teams would work on a single event or if all of the sub-teams would work together on all three events. After a long discussion, the youth team decided that each peak event would be led by a different sub-team. The youth team distributed roles and responsibilities—including logistics, marketing, fundraising, recruitment and communicating with the role model—among the sub-teams and a goal was set: they would host the first event at the Al Balad Theater and invite 200 Jabal Al Natheef youth to attend.

The youth team struggled, though, to explain how the event would encourage reading. They brainstormed ideas ranging from completing art activities to organizing book clubs and finally decided they would each commit to reading two books that the cartoonist, Emad Hajjaj, said had influenced him. “[The plan was that] each week they would read a number of chapters and contact their peers to discuss the readings,” said Dudin. “But the youth called one another to ask for a summary rather than having an in-depth discussion on the reading and their learning. Their commitment to their tactic and even their theory of change became questionable,” she said.

As the youth struggled with the task, it became evident that the tactic did not work. Nevertheless, the event itself was deemed a success: the team had recruited and organized new members and event volunteers, created signs and marketing materials and arranged transportation and the event itself drew 200 youths. They listened to Hajjaj read passages from his favorite books, learned about the campaign and signed the 6 Minutes pledge.

Though they met their attendance and pledge goals, after the event the youth team questioned whether those who pledged would really commit to reading and reconsidered their tactics. “At the beginning, they thought what they needed was having a role model to read to them, literally read in front of them. So they started looking for role models within the Jordanian community, but they found that meeting the role models didn’t actually encourage anyone to read and they needed to change the tactic,” said Iqrsusi.

Accordingly, they decided to adopt a different tactic: they would conduct a “reading walk”—a weekly walking book club planned to include four stops along a route for sharing readings and discussion. This led to a reassessment of the celebrity role model idea. What if they chose someone who was an active member of Jordanian society, but not necessarily a celebrity? That person could lead a discussion on the books read and discussed during the reading walk. “They met on a Saturday morning and went on a walk in Amman—both boys and girls. They would bring the book and each would read the part they liked most. It was embarrassing to go without having read the book so that ensured they had read it. It became prestigious; they were part of an intellectual group. It was an unusual opportunity to meet and be part of an intellectual meeting. And that tactic worked,” said Iqrsusi. The team found that the reading walks encouraged youth to read and became an interactive and communal activity. They also redefined their definition of role model to be anyone who had influenced their lives, rather than simply a celebrity.



The youth read their favorite texts and share their reading walk experiences. Source: Ruwwad Al Tanmeiya. Used with permission.

On July 30, 2011, the youth held their second peak event in honor of the late Ghassan Kanafani, the Palestinian author whose books they had been reading. Each sub-team created a short play to re-enact his writing, recited his poetry and shared how his stories influenced them. During the final peak, the youth team invited prominent Jordanian composer and musician Tareq Al Nasser to share his favorite books with them and discuss how reading influenced his music. They concluded the event by reading together for six minutes.

Campaign Impact

By January, 2012, the 6 Minutes campaign had reached its goals: the community had recruited, engaged and enabled 160 community members to become committed organizers; they had formed 23 sub-teams and gathered signatures on 5,042 pledges. In addition, the community reported reading 6,620 articles and books during the campaign. The question that remained was, had they created a lifestyle change within the community?

There was both anecdotal and empirical evidence. Anecdotally, mothers and youth observed changes in reading behavior among their family and friends. Youth started attending book clubs and book signings. One youth organizer said, “I never used to care to read to be honest, but this campaign helped redefine reading for me. It enabled me to meet new people and opened my eyes to a new world.”⁴

Mothers continued reading with their children and purchasing books for them as gifts. Mothers started sharing books with one another, both for themselves and for their children. One was pleased to overhear her child explain to another, “Guess what my mother read to me last night!”⁵

The teachers observed that the children had become more enthusiastic about reading activities at school, especially when their mothers attended.

Librarians, too, saw changes in attitude and behavior by library visitors. In 2010, 840 books were checked out at the Shams Al Jabal Library and an average of 60 children visited the library weekly. In 2011, during the 6 Minutes campaign, over 2,561 books were checked out and an average of 110 children visited the library each week.

However, there were clear differences of opinion on whether or not the campaign would have a long-term impact on reading in the community. Did those who signed the pledge read daily during the campaign and if so, did they continue to read afterwards? Irqsusi felt that those who signed did read during the campaign. “A mother asked a neighbor to sign the pledge. Her neighbor said, ‘Give me the pledge and give me two days and let me see if I can do it.’ In this culture, a promise is a promise. They take it very seriously,” said Irqsusi. Nevertheless, they had not been able to create tangible measurements for the lifestyle campaign which made it difficult to assess whether long-term behavioral change occurred.

In retrospect, the core team recognized that establishing a reading benchmark to allow them to conduct a “before and after” assessment of the community’s reading ability would have better helped them evaluate the efficacy of the campaign. Another option would have been to create a team dedicated to following up on the data and documentation of the campaign.

Collecting Feedback from the Organizers

At the end of the campaign, Ahel, a non-profit community organizing training organization formed by Haj Ahmad and Irqsusi during the campaign, conducted focus groups with organizers and team members to assess the impact of and learning from the campaign. In addition, a survey was distributed to a random sample of 25% of the organizers.

In the focus groups, organizers offered that they had developed good listening and communication skills and learned the importance of commitment to driving success. They felt the practice of working together, holding one another accountable and creating a safe and open meeting environment allowed the teams to develop these skills. However, the focus groups also revealed that the organizers had a limited understanding of how to develop strategy, with many saying they did not understand how to create a theory of change or how to test it.

Most organizers also said they felt there was a clear change in the community’s pride in Jabal Al Natheef, which they attributed to the campaign. One said, “I used to hate Jabal Al Natheef. When I got married and moved here I saw this place as a place for school dropouts, drug addicts and gossiping women. After the campaign and being part of this community and building relationships with the organizers, I now have a lot of love, respect and loyalty to my neighborhood.”⁶

As a result of their participation in the campaign, organizers said had begun to see themselves as agents of change. Many women had to stand up to their husbands just to participate in the campaign; others gained their husbands' respect as they became activists and discovered their self-worth and their ability to effect change in their own lives. One community member said, "Now I feel I can do something. I can have a conversation with people with different levels of education. I was able to develop a stronger relationship with my children. People are turning to me, wanting to learn from me!"⁷

It was important for the campaign to emphasize the potential of the experience to increase each organizer's own skills and knowledge, no matter what the organizer's profession or education level. Starting at the training and continued throughout the campaign, each team and community meeting concluded with a meeting evaluation, asking organizers to reflect on what went well during the meeting, what could have been done better and what was learned. When asked if they felt that the campaign had impacted their skills and knowledge, 93% strongly agreed that it had.

When the organizers were asked their definition of leadership, they said it was stepping up and taking responsibility, building teamwork, creating a shared purpose, achieving goals, motivating others to move to action and creating positive change in the community. The mothers and youth stressed that enabling others was an important leadership practice. The teachers further described leadership characteristics such as honesty, high self-esteem, being humble, while other constituents mentioned leadership roles as the ability to persuade others, exploring and empowering others, facing challenges and good decision-making abilities. Haj Ahmad and Dudin felt the focus group results demonstrated that the organizers had come to understand and embrace leadership both in terms of the skills and characteristics a leader must develop.

Just under half of those surveyed agreed that building social relationships was empowering—though these answers came from the teachers, librarians and mothers exclusively. They also mentioned the importance of building trust, knowing one another and creating a sense of unity. One mother explained, "[Empowerment] is the ability to make change, and my strength was brought forward when I collaborated with other Jabal Al Natheef residents."⁸ One person from the female teachers team said, "My power comes from the presence of people that support me in doing something I love and being creative, focusing on my talents and persuading people to take part in something I am passionate about."⁹

The campaign gave the organizers an opportunity to build relationships and work with people outside of their social circles. Most surveyed said that there was a transformation in the community members' relationships with one another and the majority said that their relationships with individuals in their community grew and developed due to their experience in the campaign. The campaign built confidence in the community's ability to take agency and make change by creating a shared purpose, taking action and committing to the team's goal. When asked if they felt confident that the community could come together to create change, 96% of the organizers agreed.

The Mountain Peak

In December 2011, the Jabal Al Natheef community formed a Mountain Peak team to begin planning a large-scale event to celebrate the campaign's completion. On February 9, 2012, over 500 people packed the theater at the Al Hussein Cultural Center to attend the event.

The celebration featured a video recapping highlights of the campaign: mothers, teachers, librarians and youth recounted their public narratives and described the challenges they had overcome. Guest speakers described the positive changes they witnessed in the community and Dudin congratulated everyone on their hard work and the success of the campaign. At the conclusion of the event, Dudin posed one final question: who would like to join us in our next campaign?



The core and coaches teams celebrated after the Mountain Peak event with Fadi Ghandour, founder and chairman of Ruwwad (bottom row, third from left), Samar Dudin (bottom row, second from right), Rawan Zeine (top row, fourth from left) and Nisreen Haj Ahmad (top row, fifth from left). Source: Ruwwad Al Tanmeiya. Used by permission.

Next: The Safe Homes Campaign

Even before the 6 Minutes campaign concluded, the organizers were eager to launch a new campaign. “Ruwwad planted a seed for the next campaign and then announced it at the closing ceremony for 6 Minutes,” said Haj Ahmad. Dudin felt ready and eager to launch the next campaign. “Midway through the 6 Minutes campaign I took over coaching the core team,” she said. “It prepared me to be the coach of the next campaign; succession was built into the process.”

Dudin asked the mothers, ‘What’s next? What is the pain we need to address?’ They said child protection. The Safe Homes Campaign would be designed to combat domestic violence—physical abuse of children at home, in school and on the street. “They wanted to do a campaign focused on making homes safe,” said Dudin. She hoped that the Six Minutes campaign had laid a firm foundation for this next campaign.

Though eager to get started with Safe Homes, Haj Ahmad, Dudin and Iqrsusi still weren’t certain that the campaign they had just finished, Six Minutes, would have a lasting effect on Jabal Al Natheef. “In terms of reading, I’m not sure. In terms of building leadership, organizing power and capacity, yes,” said Iqrsusi. Haj Ahmad agreed and shared a story about an 8-year-old girl that approached her during Ruwwad’s Annual Day celebration:

She said that each Thursday the children were made to clean the bathrooms. “The janitors sit on their chairs talking on the phone. I want to organize a campaign and they told me to talk to you.” I asked her how she knew about campaigns and organizing and she said, “My mom was in the 6 Minutes campaign.” This story gives me hope.

Still, they wondered, how should they best apply the learning from 6 Minutes to make the Safe Homes campaign a success?

Exhibit 1 Civic Leadership Capacity Building Framework

We teach leadership as based on the relationship among self, other, and action: accepting responsibility for enabling others to achieve shared purpose under conditions of uncertainty. As an adaptive response to challenge, it requires combining the hands (skills, behaviors), the head (concepts, strategy), and the heart (values, narrative). As craft that can be learned, not a person or position, the practice grew out of a community organizing tradition of developing leadership who enable their community to mobilize its resources to build power it needs to assert its interests effectively.

This requires learning five core practices: motivational narrative, intentional relationship building, adaptive strategizing, accountable action, and organizational structuring. The foundational practice of public narrative focuses on values as the starting point: learning how to access the emotional capacity for agency through narrative—accounts of moments of challenge, choice, and outcome—that can communicate the emotional content of value. The emotional conditions for the exercise of agency depend on one’s ability to trump fear with hope, alienation with empathy, and self-doubt with a sense of dignity or self-worth—the work of leadership.

In what we call “public narrative,” we link teaching articulation of one’s story of self (one’s own values), story of us (shared values), and story of now (challenges to those values, choices that must be made, and sources of hope). Coupled with the motivational practice of narrative is the cognitive practice of strategizing, taught as a verb, not a noun, an ongoing process of analysis, theory, action, evaluation and adaptation. We identify a community challenge, analyze sources of that challenge, theorize the change required to meet that challenge, translate this into a specific campaign goal, devise tactics that can translate community resources into the power needed to achieve that goal, and create metrics to be used to evaluate progress, success, failure, and the need for change.

A third focus is on creating the kind of structure need to translate story and strategy into action. In what may be the most challenging element of our approach, we introduce an alternative to exercising leadership through unitary command and control structures in the form of collaborative teams. This requires forming stable, bounded, and diverse teams of persons drawn from the constituency who do the work to define a common purpose, establish explicit ground rules of governance (decision making, commitments, time management, evaluation), and well defined interdependent roles. With this approach scale can be achieved as a “cascade,” each team member forming his or her own team, and so on outward. When successful this approach makes the most of individual resources, produces more commitment, and can be far more creative than more authoritarian or expert models, but also requires assumption of responsibility for self-governance in what can be very challenging ways.

People learn these practices experientially via explanation, modeling, practice, and debriefing, supported by skilled coaching, in classrooms, workshops, and campaigns. Workshops are one- to three-day team based participatory training sessions focused on public narrative or all five core organizing practices. A trainer leads general sessions with a team of coaches, each of whom coaches a smaller group of 5 to 8 persons in breakout sessions. Coaches are often drawn from the host community or organization so coaching develops another tier of capacity. Campaigns begin with a workshop on story strategy, and structure with a core leadership team who develop an initial plan focused on achieving a campaign goal. A campaign is an intense, outcome focused, streams of activity that can be brought to scale through distributed leadership. Developing the pedagogical capacity to do this work

has itself been an objective – and a model - of the basic approach, based on a workshop design assigning a key role for team coaches, the first rung in a ladder of leadership development. As potential trainers are identified in workshops or campaigns or within organizations or constituencies hosting workshops or campaigns, they are invited to coach, gain experience, expand their scope of practice, become trainers, and so forth. This approach to training models the overall approach to leadership development that we are teaching.

Source: Adapted from Marshall Ganz and Nisreen Haj Ahmad, “Civic Leadership Development: Practice, Reflection, and Learning,” undated memo (Arab Civil Society Memo Final.pdf).

Exhibit 2 Core Team Members

Um Saleh, Rehab Abu Arqoob Mother

Um Hussam, Amal Yaghi Mother

Busayna Mahmoud Al Rifai, Principle of Ateka School for Girls

Samar Dudin, Ruwwad Regional Director Head of Programs

Taghreed Al Naji, Ruwwad Mother Parenting Program

Kefah Adnan, Ruwwad Community Empowerment Program Manager

Noura Awwad, Ruwwad Child Development Program Officer

Enas Abeedallah, Ruwwad Shams al Jabal Librarian

Amer Armoush, University Student

Source: Rawan Zeine, Community Organizing, 6 Minutes: Reading for Pleasure in Jabal Natheef Case Study, The Arab Foundation for Sustainable Development "Ruwwad" and The Middle East Community Organizing Initiative, July 2011.

Exhibit 3 6 Minutes Public Narrative (translated from Arabic, abridged and edited for clarity)

We all work and live in Jabal Al Natheef in Eastern Amman. We are an economically and socially marginalized area. Before 2006, we suffered the absence of some basic services such as a police station or a medical clinic that impacted our community. Jabal Al Natheef is characterized by social and cultural diversity; it is home to the learned and the illiterate, rich and poor, Christian and Muslim, and Circassian and Druze. It is adjacent to Mohammed Amin, a Palestinian refugee camp that is not covered by the UNRWA refugee camp services.

We started a series of meetings with the people of Jabal Al Natheef and neighboring schools to talk about the most pressing challenge in Jabal Al Natheef: education. Children of Jabal Al Natheef have a high rate of school dropout, 17% according to a 2002 UNDP study 2002, along with illiteracy and poor reading skills. To the extent that the directors of four [local] elementary schools started speaking to Ruwwad about how at least 5 of every 25 children suffers from illiteracy and another 5 are weak readers. Illiteracy and poor reading and writing skills emerged as major challenges. There is an absence of community activities to support reading—particularly reading for pleasure—inside or outside of school. Reading for enjoyment, fun or pleasure was not a priority, nor an urgent community norm and found unnecessary by the mothers and the teachers of the community.

Parents said they cannot make reading a priority because of their families' deteriorating economic situation. They also say it is difficult to focus and follow up on their children's education because of the difficult living conditions. Teachers also pointed out that the pressures they face to end the curriculum within a specified time impedes them from engendering interest in reading for fun and focusing on the most vulnerable children.

We mothers, fathers, teachers, young men and women of Jabal Al Natheef take upon us the importance of addressing this challenge and the formation of community learning and reading for pleasure. The people of Jabal Al Natheef in cooperation with Ruwwad will take the initiative of organizing the community to achieve this goal.

Source: Rawan Zeine, Community Organizing, 6 Minutes: Reading for Pleasure in Jabal Natheef Case Study, The Arab Foundation for Sustainable Development "Ruwwad" and The Middle East Community Organizing Initiative, July 2011.

Exhibit 4 The 6 Minutes Pledge (translated from Arabic and edited for clarity)

I pledge, not to deny myself to read 6 minutes per day and enjoy reading freely for myself, privately, or with others, publicly—at home, school, in the neighborhood, in the library or elsewhere.

I will give myself 6 minutes enjoy learning and reading to the people of Jabal Al Natheef, let's start a learning journey together.

I pledge that I will read 6 minutes per day, 180 minutes in 30 days, 2190 minutes in 365 days. I pledge to read to myself or to my neighbor, my mother, my father, my children, my students, my friends, my husband and my wife.

I pledge to read the topics in the newspapers that are relevant to me, or a novel, or an author I enjoy, or a blog that gets my attention.

Read what I see Read what I image Read what I draw

Name:

Telephone number:

Signature:

Source: Rawan Zeine, Community Organizing, 6 Minutes: Reading for Pleasure in Jabal Natheef Case Study, The Arab Foundation for Sustainable Development "Ruwwad" and The Middle East Community Organizing Initiative, July 2011.

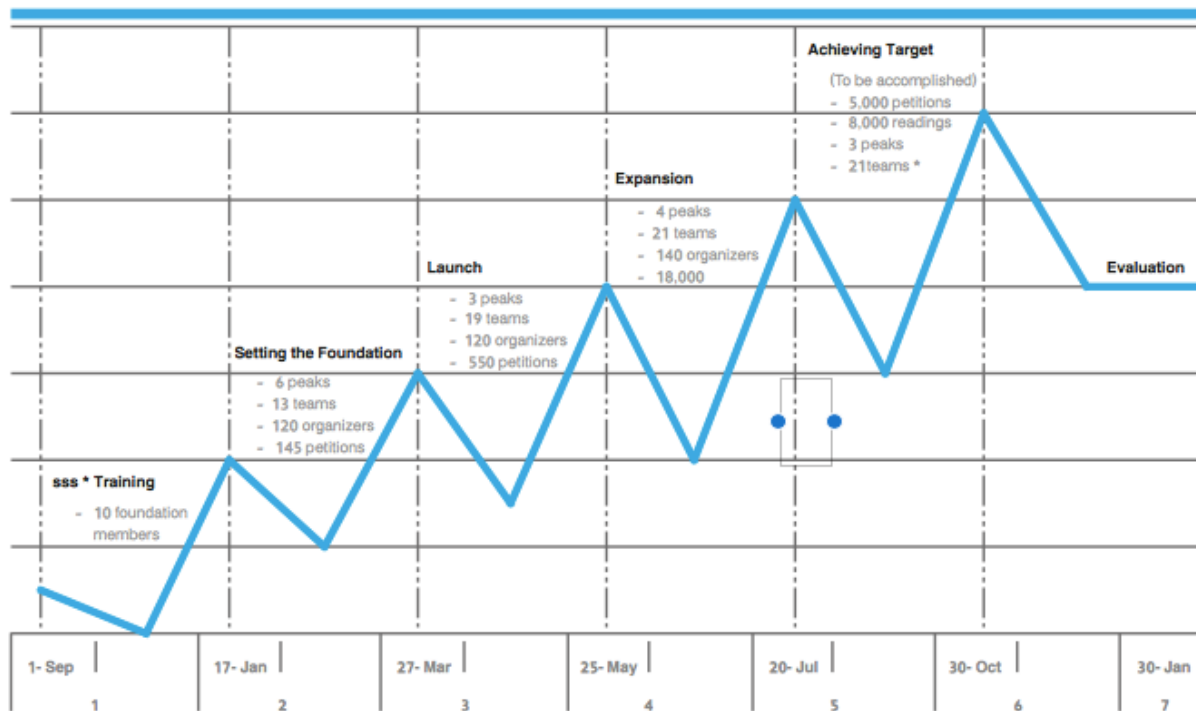
Exhibit 5 Campaign Timeline

Date	Team	Peak	Activity
April 2010	Ruwwad		Training introduction on community organizing
May-August, 2010	Ruwwad		Sought campaign funding
November 2010	Core team		Conducted campaign conceptualization workshop
January 2011	Core team		Community organizing training; begin weekly meetings
January 2011	Constituency teams		Begin weekly meetings
February 2011	Mothers team	1	Recruited 40 mothers to read 6 minutes over coffee
February 2011	Female Teachers team	1	Launched mothers reading in class
February 2011	Coaches		Begin work on documenting metrics
March 2011	Male Teachers team		Team disbanded
March 2011	Female Teachers team	2	Celebration with childhood learning expert
March 2011	Librarian team	1	Recruited first leadership tier
March 2011	Youth team	1	Select and recruit role model
March 2011	Female Teachers team		Launch reading competition
March 2011	Coaches		Developed metrics framework
March 2011	Mothers team	2	Organized 140 mothers to read 6 minutes for Mother's Day
March 2011	Youth team	2	Formed first tier
March 2011	Female Teachers team		Launched library reading campaign
April 2011	Mothers team	3	Reached 5 teams of 35 organizers
April 2011	Female Teachers team		Mothers reading in class ended
April 2011	Librarians team	2	Reaches second peak
May 2011	Librarians team		Rehearsed show/performance
May 2011	Mothers team	3	Celebrated expansion
May 2011	Female Teachers team		Reading competition ended; library reading campaign ended
June 2011	Coaches		Coaching skill and meeting training session

June 2011	Female Teachers team	3	Celebrated mountain peak
June 2011	Youth team	3	Hosted first role model
July 2011	Coaches		mid-way evaluation
July 2011	Youth team		Launched “reading walk”
July 2011	Mothers team	4	Celebration and training
July 2011	Librarians team	3	Mountain peak: final performances
July 2011	Youth team	4	Hosted second role model
October 2011	Mothers team	5	Mountain peak final celebration
October 2011	Youth team	5	Mountain peak: hosting third role model

Source: Adapted from Rawan Zeine, Community Organizing, 6 Minutes: Reading for Pleasure in Jabal Natheef Case Study, The Arab Foundation for Sustainable Development “Ruwwad” and The Middle East Community Organizing Initiative, July 2011.

Exhibit 6 Campaign Peaks



Source: Rawan Zeine, Community Organizing, 6 Minutes: Reading for Pleasure in Jabal Natheef Case Study, The Arab Foundation for Sustainable Development "Ruwwad" and The Middle East Community Organizing Initiative, July 2011.

Exhibit 7 Example of Mother's Story of Self Narrative (translated from Arabic and edited for clarity)

I am Um Fadi, and a member of the Mother's team. I am 48 years old. My father forced me to leave school when I was in the fourth grade. I suffered a lot and cried day and night. I frequently begged him to return to school but to no avail and he always asks me, why do you want to go to school? When my friend came home from school, I would borrow her books and go into a secluded place and copy everything they had learned in school that day. I did this for an entire year. That secluded location became my learning space, right next to the Kareem Supermarket in Jabal Al Natheef.

My dad married me when I was 15 to a man 35 years older than me and we had children. The challenge for me was how could I give my children what I was denied? I hope my children can achieve the things I was deprived of and when I heard about the campaign I was encouraged and joined. The campaign was going to give me back the education that I was denied. That is why I'm determined that the campaign is successful and will participate in the campaign and give my full support.

Source: Rawan Zeine, Community Organizing, 6 Minutes: Reading for Pleasure in Jabal Natheef Case Study, The Arab Foundation for Sustainable Development "Ruwwad" and The Middle East Community Organizing Initiative, July 2011.

Endnotes

¹ Nisreen Haj Ahmad was interviewed by telephone by casewriter Laura Winig on July 14, 2015.

² Samar Dudin was interviewed by telephone by casewriter Laura Winig on June 18, 2015.

³ Mais Irqsusi was interviewed by telephone by casewriter Laura Winig on June 2, 2015.

⁴ Rawan Zeine, Community Organizing, 6 Minutes: Reading for Pleasure in Jabal Natheef Case Study, The Arab Foundation for Sustainable Development “Ruwwad” and The Middle East Community Organizing Initiative, July 2011.

⁵ Rawan Zeine, Community Organizing, 6 Minutes: Reading for Pleasure in Jabal Natheef Case Study, The Arab Foundation for Sustainable Development “Ruwwad” and The Middle East Community Organizing Initiative, July 2011.

⁶ Rawan Zeine, Community Organizing, 6 Minutes: Reading for Pleasure in Jabal Natheef Case Study, The Arab Foundation for Sustainable Development “Ruwwad” and The Middle East Community Organizing Initiative, July 2011.

⁷ Rawan Zeine, Community Organizing, 6 Minutes: Reading for Pleasure in Jabal Natheef Case Study, The Arab Foundation for Sustainable Development “Ruwwad” and The Middle East Community Organizing Initiative, July 2011.

⁸ Rawan Zeine, Community Organizing, 6 Minutes: Reading for Pleasure in Jabal Natheef Case Study, The Arab Foundation for Sustainable Development “Ruwwad” and The Middle East Community Organizing Initiative, July 2011.

⁹ Rawan Zeine, Community Organizing, 6 Minutes: Reading for Pleasure in Jabal Natheef Case Study, The Arab Foundation for Sustainable Development “Ruwwad” and The Middle East Community Organizing Initiative, July 2011.