



# Public Narrative and Its Use in the Stand Up with the Teachers Campaign in Jordan (QMM)

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# PUBLIC NARRATIVE AND ITS USE IN THE STAND UP WITH THE TEACHERS CAMPAIGN IN JORDAN (QMM)

## RESEARCH REPORT CASE STUDY 1 NARRATIVES4CHANGE PROJECT

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This investigation would have not been possible without the collaboration of teachers' members of the Stand Up with the Teachers (QMM) campaign in Jordan, who even amid the challenges emerged in the context of the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, dedicated with enthusiasm hours of dialogue to explain, debate, and share their experiences leading and organizing the campaign

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents and discusses the main findings of the case study on the “Stand up with the teachers’ campaign” supported by the organization Ahel in Jordan, carried out in the framework of the Narratives4Change research project.

This case study is part of the research project Narratives4Change[1] led by Dr. Emilia Aiello, and which has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 841355. This is a 36-month research investigation consisting in two main phases: data collection and analysis in an outgoing phase (outside of Europe), and implementation of results in a return phase (in Europe). This way, the first 24 months of the project (outgoing phase) have been carried out at the Harvard Kennedy School (HKS), and the last 12 months (return phase) will take place in Europe, at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB, Barcelona, Spain).

The main goal of the Narratives4Change project is to study how the public narrative framework is being used for the development of individual and collective leadership in different areas of action (e.g.: advocacy/organizing in education, health, politics, etc.) and cultural and geographical contexts, to better understand how it enables individuals’ agentic action, and their capacity to develop agency in others, enhancing organizational capacity. Doing this will eventually inform a twofold objective.

First, to better understand how the use of public narrative impacts on individuals’ inter-personal relationships by means of enabling agency. And second, to explore how it impacts on creating new social realities. Drawing on the results obtained in the research phase at the HKS, that is, on the larger analysis of the public narrative framework, the project seeks to contribute with novel knowledge on how public narrative can be adapted to the European context.

More specifically, Narratives4Change aims at findings ways to inform how to advance in better organizing the Roma women movement Europe, and in Spain, a field on which Dr. Aiello has been working during the last decade, collaborating and adding to the wealth of research with social impact on Roma people and the overcoming of inequalities led by the Center for Roma Studies at the Community of Research on Excellence for All (CREA, Spain). Thus, during the return phase of the project, the Narratives4Change investigation plans to capitalize on the use of public narrative on the Roma women organizing in Europe (planned from June 2021-May 2022), as well as other women whose agentic capacities have been limited due to systemic and long-lasting structural constraints.

Within the broader framework of the Narratives4Change research, the QMM case study was designed aimed at answering two research questions.

**1. How is AHEL using Public Narrative for the development of individual and collective leadership capacity? Linked to it, in what ways is this contributing to develop collective organizational capacity –build community and build power?**

**2. In what specific ways is this contributing to create new social realities? How is AHEL impacting at the (a) individual and family, (b) community, (c) societal; and (d) institutional level? What’s the role of PN embedded in AHEL organizing scheme in this?**

This report presents the results obtained and seeks to inform researchers doing research on public leadership and organizing from a gendered perspective, as well as practitioners and leaders operating on the ground.[1]

[1] Narratives4Change. Capitalising Public Narratives in the organising of Grassroots Roma Women (H2020-MSCA-IF-2018. Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowships. Project Nr. 841355. IP: Emilia Aiello).

[2] Disclaimer: research publications are being elaborated gathering the results of this case study and exploiting and disseminating them among both academic and non-academic audiences. It is aimed with this case study to enrich both the scientific and practitioners debate on how to advance towards individual and collective leadership, using strategies that activate individuals’ agentic capacities and open up opportunities for social transformation..

## IN A NUTSHELL, WHAT PUBLIC NARRATIVE IS?

Public narrative is a way of using narrative and storytelling for public leadership. Developed by Professor Marshall Ganz and taught by him for more than 15 years now at the Harvard Kennedy School, crafting a public narrative consists on articulating and linking three elements: a story of why I have been called, a story of self; a story of why we have been called, a story of us; and a story of the urgent challenge on which we are called to act, a story of now. This articulation of the relationship of self, other, and action is also at the core of our moral traditions (Ganz, 2010). As Rabbi Hillel, the 1st Century Jerusalem sage put it,

**“If I am not for myself, who will be for me?  
If I am for myself alone, what am I?  
If not now, when?”**

The story of self digs on answering Why have been I called to lead? Why do I care?. The story of us, explains what is the shared story that I have with others, my community, those who I am trying to take the lead with me. The story of us explains the story of “Us” as a constituency, grounded on shared values and a shared purpose. In the story of now, we tell the story of What is at stake now if we don’t act today?, and therefore, why it is urgent to act today.

Public Narrative is being used for public leadership in diverse cultural and geographical contexts ranging from the US, Japan, Jordan, Mexico, Serbia, New Zealand or South Africa, to mention some; as well as in different areas of action (politics, health, education, labor, climate change, among others). Since 2009, hundreds of trainings on Public Narrative have been done across the world, translating its materials into Arabic, Spanish or Chinese, and celebrated in offline and online settings.[3] Facilitated by coaches across the world who are familiar with the framework, these trainings workshops always follow a similar structure: the presentation of the theoretical foundations of Public Narrative, the rationale of each of its parts, its modelling by participants organized in small groups, and debriefing on the process. This way, the framework is modelled and practiced with each other. Multiple resources such as videos, readings, and other supporting materials about the Public Narrative pedagogy are available online in open access aimed at offering guidance and support to all those learning the framework. Videos related to how to coach offer a nuanced understanding on how the modelling, practicing and debriefing of the whole framework looks like.[4]

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[3] For instance, the tech platform built for low-bandwidth “Grassroots” (promoted by MIT GOV/LAB) is working in South Africa teaching Public Narrative through WhatsApp. See: <https://mitgovlab.org/results/teaching-on-whatsapp-leadership-and-storytelling-for-grassroots-community-organizers/>

[4] See The Leading Change Network (<https://leadingchangenetwork.org/about/#our-story>) and The Resistance School initiative (<https://www.resistanceschool.com/who-we-are/>) for consultation of official materials available in open access for public usage.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

As mentioned, this study was done in the framework of the broad Narratives4Change research project (2019-2021). In it, a set of research studies have been carried out, including an explorative research survey mapping the use and impacts of those who have learnt public narrative during the period 2006-2019, and three in-depth case studies analyzing initiatives that have used public narrative. In this section is briefly presented the context of Jordan, key information regarding the QMM campaign, and the case study design.



Photo courtesy of Qoum Moualem facebook page

### 2.1. Communicative methodological approach

Narratives4Change has been developed under the communicative methodological approach (Gomez, Puigvert & Flecha, 2011). The communicative methodology emerges from the new scientific and social challenges. Current dialogic turn of social sciences and society has implied significant changes in the understanding of reality (at the ontological and epistemological level), as well as in the way social reality is scientifically analyzed (Soler-Gallart 2017).

The move from objectivist to constructivist, socio-critical and communicative conceptions has led to the development of this methodology that gathers key elements from prior research approaches, but goes beyond them in understanding that social reality has been constructed in communicative ways through social interaction. This approach is in line with the dual nature of current social theory, which accounts for the influence of systems and social actors, and the interactions among both.

The basis of the communicative approach is the dialogic relation between both the researcher and the social actors or 'researched subject', the first one contributing the knowledge from the scientific community, and the latter, with their interpretations from the common sense of their lifeworlds (Habermas, 1984). Traditional objectivist research tended to approach researched subjects, and especially those who find themselves under constrained conditions, solely as objects of the research, and taking distance from them. Unfortunately, this happened in a systematic way in many research investigations carried out with ethnic minorities, such as with the Roma in Europe, reproducing stereotyped discourses and prejudices about them. Subjective conceptions of research have included the voices of the subjects, but in many cases the researched subjects have not had a say during the research process. Beyond subjectivist or objectivist positions, the communicative approach differs from participatory research or action research, as it seeks on ways to including the voices of researched subjects through an intersubjective dialogue among the researcher and the researched subject.

This way, the researched subjects bring into the discussion his lived experiences -lifeworld, while in conversation with the researcher, who adopts an active role guiding the discussion and adding elements derived from his analytical framework, new knowledge is constructed.

In all, in the Narratives4Change project, and specifically in this case study, the protagonists of the campaign have been involved throughout the entire research process. Since its early design at the time of framing the research questions, guiding the process of data collection, as well as at the time of interpreting data. Key actors from the Ahel team, as well as from the campaign have been opened to shared insights, think and re-think over the issues posed, and also challenge or suggest nuances to the interpretations of the data initially done by myself. This has been an inter-subjective process of knowledge elaboration and peer learning, and the use of the communicative approach have provided the methodological lenses to be able to grasp those sites of agentic action in very specific situations which, other methodological approaches could have tended to overlook.

## **2.2. Context of Jordan: the pay gap in the private education sector**

With a near 11 million population, Jordan had in 2019 a total unemployment rate of 16.9%, being that of men 15.5%, and that of women, 24.1% (ILOSTAT, 2020). The high unemployment especially among young females with tertiary-education, and the poor wage and labor conditions in the education sector make many women who need to work, while also take care of other family responsibilities to enter in this workplace.

As part of the mandate of the Jordanian National Committee for Pay Equity (NCPE, created in 2011) of establishing an effective means to close the gender pay in Jordan, the International Labor Organization (ILO) was commissioned with the elaboration of a study on the gender pay gap in the private education sector in Jordan. This study was published in October 2013 (ILO, 2013), reporting astonishing data on the severe violation of labor rights of women working in private education, both in primary schools and universities. According to the ILO study, women working in private schools are over-represented in all job categories (administrative, teaching and support services), while in private universities, men and women are equally distributed in teaching positions but men are prominent in support services and women in administered positions. Vertical segregation is practiced in private universities, where 70% of managerial jobs are held by men and only 30% by women. In the case of private schools, 75% of the managerial positions were held by women. Findings were also striking in terms of wages differences. The research showed that the gender pay gap was 41.6% in private schools and 23.1% in private universities (women in worse situations). In private schools, the average monthly remunerations in 2013 was of 435 JOD for males (\$613) and 254 JOD for females (\$358), and 540 JOD for males (\$761) vs. 415 JOD for females (\$585) in private universities.

What the ILO study did was capture data and make public a situation of inequality and labor rights' violation well-known in the country by women employed in private schools themselves. Stereotypes and prejudices, undervaluing women's jobs and women's qualifications, social and cultural factors, absence of a legislative/policy regulatory framework, or a lack of coordination among stakeholders were some of the reasons observed by the ILO to explain the pay inequalities in the private education sector.



## 2. 3. Brief presentation of the case: The Qom Ma'al Muallem Campaign (Stand Up with The Teachers)

Taking the ILO study findings into account, the NCPE and the ILO, with the support of the Jordanian Ministry of Labor, agreed on the need to support a teachers-led effort to rectify the situation, deciding that one of the ways to do so was supporting the organizing of teachers themselves. It was for this mission that the organization Ahel was recruited as a partner-organization which could take the lead in facilitating and coaching teachers to mobilize and organize around their rights. Created in 2011 and based in Amann, Ahel is an organization that does not work for profit. It operates at the grassroots level in the field of community organizing and human rights, supporting community groups and organizations that lead collective action to bring about change for freedom, justice and protection of human rights in countries across the Middle East, such as Jordan, Palestine and Lebanon.

Framed in this context, the QMM campaign was launched in Irbid, a city in northern Jordan, in 2015, sponsored by the Jordanian National Committee for Pay Equity (NCPE) and the International Labor Organization (ILO), and initially organized by Ahel.[5] The campaign was conceived with the aim of equipping female teachers working in private schools with the needed organizing and leadership skills to enable them to build power and thus address a range of severe violations of their labor rights (ILO, 2017). In early 2015 Ahel started working to recruit a group of teachers which could want to constitute itself as an initial leadership team.

At the beginning of the campaign Ahel assumed the unusual role of being the transitional lead organizer (Alami, 2019). The QMM campaign core leadership team was eventually formed in April 2015 by eight teachers, most of them from the city of Irbid (four of these initial members have participated in this research).

Regarding the current organizational structure of the campaign, if in 2015 it had a steering committee consisting of Ahel, ILO, the Ministry of Labor, and the NCPE, the QMM campaign is currently functioning independently. It is structured based on a central national team, composed by twelve members, and coordinated by two of them.

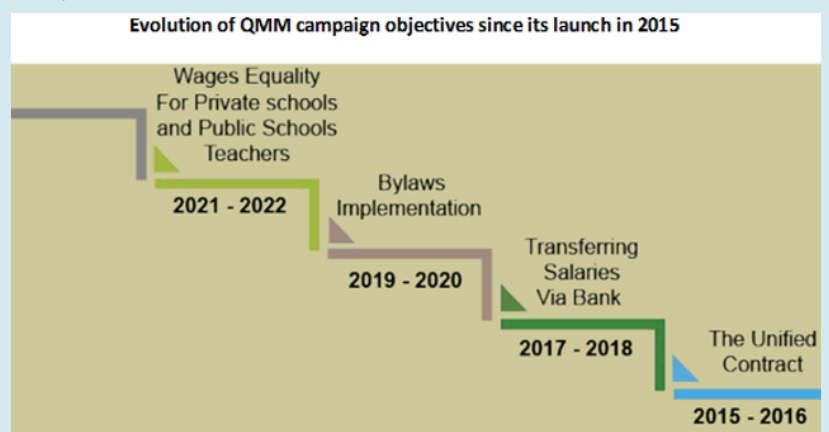
The campaign also has five local teams, corresponding to Amman, Zarqa, Irbid, As-Salt and Ajloun. The coordinator of each local team sits also in the national team. Besides this territorial structure, QMM has six working committees: database, communications and media, popular education, and complaints and inspection.

By September 2020, as reported by the national coordinators, the campaign counted on 180 regular members, and more than 3000 teachers registered in its database. By the time of doing this research the campaign is in the process of holding

discussions among its members and discussing if it worth constituting and registering as a membership-based organization, worker cooperative, union, or any other type of formally established organization in Jordan.

Below, figure 1 shows how the objectives of the campaign have evolved with the pass of the years, expanding from making sure that teachers sign the unified contract (2015-2016), to introducing bylaws that make transfer of teachers' salaries to bank accounts (as opposed to cash payments) a condition to relicensing the school for next academic year (2017-2018), to the actual implementation of the bylaws (foreseen for the period 2019-2020).

Although much is still needed to be done in Jordan, the severe violation of female teachers' working rights in the private sector is no longer a hidden topic, relegated to the private sphere.



[5] For more information about Ahel, see: <https://ahel.org/en-about-us/>

In September 2018, the then Ministry of Education passed the bylaw demanded by the campaign which included provisions making the private schools licensing and relicensing conditions upon the transfer of salaries through the banks. Such bylaw counted on the support of former prime minister of Jordan, Mr. Omar Razzaz (resigned in October 2020), who before holding that position was chief of the Ministry of Education, and who had been personally involved in the negotiations with the campaign. The QMM struggled for the implementation of the bylaw in its first year in 2019, and it is still struggling and organizing for it in 2020, undergoing the current context of the pandemic generated by COVID-19 that has worsened work conditions and school status.

## 2. 4. Study setting and participants

The Narratives4Change case study was guided by the following research question:

*How is Ahel using public narrative for the development of individual and collective leadership capacity in the framework of the Qom Ma'al Muallem Campaign (QMM)? Linked to it, in what ways is this contributing to develop collective organizational capacity –build community and build power?*

Data has been collected from three different sources. First, qualitative online fieldwork was conducted between March 2020 and August 2020. Fieldwork participants were selected according to their type of profile:

Photo courtesy of Qoum Moualem facebook page



## A

**Female teachers' members of the campaign:** ten daily life stories were carried out with female teachers of different ages (ranging from 26 to 50) core activists of the campaign, based in the cities of Amann, Irbid, Zarka, and Al-Salt. The main criteria for selecting them was their level of involvement in the campaign. Fieldwork participants were considered as core activists of the campaign as they reported to have spent at least five hours of volunteer work per week during at least nine months or even more time during peak moments in 2018-2019. [6]

Besides, some of them sit in the central national team, and are members of some of the leadership teams. Regarding their educational background, all of them have a college degree, and some of them also have other complementary higher-education training. Each daily life story lasted from 60 to 200 minutes, running those ones which lasted the most in two or three rounds. Some of the issues tackled in the conversations were the personal stories and motivations to join the campaign, the impacts on their lives, on their families, on their job, perceptions of making sense of their life trajectory as women working in private education, among other issues. Additionally, one focus group was done counting on the participation of six of these teachers. Table 1 provides demographic data about this group.[7] All real names of teachers have been substituted with a pseudonym.

**Table 1. Demographic information of female teachers' participants in the study**

Pseudonym	City	Age	Civil status & children	Years working as school teacher	Role in the campaign
Khawla	Amann	30	Single. No children	3	QMM founder member Chief coordinator of the national team
Ihsan	Irbid	46	Married. Mother of 4	18	QMM founder member Chief coordinator of the national team
Emani	Irbid	51	Married. Mother of 2	25	QMM founder member Coordinator of city of Irbid local team and member of the national team
Rannia	As-Salt	50	Married. 3 children	14	QMM founder member Coordinator of the city of As Salt local team and member of the national team
Majd	Zarqa	50	Divorced. 5 children	12	QMM founder member Coordinator of the QMM popular education working committee
Hala	Irbid	52	Single. No children	More than 20	QMM founder member Member. Former member of the national team
Samar	Irbid	39	Divorced. No children	9	Member. Member of the QMM system working committee
Maha	Irbid	27	Married. Mother of 1	3	Member
Lina	Irbid	50	Single. No children.	27	Member
Toujan	Irbid	26	Single. No children	5	Member

## B

**Ahel coaches involved in the campaign:** three interviews with the coaches and members of Ahel who have been involved at different moments of the campaign. The three of them are women, have college degrees and are highly skilled and trained in organizing methodology and public narrative following Ganz pedagogy (Ganz & Lin, 2011). They had between 5 and 15 years of previous experience working on the ground in different campaigns, and in other organizations different from Ahel, based in Jordan and other middle eastern countries (Palestine and Syria), as well as Canada and the United States. Their role in the QMM campaign varied throughout the time, from either recruiting and coaching teachers at its very beginning, supporting the core leadership team when it was constituted, or facilitating the popular education circles, among other type of coaching and training activities. Two rounds of interviews were held, each interview being of 60 minutes. Two focus groups were also led with them, one at the beginning and other at the end of the data collection phase. This allowed to discuss the strategy followed by Ahel at the time of coaching the campaign, and the challenges faced.

[6] The guiding criteria of considering a 'core activist' those volunteers who have spent at least \*five\* hours of weekly work was informed by the work on Leadership in Civic Associations led by Han et al. (2011).

[7] This same information is not provided for the other two types of profiles as it does not add any relevant information for the data analysis.

## C

**Other stakeholders of the campaign:** two additional interviews were done, one with a senior employee from the ILO, and member of the National Committee for Pay Equality, and another with an independent consultant and researcher who led a case study on the campaign commissioned by the ILO and the Jordanian Ministry of Labor. These two interviews served to gain contextual information on the case, framed on the broader situation of the working rights of women in Jordan. Each interview lasted 60 min.

Second, existing secondary documentation related to the campaign, the community organizing methodology used by Ahel, and the situation of female workers in private schools in Jordan was screened and reviewed. These materials were either sent by fieldwork participants or identified on the internet. They served specially to contextualize, contrast, complement and triangulate the data gathered in the qualitative fieldwork.

And third, notes and materials (e.g.: agenda, minutes) related to workshops led by Ahel for coaching the campaign in different moments, photos shared by members of the campaign when celebrating popular education circles, as well as social media data (Facebook posts, and Twitter data) was also gathered, reviewed and analyzed. Given that the fieldwork was done online, all these materials and especially the visual resources shared were of great help to get a deeper sense of the social reality that fieldwork participants were explaining, and thus better capture the reality that is under analysis.

Although language was initially expected to be a barrier at the time of data gathering, eventually it was not. Most of the fieldwork was carried out in English, and in those cases in which female teachers did not speak English, we counted on the support of a translator who helped translate from Arabic to English and vice-versa. Secondary documentation and other types of materials that were written in Arabic were translated with the help of translating software and the translator.

## 2. 5. Ethical Issues

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the Harvard University-Area approved this study, IRB Registration Nr: IRB00000109. In addition, all information gathered for the Narratives4Change project complies with the Ethics Appraisal Procedure required by the Horizon 2020 research program, funded by the European Commission.

Accordingly, Narratives4Change project follows the Regulation (EU) 2016/679, the EU new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

## 3. FINDINGS

All qualitative fieldwork was recorded and transcribed. Data was coded and analyzed using NVivo software (Version 12). An initial coding scheme was created drawing on the Narratives4Change project general research questions, and the specific research questions defined for this case study.

A first categorization is according the internal/extension dimension of use (represented in the x axe, in the table). Findings show that in the QMM campaign public narrative was used either internally (with teacher' members of the campaign, when working with each other); or externally (used to advocate for constituents' right at the public sphere, beyond the QMM leadership team). In turn, two other axes of analyses were defined: (a) Settings of usage: those settings in which public narrative was coached and used; (b) Impacts achieved: public narrative as a leadership practice that either contributes or mediates impacts at four different dimensions: individual; QMM as a team, and as an organized community of actors; sociocultural, and institutional.[8]

<b>Table 2. Analysis of impact across dimensions studied</b>	
<b>Dimension 1.</b> <i>Individual</i>	Impacts on teachers themselves as social actor
<b>Dimension 2.</b> QMM as a team, and as an organized community of actors	The impact of having used public narrative on the campaign members as a team, having brought them together as an organized community of actors
<b>Dimension 3.</b> Sociocultural	Referred as the societal dimension, understood in terms of the impact at the public sphere. <sup>9</sup> At this level, both, tangible and intangible impacts do take place.
<b>Dimension 4.</b> Institutional	When changes do impact on the structure through getting institutionalized via political change.

Below, Table 3 illustrates the categories defined for the data analysis, and summarizes the main findings obtained in terms of the usages and the impacts identified.

Table 3. Usages and impacts of public narrative in the Stand Up with the Teachers' Campaign		
SETTINGS OF USAGE [Settings in which public narrative was coached and used]	Internal [with teachers' members of the campaign]	External [when used to advocate for constituents' rights at the public sphere]
<p><b>SETTINGS OF USAGE</b> [Settings in which public narrative was coached and used]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One-on-one coaching</li> <li>- Team meetings</li> <li>- Popular education circles</li> <li>- 'Story-strategy-structure' workshops (at the beginning and during the campaign).</li> <li>- Campaign evaluation workshops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One-on-one meetings with decision-makers and/or other relevant stakeholders of the campaign</li> <li>- Addressing the media (TV and radio interviews)</li> <li>- Creation of content for social media Facebook posts, and videos) to raise awareness</li> <li>- Participation in large conventions</li> <li>- Used aimed at</li> <li>- Recruit other teachers to join or/and support the campaign - break the silence that is feeding the fear</li> <li>- Communicate the campaign goals and mission among wider and diverse publics</li> </ul>
<p><b>IMPACTS achieved [Public narrative as a practice that mediates the impacts in different dimensions]</b></p>	<p><b>Individual</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhancement of subjects' agentic capacities – empowerment</li> <li>- Awareness of the "strength" of showing vulnerability – Authenticity of those daring to take the lead</li> <li>- From being at the shadow (public sphere), to daring to take the lead and to speak up at the public sphere</li> <li>- Individual conscientization/awareness: "What does imply accepting the games' rule?"</li> <li>- Public narrative pedagogy used by teachers with family members (e.g.: at the time of solving conflicts, settings rules, etc.)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Sociocultural [public narrative mediating in these impacts]</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Effectiveness presenting demands to decision makers → <i>Public narrative mediating in</i> → Private education female teachers' labor rights incorporated in the Jordanian <b>political agenda</b></li> <li>- Effectiveness at the time of addressing the media → <b>Public narrative mediating in</b> → Private education female teachers' labor rights incorporated in the Jordanian <b>public agenda</b></li> <li>- Changes in the assumptions of what women can and cannot do in terms of gender practices – due to contesting power dynamics at the private (family) and public sphere - <i>Generating new and alternative gender role models</i></li> <li>- Change in the societal discourse regarding the perception of the power that teachers have in organizing for their labor rights: from being perceived as 'weak', non-organized actors, to be perceived as strong organized actors with agentic capacities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Institutional [public narrative mediating in these impacts]</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Applying the unified contract in private schools</li> <li>- [Sept 2018] Ministry of Education regulation of Private Schools, including provisions making the private schools licensing conditional upon the transfer of salaries through the banks.</li> <li>- Creation of new ways to communicate with political authorities (informal, and formal – holding Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labor accountable)</li> </ul> <p>Key allies built with specific media actors – finding support at the time of denouncing a given situation.</p>
	<p><b>QMM as a team, and as an organized community of actors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Defining shared purpose and facilitating strategy</li> <li>- Creating and strengthening social relationships among teachers</li> <li>- Effective conflict solving</li> <li>- Building team culture and holding others accountable</li> <li>- Yield the ground for organizational effectiveness</li> <li>- Enhancement of social capital and solidarity networks among members of QMM:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Solidarity in their struggle with school owners and fair wages</li> <li>o Solidarity with each other as women navigating and contesting family relationships.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Meaning creation and shared social identity ("USness") - Collective awareness/conscientization</li> </ul>	

## 3.1. QMM members and public narrative learning

Public narrative was adapted in the QMM campaign not in a vacuum but as part of a broader process of leadership and community organizing coached by Ahel since the beginning of the campaign in 2015. Storytelling is one of the five practices of the community organizing methodology, along with relationship-building, team structure, strategy, and action (Ganz, 2010). This is of relevance in the framework of this campaign as something that the three coaches of Ahel agreed upon when coaching the members of the campaign, was that the community organizing methodology be applied completely, not partially.

Storytelling, and specifically public narrative, was used strategically to build up relationships among the teachers who first joined the campaign (members of the “core leadership team”). They were strangers and had never joined a collective action before.

Before describing in further detail the different ways of usages and impacts of public narrative in the QMM, it should be explained how campaign’ participants learnt and were trained in this leadership practice.

As Ahel coach and organizers explained, there has been mainly three ways through which QMM members were trained and learnt public narrative:

**1**

**Public narrative workshops** facilitated and coached by Ahel, in which participants were introduced to the public narrative pedagogy, modelled it with others, and debriefed the practice together.[10]

**2**

**Dry runs (testing):** in which participants were coached and practice articulating and telling their own public narrative. This was done mostly in one-on-one with coaching sessions with Ahel coaches, especially at the time of preparing meetings with decision-makers, and/or other relevant stakeholders.

**3**

**Community organizing and leadership online course** facilitated and taught by Ahel: the course pedagogy and design was based on Professor Ganz’s online course with the Harvard Executive Education program. It lasts 5 months, and it consists on an experiential class with a pedagogy for learning, practicing and reflecting. Many of the QMM members have taken this course, in their different editions.

## 3.2. Settings of usage

Public narrative is not a formula, but a pedagogy for leadership development, which as Prof. Ganz highlights, is learnt while being practiced, and debrief with others (Ganz & Lin, 2011). This way, members of the QMM were formally introduced to public narrative through some of the above-mentioned ways, and thus they started to use the framework in their own practice as leaders in the campaign.

This section describes the types of usages identified in the research. As showed in Table 2, settings of usages are distinguished in the internal, and external category.

### 3.2.1. Using public narrative within the QMM campaign team

Public narrative was used and adapted within the campaign through a set of activities that varied in two ways. First, it was adapted in how the story framework's elements were used: **story of self, story of us, story of now**, or solely by using story moments. And second, it was adapted and used in activities that were either individual-oriented, such as in one-on-one coaching, or group-oriented, such as in team meetings, popular education sessions, story-strategy-structure workshops or mid-term or final evaluation workshops.

One of the challenges that the QMM campaign faced during its initial months in 2015 was recruiting teachers who would be willing to join and constitute the core leadership team, and be at its forefront. Two barriers prevented and still prevent female teachers from joining or even publicly show their support to the campaign. First, the fear for the potential reprisals that could come from private school owners and bosses of being fired or blacklisted. Second, the strict gendered norms structuring Jordanian society (as it still occurs in other countries worldwide, including Western countries), which in most cases still locating women outside public spaces of debate and decision-making; and thus, family members opposing the fact that wives, sisters or daughters for being woman participate in this type of political/advocacy activity.

When the core leadership team was eventually constituted in the city of Irbid, formed by eight members, hours of one-to-one coaching between Ahel coaches and these teachers themselves unearthed experiences and feelings of injustice and the desire to act to stop that situation to continue happening, but also the fears and concerns that each of them had regarding how their participation would be perceived within their workplace and within their families. As Ahel coach Reem Manna explains, conversations with the teachers revealed how deeply rooted patriarchal societal norms are, something that constrains women's agentic capacities and is expressed in myriad ways in this case: from reluctance to express any type of disagreement in front of male authorities, being their bosses, or sometimes members of their own family, such as husbands, fathers of brothers:

“

*So one key reflection at the very beginning was... How can you pretend that women speak up against abusive employees, when in many cases this is not even done in the private sphere, in their personal lives, with abusive husbands, or even with parents...? There is a societal burden that needs to be properly considered!*

*(Reem Mana, Ahel coach, interview)*

”



At this initial phase Ahel coaches identified that they were in front of a “heart” challenge, related to emotions, not a “head” (intellectual), nor a “hands” (behavior) challenge (Ganz, 2009). Hence, organizing a constituency needed from putting in place a long-term strategy, starting with launching a good amount of work aimed at building strong relationships among teachers who although sharing common values, barely knew each other at that moment.

Since the beginning of the campaign, the core leadership team joined the story-strategy-structure workshop facilitated and coached by Ahel, and focused on learning and practicing together skills that related to the three practices characteristic of the organizing methodology: story, strategy, and structure.

This two-day workshop is run every year, and it is opened to all teachers of the campaign involved at the national level. The initial core leadership team of the QMM (composed solely by seven teachers from the city of Irbid) joined this workshop for the first time in April 2015.

However, the type of training initiated in these workshops needed to continue on a more regular basis. It was in this context that by the end of 2017 Ahel coaches proposed to the teachers’ members of the campaign leadership team to launch popular education circles, as a way of embracing together their own learning journey as a team.

Research findings show that specific attention needs to be paid at the popular education circles as all teachers who participated in the fieldwork highlighted the importance of them joining these spaces, and the centrality that narratives played in it.

### 3.2.1.1. A glimpse into the popular education circles

The popular education circles draw on Freirean dialogical action pedagogic approach (2005), understanding that dialogue and the power of the word are central elements featuring the search and conquest of the conditions that will allow the oppressed to overcome their situation of oppression (Freire, 2005). The sessions got from Freirean approach the idea of being conceived as informal spaces of inter-subjective peer learning among teachers where there are no experts. The popular education sessions were set with three main goals. First, to open a safe space in which participants could discuss about a chosen topic, in which they can share their stories, converse, and share their views, and commit to take a behavioral change. Second, serve as an opportunity to both practice themselves and coach others on key

“story moments”, and get a sense of how the discussion on a given topic would unfold (potential for replication). And third, learn facilitation skills and prepare teachers for when they will have to facilitate the circles themselves.

Ahel coach Rahab Doha acted as moderator of the circles, her role being that of guiding the discussions on each weeks’ topic and to making sure that all logistic aspects were set up in place. The sessions took place every Saturday morning, for two hours, at Ahel’s headquarters in Amann. Joined by eight-ten women on a regular basis, they came from their home cities in Irbid, or Zarqa to Amann, the most of them taking public transportation.

Rahab explained that some of them used to bring their children with them. When this occurred, while mothers participated in the

sessions, children were in a different room, doing themselves other types of activities such as putting together a jigsaw puzzle, or playing games. As Ahel coaches observed, popular education sessions offered a two-hours space in which female teachers who were participating would choose a topic on which to focus on to discuss, engage in a meaningful team conversation about it, and model together how to act in those given situations in which their agentic capacity was being constrained.

Intended to be a site for emancipation, while with the urgency of needing to recruit other teachers to join and support the campaign, teachers involved in these weekly sessions, replicated then the sessions at their own homes with other teachers.

This way, teachers involved in these sessions become facilitators of “popular education circles” at their own homes. As Rahaf explained, each two teachers involved in the Saturday sessions, committed to lead a popular education learning circle at their own city, taking on the same example of the initial team. If in the popular education session there were ten teachers, each two created a learning circle in their home cities and become facilitator of them. These two were in charge of recruiting teachers to be part of the learning journey, ensure their commitment and facilitate the circles. Facilitators replicated in the circles that they lead what they learnt together in the sessions.

Evidence collected for this investigation shows that **at least three aspects of how popular education circles were run converged with elements of the public narrative pedagogy, enabling its coaching and crafting.** First, each session was focused on a specific topic. This made possible deepening in what were not solely the position of each member in relation to them, but also the values at stake, and what bound them together. Second, within the circles, the topics discussed were intentionally grounded on stories. And third, participants were asked to get commitments and were held accountable to each other later.

## SPECIFIC TOPICS

Each session was planned around a specific topic chosen jointly by the participants and the moderator of the circles. The topics ranged from issues focused on interpersonal relationships such as power dynamics and how they as female teachers navigate through them, to others’ aspects related to legal training on labor rights, negotiating skills, community organizing or even sessions dedicated to learning new pedagogic skills for their teaching. Focusing each session on a specific topic allowed the group to start unpacking in a detailed manner those core values that were of relevance for participants themselves as individuals, as well as for them as a group in the context of the campaign. As teachers explained, these were some of the questions that came up in the circles, and they were discussed in a meaningful way, bringing their own stories into them, honoring and respecting anything that was shared by the group members:

“ Talking with others in this way is easier, because it's not something that you “take step 1, take step 2..” It's not about that... We started each session sharing a story, and then we moved to the main topic. This really helped. I think that stories brought us closer to each other...  
(Nawra, teacher, daily life story)

”

Sharing personal stories enabled empathy among each other and realizing that all of them had gone through similar experiences.

“ (...) In one of the circles I remember just thinking... Yes, I've also been through that! It was that moment of empathy (...) Every one of us passed through this experience. We think that we are the only ones... but not. We all humans have the same experiences. So everyone you heard those stories we became closer and closer and closer, and so it was that we got unity. You'll never understand people if you don't understand yourself (...)  
(Akilah, teacher, daily life story)

”

Ahel coaches Rahaf and Nisreen reflected in the focus group held with them how according to them, using public narrative in the own internal organizing of Ahel, and then in the QMM campaign through popular education circles, was a strategy that went far beyond of making possible crafting a story of self, a story of us, and story of now. It allowed creating a space to be emotionally open:

“ I'm thinking that talking about public narrative and how we use it, it's not just about the practice, story of self, Story of Us, and Story of now. It's also about being emotionally open and having the ability to use your emotions, as well as using your strategic thinking.  
(Rahaf, Ahel coach, interview)

”

Teachers' narratives also suggest how the popular education circles become a “brave space”, as called in public narrative pedagogy. Participants found a welcoming environment to be vulnerable, allowing themselves to be challenged by others, thus reflecting on their own biographies, relationships or acts while considering others' stories and past experiences. This is reflected in Lina's narrative:

“ Sometimes you just discover that you need another person to talk about your feelings. And that happened to me with a friend of mine, also a teacher, whom we have been friends for more than 20 years now. I discovered things from her by listening to what she shared in the circles that I didn't know – and I thought, How can it be? We've been friends for 20 years, How would it be that I've never taught in that? It was really hard...  
(Lina, teacher, daily life story)

”

## TOPICS GROUNDED ON STORIES

The second aspect identified in the popular education circles that converged with public narrative is that each topic discussed was deeply grounded on stories. **Each session was started off by intentionally asking participants to share a personal story related to the topic that was going to be discussed.** The moderator's role in the discussion was important not in advancing any taken for granted assumption, but in guiding the discussion by means of posing questions and identifying what in public narrative is called 'origin moments'. These origin moments make possible to unearth those experiences which have been deeply meaningful for the individual, which have shaped her values as a person, and her call as a leader. **The inter-subjective conversation between members of the circles guided by the questions intentionally posed by the moderator was also relevant at the time of identifying and coaching 'story moments of challenge' (What was the challenge faced?), 'moments of choice' (What was the choice faced?) and 'moments of outcomes' (What as the outcome) in the members' journey as teachers, and as teachers who were daring to take the lead in speaking up against power.** Teachers recalled moments in their lives when they felt that they were not being treated as deserved, when their voices as professionals were ignored, or in which others, most of the time men like their male bosses, had spoken over them or exerted their authority over them.

Below, Ihsan's and Hala's narratives show those specifics 'moments of challenge' that they went through while working as teachers, and which made them open their eyes and realize that they needed to act:

“

*After working in that school, I discovered that I was not registered in the social security. So, what should I do...? I denounced that and quitted that job.*

*(Ihsan, teacher, daily life story)*

”

“

*We were invited to a conference about labor rights [She attended representing the campaign] So my boss found out that I attended the conference, and the following day he fired me and another colleague who had also attended. But after that, I have not been silent. I couldn't. We decided to denounce that situation, and we brought the case to the court... That was unfair. We lost the trial, but I don't care.*

*(Hala, teacher, daily life story)*

”

In public narrative, story moments are important for both the speaker and narrator of the story, as well as for the audience. For the narrator they involve an act of making explicit what has been implicit, while making sense of it. As for the audience, they illustrate moments in which those who are listening can mirror themselves, create empathy, and feel identified with the values that are being expressed. For all this, story moments can also be sources of courage, sources of hope, and eventually enable agentic action. Rahaf (coach) explains that being able to identify and coach story moments such as the ones described above by Ihsan and Hala during the popular education circles was intentionally done by her as

a moderator of the circles. She was bringing to the circles all her previous experience using public narrative in other campaigns, as well as with the Ahel team. Nisreen (coach) was sometimes shadowing the sessions and participating in them as an observer. Nisreen and Rahab reflected in our focus groups that the fact that Nisreen was shadowing some of the popular education sessions allowed them after they finished to reflect on those aspects that were working properly, and those other aspects on which more work and coaching needed to be done.

Being these spaces sites where story moments were coached, and their individual (for each teacher) and inter-personal (for the whole group) meaning unearthed, resulted to be essential at the time of later having to articulate a public narrative of the group, and at the time of having to use them externally, to communicate the campaign's values, missions, and challenges.

## CONCRETENESS OF REQUEST AND COMMITMENT

Finally, the concreteness of request characteristic of the story of now in public narrative converged with one very aspect identified in the popular education circles, the idea of asking participants to get a commitment to be done by them related to the topic that was being discussed. Those participants of the circles who wanted were asked to share the commitment with the group, and thus report on its accomplishment or on their progress towards its accomplishment in subsequent sessions. When asked about examples of commitments that teachers made in the group, most of them mentioned aspects related to exercise their agency in situations in which they were now aware that most of the time they have not dared to speak because they have not felt courageous enough. Rahaf recalled many examples of commitments made by teachers to stand up and say 'No' to their mothers-in-law, to say 'No' to

their mothers-in-law, to change norms with their husbands, establish new norms with their children or even within the school they worked in by building consensus with co-workers. This way, popular education circles were sites where personal, sometimes painful, stories were shared, some of them reflecting on moments where they felt they had not exerted their agency. At the same time, they were also spaces where new memories were constructed as participants learned from these stories and decided to take actions to improve their situations.

The example below by Samar and Toujan, two teacher members of the Irbid local team, illustrates how for those teachers whose labor rights were being violated, the support found in each other became sources of courage:

*“Samar and myself were working for more than four years in a school in Ajloun which didn't comply with the labor rights. All teachers were paid less than the minimum wage. At the end of the academic year, our contracts were finished and then re-started, so this way they did not have to pay us our salary for the summer holidays. We joined the popular education circles and started to know more about our working rights, and our colleague Lina encouraged us to speak up, and to not accept those conditions (...). So eventually I got the courage and asked to talk with the school owner. Of course, when I asked her to pay us what she owed us she refused, but she knew that we knew our labor rights (...) Lina was all the time there, supporting us, telling us 'Remember that the law is always on our side'. So we told the owner that we wanted to negotiate with her. Eventually, she realized that it was better for her to do so, otherwise we could make the ministry of labor run an inspection in that school, and issue an official complaint, which would mean having to close the school. (Toujan, teacher, daily life story)*”

“*And what was interesting is that all other teachers of the school were just waiting for someone to take the lead and speak up. They were all fed up with the situation! Most of them have left that school...*”  
(Samar, teacher, daily life story)

**Leadership is exerted not only by means of changing one's behavior, but also by encouraging and supporting others to do so. If such support is anchored in an explicit commitment and a subsequent follow-up with each other, the likely of taking action is much higher.**

### 3.2.2. Using public narrative “out there”, explaining “why do I care” to others

Every time that we talk with a new person, being a teacher that we want to recruit, the media, if we meet up with a politician... the first thing that we do is share our story: What happened to us? This is our voice! If I share my personal story they will also empathize and feel what I felt. The stories are so powerful because they really help to transmit what we want to share, and they are able to make the other person to put in our place. (Ishan, teacher, daily life story).

Beyond the usage of public narrative within the QMM team itself, **it was used externally, to communicate with others and to advocate for constituents' rights at the public sphere.** Two main goals were identified when used externally, in the public sphere. First, it was used to communicate the campaign goals and its mission among wider and diverse public. Second, it was targeted at other female teachers working in private schools, and intended to recruit them to the campaign, either as members or as supporters. This is well explained by Ishan:

With these intentional goals, leading members of the QMM campaign used public narrative in an array of settings, such as one-on-one meeting with decision-makers and/or other relevant stakeholders, when being asked to participate in media interviews either in the TV or at the radio; and also when participating in large conventions or conferences.

(Ishan, teacher, daily life story).

### 3.2.2.1. Communicating with decision- makers: “share specific details by sharing stories”

Data gathered shows that public narrative has become a key **tool for members of the campaign at the time of communicating with decision-makers, and explaining why it was important to introduce specific regulation in the private education sector.** Both the campaign’s members and Ahel coaches interviewed reflected on how by means of using public narrative teachers leaders of the campaign were able to add nuances in their explanation, details, such as putting faces and specific stories to what would have been solely numeric facts. Ahel coaches explained how the use of public narrative empowered teachers at the time of having to meet up with decision-makers: each meeting was well-prepared and the campaign member was coached in her story. It is worth looking at the following dialogue and reflections of Ahel coaches, in one of the focus groups celebrated with them:

I remember once that we had a meeting with the Ministry of Labor, and the Deputy Minister. Me and Nariman were the ones that were going to attend the meeting, and Nisreen insisted “Start the meeting with the stories of teachers, and what is happening now, be specific, and share every detail of what’s happening to you (to the teachers). This was in the second year of the campaign. We were trying to explain that the labor inspectors were not doing their work and that the Ministry was not follow up on it. So public narrative really served to show in an articulated way that they were not doing that properly (...) And he [the decision-maker with whom they were having the conversation] was shocked, and refused that this was happening (...) .We asked him to try to call himself the help line, and see how it was replying to teachers. By sharing her narrative Narimaan showed the reality that they were experiencing on the ground

(Reem, Ahel coach, focus group)

In the following quotation Nisreen reflects on how teachers learnt to use and navigate the use of public narrative, what was an added-value for them as leaders.

Using public narrative brought the ‘heart’ side to a type of discussion which otherwise, could have solely been centered in providing arguments based on economic or legal facts. Adding stories to the explanation of these economic and legal facts (e.g.: how women’s labor rights are being violated) made the purpose of the campaign much grounded on the daily needs of teachers as Jordanian grassroots women who deeply care for the work that they do, and for their students:

“ *Of course, doing the other type of talking, which is the type of academic or sophisticated way of talking, that does not play on teachers’ strengths. So she might be feeling insecure about that type of talking. But in this type of conversing, when sharing and explaining public narrative, it balances out the insecurity that it might generate having to explain those three PowerPoint slides that she needs to tell: she will explain something that solely she could have explained.* ”  
(Nisreen, Ahel coach, focus group)

Below, Reem explains how when teachers shared their stories in public, decision-makers understood why no more teachers were complaining about the situation. It was not that they were just accepting the conditions, but that the cost to pay for the potential reprisals to face outweighed their motivation to publicly show their support:

“ *At the beginning decision-makers were saying all the time: Where are teachers? How it is that they are not here? I don’t see that... For instance, the Head of the Social Security Department, said: ‘Teachers are not complaining about the situation. They are saying “Yes” to everything that the school owners say. So if they are not complaining there is nothing we can do to change that...’ But teachers cannot complain because of so many burdens and the risks faced. So these very specific details can be shared and explained by means of explaining specific stories. So Nariman and Hadeel told their stories. That made her take action* ”  
(Reem, Ahel coach, interview)



As said above, the use of public narrative to recruit other teachers have also been central in the QMM campaign. This was explained by all teachers, who emphasized the importance of sharing their stories with intentionality, and listening to other teachers stories. See Hala’s insights in relation to this:

“

*When we want to talk with a teacher to invite her to join the campaign, the first thing I do of course it is to share my story with her, why I have joined the campaign, what have we done together. And when we share our stories it's like getting close to each other, and also to connect with that other with whom I'm taking with  
(Hala, teacher, daily life story)*

”

### 3.2.2.2. Communicating with large audiences in public events

Since the emergence of the QMM campaign in 2015, its members have been invited to participate in different advocacy events related to women’s labor rights. This is of relevance as joining these spaces of debate gave the campaign a high visibility at the public sphere (discussed in section 3.4.3, impacts at the sociocultural level), while empowered them to communicate in public spaces. All of them explained that anytime when they were asked to participate in this type of large-scale events, public narrative offered them a framework about how to structure the message that they wanted to transmit to engage in a conversation with others.

Two examples of large-scale conventions to which representatives of the QMM campaign were invited, and in which they used public narrative were the ILO/NCPE Conference on Gender Pay Gap in Private schools, and the Women Empowered for Leadership convention, hosted and organized by the Dutch organization Hivos.[11]

### 3.2.2.3. Communicating with the media and creating content materials and audiovisuals



Photo courtesy of Qoum Moualem facebook page

Since the beginning of the campaign, members have been asked to join debates and conversations in different media platforms, such as national TV programmes, and also in the radio. Again, recalling and using specific story moments at the time of communicate their arguments and points is something that teachers themselves practice and do even in a natural way. Members of the campaign explained how every time that any of the members will join an interview or a discussion in the public media, they coach their public narrative time after time. In the following narrative Majd explains how public narrative have been incorporated as a strategy to communicate campaign goals among different actors, and through different media platforms:

“

*We used our stories when we did the concentration outside the ministry of Education, and also any time that we had to write petitions to decision-makers. Besides this, public narrative is constantly used in our Facebook website, to explain any action that we do, as well as at the time of talking with the media (Majd, daily life story, teacher)*

”

Multiple content materials have been created by the campaign in which public narrative are used to raise awareness about the working conditions of teachers in private schools. Since the beginning of the QMM life, its leadership team has produced a set of audiovisual resources of different type explaining the campaign goals and mission. The most of these videos can be found at the QMM facebook page (قُم مع المعلم @qoum.moualem·Community). All of them are in Arabic, and few of them have English subtitles. A common thread is identified among all the videos, that is, the narrative style in which they are explained, including clear “story moments”, either linked to Story of Self, Story of Us, and Story of Now, or linking the three elements of the framework.

An example of this is the video “Stand with the teachers,”[12] created with the aim of explaining the goals and the achievements of the campaign. Released in early 2019, this video starts off with the story of Narimaan Shawahin (current national coordinator of the campaign); she explains why she joined the campaign, why the teachers are standing together, and what the QMM asks other teachers to do Now. Below, some excerpts of the public narrative of Narrimaan are shown, to illustrate how the framework was articulated in this case[13]:

## STORY OF SELF

“

*I am Nariman Al Shawahin. When I graduated from college, I didn't think much of what I would do. I felt like I was going to be a teacher. My father spent all his life in teaching and made me see how high this profession is. **I worked as a teacher for 15 years in private schools, and because of the lack of experience, I didn't care how much the salary was in the first years of my career life,** despite the long working hours, unpaid bus tours, no vacations, it wasn't all that mattered to me. I worked and asked the owner of the school to join me in paying for social security. I decided to pay for social security... And here was the defining moment. When the employee repeated the sentence and told me, "What is your full name?: "Nariman Al-Shawahin". "He told me: we don't have a file for you at all"! Imagine that the school owner was deducting the percentage of social security that I owe and that he owes from my salary, and he is an educated person!*

*I was not aware enough while walking on the street, how did I cry in the first place! How was he fooling me! I was recessive. But honestly, **this was the first strict "no" in my life** (...)*

”

## STORY OF US

“

*(...) There is a saying that says: "You have something in this world, so rise." **The campaign's goal is simply to ensure that teachers in private schools obtain their rights,** especially in terms of wages.*

*When you see us, you see a beehive....? Women of all ages, including mothers like Safia, Raedah, Heba, and Nariman, all had to organize their time by the minute to keep up with the housework, the children, and the school, and at the same time, they should come to the weekly campaign meetings, being creative in the responsibility they had in the campaign.*

*Among us are young women such as Sajida, Iman, and Hadeel, who desperately wanted to have any educational opportunity, and strive to win any chance to develop their skills to help them in the campaign. **We achieved many successes, but the campaign's journey was not only meetings and laughter, we went through very difficult obstacles.** you cannot imagine that two teachers from our team were dismissed from work because they participated in a conference that talks about the rights of female teachers in the private sector. We did not imagine that any headteacher would be intimidated by the idea that the teachers knew their right... (..) Praise be to God, as we arranged our goal and organized ourselves, we were not discouraged by the head teacher's intimidation, but rather we kept going. The two teachers who were fired from their jobs are continuing with us in the campaign, and we take our strength from their strength to continue our struggle.*

”

## STORY OF NOW

“

*We succeeded in obliging schools to transfer teachers' salaries to banks and electronic wallets, and the question now became: **Will the teachers stand with each other and demand their schools to stop injustice?** Our strength at present is through unified collective rejection, not just individual rejection. (...) Our message to the teachers: It is nice that there are teachers who raise their heads and raise the banner of struggle for this issue, **but the real change is that we all stood with each other.** We ask you to insist on this power and not to let anything shake it. Commit to your schools and unite and reject injustice against any of you. Refuse to sign promissory notes, and insist that your salaries be transferred to banks or electronic wallets, and refuse to sign resignations before the summer. In short, reject the injustice against yourself and any of you. Motivating colleagues to join the campaign.*

”

As observed, this public narrative describes key moments in the life of Narimaan when she felt that her values were being at stake, moments that served as sources of courage to her (in the story of self), then, what are the values that the QMM campaign foresees, even being all of them very diverse (story of us); and finally, what is that specific request that they ask other teachers to do: join us, refuse to sign the promissory notes, and demand that your salaries be transferred to banks or electronic wallets (story of now).

### 3.3. Deepening on the Impacts achieved

This section presents and discusses the main results related to the impacts achieved by the use and adaptation of public narrative in the QMM campaign.

#### 3.3.1. Impacts on teachers' themselves: activating their agentic capacities

“

*Since I was fired from the school in which I was working I have not kept silent... We denounced it, and we brought the case to court because that was unfair. Now it is different as I feel that I have much more experience, I know what my rights and duties are, and I will not shut up, I will not accept any injustice against me at all (...) And yes, the case is still open, since 2015, our former boss has managed it to bring witnesses to declared in favor of him... But even that won't deter me to speak up (...)*  
(Hala, teacher, daily life story)

”

Dialogues with teachers themselves, with Ahel coaches, with stakeholders as well as other evidence obtained from reviewing and analyzing posted and shared materials in the social media networks of the QMM, and on the internet related to the campaign sheds light on how the use of public narrative by teachers themselves enhanced their agentic capacities in a myriad of ways. This is one of the most relevant aspects on which the use of public narrative made a differential change in the QMM as it seeded the ground on which to root the strategies, structure, and the actions embraced by them once they started to work together as a team.

Most of teachers who participated in the fieldwork for this research explained how they did not know about their labor rights before joining the campaign, they just accepted the conditions that they were established by their employees. Getting to know each other and doing so through sharing their stories in those spaces of learning and leadership development that they shared, such as the popular such as the popular education circles or one-to-one conversations, not solely

brought them closer to each other, but allowed them to reflect about their own stories as women, as well as about their stories as teachers who could stand up against those unfair situations. Hala's words shared above are a very good example of this. She explains how she was one of the many teachers in Jordan who knew nothing or very little about her rights, but now she knows, and she is no longer afraid of speaking up.

The impact of learning public narrative and how this enhanced their agentic capacities is appreciated in different ways. First, as it was the case of Hala, but also the case of many other campaign's members, many of them went from being at the shadows, not daring to speak up because of being afraid of the reprisals that they could have to face, to dare to take the lead and to speak up at the public sphere. This was repeated over and over by teachers. Deepening in their stories and listening to other stories enabled them to reflect together on those lived experiences in which their rights were violated, or their voices not considered. Spaces of learning, coaching and reflection that they shared, served also as spaces in which they could model situations in which they would have liked to say "no" in front of authority. What Khawla and Lina explains shows this aspect:

*The QMM changed me and made me a different person. I've gained Friends, I've made new relationships... but I have also learnt from the other's experiences, not just for my job but also for my personal life. And this was because of sharing our stories. I learnt how to negotiate, how to say "no" to authority, and just speak up. Of course that all this has been important for the campaign, but it has been very important for me*

(Khawla, teacher, daily life story)

*It changed my character.... Working with Rahaf really helped me. I become a new person. I changed my character even at home. I was that type of person who If I don't accept something, I'd never going to tell you. But I totally changed this. I learnt to say NO. I learnt that if you want something and you don't want to give it to someone else, you have to discuss, you have to say your argument. First of all, you have to discuss, And that's what I began to do. And it was amazing. Yes*

(Lina, teacher, daily life story)

This very idea of daring to take the lead and go from the shadow to the public sphere was also explained by Reem (coach):

“

*There are so many changes that can be tracked... For example, when we started the campaign the core team of teachers were afraid to be in public, fear to be associated with something related with struggle for their rights. At the end we can see not just the core team, but more and more teachers are sharing their stories... saying proudly that they are members of the campaign. So they went from not wanting to be at the public – to claim this!*

*(Reem, Ahel coach, interview)*

”

Reem's explanation is revealing of how because of teachers' empowerment, moments which in the past were linked to experiencing fear, such as speaking in public, now are associated with courage and the idea of communicating their shared purpose.

A second aspect identified and both derived and linked to the triggering of the agentic action, is teachers themselves being aware of the strength of showing their vulnerability. The use of public narrative incorporated this aspect as a natural one, explaining to others their concerns, and daring to open up accepting that it is most likely that those situations that are happening to them, are also happening to others. This provided them with a type of leadership which is authentic in so far that they are not making up anything, but explaining sincerely why they were moved to act, what their deepest concerns and motivations are. This is reflected in Lina's narrative:

*Sometimes you just discover that you need another person to talk about your feelings. And that happened to me with a friend of mine, also a teacher, whom we have been friends with for more than 20 years now. I discovered things from her by listening to what she shared in the circles that I didn't know – and I thought, how can it be? We've been friends for 20 years. How would it be that I have never known that? It was hard...*

(Lina, teacher, daily life story)

*When I was fired because of attending to that conference, after 11 years of just dedicating my life to my students... and my employee always being very happy of my work... He fired me because of that... You know what, at that moment I felt like I had a stone in my heart. But after 3 years my heart has become stronger. Maybe it is because I've shared my story... And this has made me a strong woman... And I think that is because I'm with the other women.... My life totally changed since that experience. I feel that I can do much more now*

(Ishan, teacher, daily life story)

Finally, another key aspect related to the individual level, and which emerged almost in all the conversations with the QMM members as we all with Ahel coaches **was the impacts that the involvement of teachers in the campaign have had on their families.**

The agentic capacity gained by them, led the to reclaim their sphere of power also within their families, renegotiating gender-roles, asking to be listened, or sometimes transferring to their own families the type of coaching that they were doing with public narrative, there, for solving conflicts with their children, or at the time of setting norms.

Rahab explained, for instance, how many teachers shared with her stories of what they dared to change norms with mothers-in-law:

“*There are a lot of stories of teachers who are first-time mothers contesting the authority of their mothers-in-law and asking them to do not to interfere with their children upbringing. For example, like one mother, she doesn't want her kid to be on screens. She doesn't want her to get to eat a lot of unhealthy food, but because she works. And she puts her kids and her mother-in-law her home to take to get taken care of the mother-in-law could break all of these norms in a way or another. And there were always these discussions where he knew that she does not want to have a fight with her mother-in-law because the kid is going to stay with her mother-in-law. She's working*”  
(Rahab, interview, Ahel coach)

Rahab explained how this type of changes were attributed to the fact that teachers were able to talk and share with each other their concerns. The fact of one of them taking the lead and talking, also inspired others to do the same. When teachers were asked about to what extent they felt that having joined the campaign has impacted on them, most of them gave extensive replies in how having joined the campaign have made them becoming different persons. This is explained for instance by Majd:

“*The campaign changed me in a positive way, y personality, I've grown stronger, I've become stronger. Before joining the campaign I was afraid of asking for my rights, for asking for what is mine, for what belongs to me (...) and now, at home, I've also changed at home, and I feel that my children have grown stronger with me, that they are learning from me. I'm teaching them that it is not okay to accept injustice, we must say no to it, one need to speak truth to power ... I was so fearful to do things with freedom, this is something that has changed... And my children have joined me in many actions we have done in the campaign, they are proud of me.*”  
(Majd, teacher, daily life story)



Maha also explained how they used public narrative with her own family at the time of solving conflicts:

“ I think that I also apply this with my family, and also with my husband. It's very cool! When I wanted to make an argument, and ... the conversation was smoother (Maha, teacher, daily life story) ”

Another of the aspects observed was how because the way how narratives were coached, and teachers themselves were able to agree on norms within their team, as leaders, they also transferred this to their families. This way of agreeing norms, for instance, in the popular education circles, served as a site where to model putting in place norms, and then getting each other accountable. Below, Rahaf explains how she observed that this occurred in some of the teachers:

“ One mother shared with us that, like, you know, when kids are around eight and 13 the really difficult to deal with. So there comes this mother who was saying, okay... After the first session, we had in popular education and where we sat the norms and distribute the roles and responsibilities. I went home and I worked with my kids on setting norms in our household. And that woman that set the context she fought for her divorce for more than three years. She was a highly committed person. She is a single mother who has three kids who are really good in their school academically speaking. They're very special care. But she she got divorced, while we were we're in 2019 whatever we're doing the third round of popular education. And we never lost her, and we never lost her passion, although that was a really rough time for her (Rahaf, Ahel coach, interview) ”



### 3.3.2. Impacts on the QMM as a team, and as an organized community of actors

Another dimension on which public narrative impacted on the QMM is on how they organized internally, as a team.

## CREATING AND STRENGTHENING SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS THAT ENABLE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SHARED PURPOSE

Relationships of friendship and mutual caring have emerged among teachers' core activists of the campaign along their journey together, even though many joined the campaign at different times. Teachers explained how the environment of trust created at the popular education circles, or in other gatherings where they intentionally shared personal stories, invited them to be open and vulnerable, reflecting on their own stories, diving deeper into their relationships or behaviors while considering others' stories and past experiences.

An element that has been identified in almost all the teachers' narratives is a deep sense of respect and admiration for each other. In the narratives gathered for this study, this was often related to moments when members shared with the group situations where they spoke up against those in power. According to them, sharing these moments bound them together as a team and strengthened their relationships. As teachers themselves explained in the focus group, these feelings were fostered by means of sharing their stories with intentionality:

*Using our personal stories somehow made us become a family, to get to know each other. Of course, at the beginning there were barriers, but once we started sharing, these barriers disappeared.*

(Majd, teacher, focus group)

*I agree with that. I think that stories allowed us to feel what the other was feeling, and to realize not just 'ok, I'm also going through this or that problem', but also, 'okay, if she got the courage and stood up, I can also do it'. She is able to reject injustice and say No, so do I." That gave us a sense of courage*

(Hala, teacher, focus group)

In those spaces shared together as a team, teachers crafted and made sense of their story of self, unveiling the reasons why they felt called to lead and join the campaign. In turn, going through a joint learning and leadership journey gave them an experiential sense of Us. The process of going deeper into their stories of self allowed them to identify and make explicit those shared values that bound them together, such as caring for their profession, wanting to be good teachers, wanting to be treated with dignity as professionals, being able to take care of their children and families, caring for their community, and even standing up for each other when needed. In the focus group done with Ahel coaches, Rahaf and Reem recalled two moments in which the sense of Us mirrored in the story of us could be identified and celebrated among the group:

“

*Last year, when we did the evaluation, we asked teachers about a specific moment in their journey in the campaign that made them feel connected, in which they felt that they belonged to the campaign. One of the teachers explained that she was very moved when another teacher called her father asking him why he was not allowing her to attend the community meetings, and to one of the big events. She felt that her fellow teacher was really taking care of her. And many of them shared the moment when they stood up in front of the ministry of education, with their children there, holding the banners.... That was an important “Us” moment for many of them.*

*(Reem, Ahel coach, focus group)*

”

The agentic capacity gained by them, led them to reclaim their sphere of power also within their families, renegotiating gender-roles, asking to be listened, or sometimes transferring to their own families the type of coaching that they were doing with public narrative, there, for solving conflicts with their children, or at the time of setting norms.

## EFFECTIVE CONFLICT SOLVING

Another impact of public narrative observed at the team level was effective conflict solving. This element was explained by Ahel and by members of the campaign. See for instance what Hala commented on this:

(Hala, teacher, daily life story)

*When there are problems in the group, we think in what are those values that we share, at the end of the day, of course conflicts will arise, but those shared values are the ones which drive us*

From their perspective as coaches, Rahaf and Reem also showed specific examples about how narratives were used for effective conflict resolution in the framework of the QMM. Rahaf explained:

“

*Using narrative prevents the team from failing or from stopping or from discontinuing... Do you remember Reem when you had that problem in Zarqa, that the team that was about to stop meeting? That was last year. I do remember saying 'Reem, why don't you meet just with the coordinator,' and Reem was saying, 'no, I'm going to call all the team.' So you, Reem, brought them all... At the beginning there were stories about: What brought you here in the first place? What's your drive to the campaign and to this specific team? And what's the moment of tension that made you come to this area of tension...? (Rahaf, Ahel coach, focus group)*

”

The excerpt from above reveals two aspects related to how narratives were incorporated in the campaign for effective conflict resolution. First, the natural manner in which members would remind themselves of their shared values when conflict arose ('Why do we care?' 'What is it that binds us?'). Second, when specific conflicts related to the team emerged, they were framed as team conflicts. Specific individuals were not targeted. Reem shared another illustrative example of this team framework:

*There was a tension in the campaign about who was going to be the one to go to the media to present the campaign... Two teachers had an argument with each other. Khawla explained that that moment reminded her about how she was raised by her father, how they looked at her as someone who cannot do things properly... She said that that moment in the campaign made her feel like [we were] not trusting her. And the other teacher also explained why she was angry. I remembered thinking: ok! This is the reason why we use stories! Thank you!*

(Reem, Ahel coach, focus group)

Qualitative evidence like this shows that the use of public narrative when conflicts emerged was a resource that grounded those arguments on shared values, shared purpose, and the norms agreed to by the team.

## BUILDING TEAM CULTURE AND HOLDING OTHERS ACCOUNTABLE

Public narrative and storytelling enhance building team culture by enabling the team to build and articulate their shared values, and, as such, make explicit their willingness to take responsibility and hold each other accountable. This is well-captured in Lina's words:

“

*Telling our stories plays a huge part, it shows your mind, how you think, and whether you are able to accept and be part of the team and to understand... what is required of you... (...)*

*(Lina, teacher, daily life story)*

”

Related to this, this process set the groundwork on how to structure the campaign in a later stage. Ishan comments on this very aspect, emphasizing how the relational work of using narratives was important, especially at the beginning of their journey together:

*At the beginning of the campaign, in 2015 and 2016, we mainly focused on building a strong team. We shared our stories, we shared our emotions, how to learn from all the team... This set the pillars (...) And sharing our stories with the teachers has made our relationship stronger. It made [it possible to expand] the campaign ...to different cities beyond Amann and Irbid (...) And now we ...have a very good team, with campaign members registered and organized. We've gained knowledge and have been trained in labor legislation (...). We have learned how to organize from Ahel.*

(Ishan, teacher, daily life story).

Ishan also made the connection between sharing their stories, building a team culture, and gaining organizational capacity to structure the campaign, as skills that come from Ahel's way of organizing. The coaching provided by Ahel throughout the leadership and organizational development of the QMM campaign stands out as a key element appreciated by most of the campaign core activists. Most of them felt that they were learning to organize and lead by mirroring Ahel's way of doing it:

“

*At the beginning we didn't have this strength, we were frightened... But the coaching and support that Ahel has provided has made us stronger. Think of all we have achieved now! Communication skills that we didn't have in the past, or how to organize a database, how to run the social media websites like Facebook and Twitter.*

*(Kayla, teacher, daily life story)*

”

A more specific aspect of accountability that was enhanced due to using public narrative was the importance of commitment to the campaign. In public narrative, it needs to be clear what is the specific commitment that the narrator is asking the listener to make to achieve a specific change. This is communicated in the story of now, the moment in the public narrative when the speaker tells those who are listening what needs to be done today by them.

As explained above in section 3.2.1., this concreteness of request characteristic of the story of now converged with how popular education circles were run in the QMM campaign.

## SHAPING THE 'US' AS A TEAM

From the aspects discussed above something that emerges is how the QMM was able to shape a shared social identity, that is, a sense of who the “Us” as a team was. Because of sharing this sense of “us”, and the relationship built among themselves, solidarity networks among themselves as fellow teachers workers were also constructed. This sense of solidarity among themselves is expressed in their struggle with school owners for their own fair wages, but also solidarity with each other as women in dealing with their families, husbands, and their children.

### 3.3.3. “We shifted the narrative on us”, impact at the sociocultural level

Sections 3 and section 4, related to the sociocultural and institutional level, are dimensions of impacts in which the observed impact of public narrative is not direct as it is in most of the aspects observed related to the individual, and team and organizational dimension. Evidence collected reveals that the use of public narrative as a pedagogy for leadership development seeded the ground for the impacts at the sociocultural and institutional dimension, generating a context that has therefore facilitated these impacts to happen.

Four inter-linked aspects stood out as being facilitated using public narrative in the campaign at the sociocultural level.

First, teachers explained feeling now more confident at the time of presenting their demands and claims to decision makers. A relevant aspect related to this is that is not just that they are more confident communicating with decision-makers, but also that they are more effective doing it. As showed in 3.2.2. (using public narrative “out there”), the use of narratives in their dissemination strategy, and in the way how they reach out to decision-makers and to other relevant stakeholders has been a key aspect at

the time of explaining what the material situation on which they stand on as a constituency is (having their rights neglected, being abused by employers, feeling that their word do not count in any decision...). An evidence of the effectiveness of the QMM strategy at the time of targeting decision-makers is observed for instance in the sustainability of their demand within the Jordanian political agenda. **The QMM campaign emerged being few teachers, and throughout the last five years more than 1000 teachers have requested to be registered in its database, rising questions and concerns about their labor rights thorough e-email, or through its Facebook channel. This, together with the media and political attention that the QMM has received, has made the campaign gaining public recognition in Jordan, making it an actor with a potential chance to be heard.** The support provided by the ILO to the campaign, as well as other international foundations, such as the Hivos Foundation has also been a catalyst for this.

As a second aspect inter-linked with the one mentioned above, something similar occurs in how they communicate and engage with the media.

All teachers who participated in the research shared that they feel more confident now in the way how they communicate with the media as a stakeholder, having a sense of agency when explaining their story, and the story of the campaign. This, in the context of the organizing work that the campaign has been developing has made possible to place the issue of women teachers' labor rights in private education as part of the Jordanian public agenda, being the QMM campaign one of the interlocutors with the media representing their constituency.

What Hala explains in the following quotation reveals this sense, and shows at the same time the own perception that they as an organized group have of the importance of counting on the media as an ally:

“

*We know that we can count on the support of some media journalists (...) When we have decided to launch some type of tactics, we have called some journalists, and many of them are eager to support and cover the campaign. Building this relationship with some journalists has been important for the campaign; some of them have really helped writing articles, or covering the campaign in the TV for instance. And this was not the case at the very beginning*

*(Hala, teacher, daily life story)*

”

Her words illuminate on something observed in the narratives of many of them, which is the idea of the need of daring to “go out there”, and count on the media as a strategic ally for their cause. Many of them explained how at the very beginning they would be intimidated by having to talk with these public actors, but thanks to the coaching that they have received from Ahel, and from their own colleagues, having to attend to an interview, and have a debate in public feels like more natural now.

Since the emergence of the campaign and specially since 2018 when it achieved passing the resolution at the Ministry of Education making compulsory for employees to do the payments via bank, the campaign has become one of the actors in the debate over teachers' rights. This has been a hot topic in Jordan in the last years. The Jordanian Teachers Syndicate -representing public education- led a one-month strike in 2019, the country's longest public sector strike that disrupted schooling for more than 1.5 million students [15]. Although achieving some of their key demands, in summer 2020 this conflict escalated, as leadership of the syndicate accused the government of failing to honor the signed agreement that had ended the strike. The situation went like a turmoil in July 2020, when again in public protests, leaders of the syndicate were arrested. This revealed the

polarization of the conflict, as well as the caution of government that it would trigger protests in other sectors. Eventually, this issue was an adding element that fed the government crisis, ending up in the prime minister resignation in October 2020.

The QMM campaign has not been silent in this issue, and although in many moments they have been at odds with the Jordanian Teachers Syndicate, they have also been side actors in this contest, supporting public teachers legitim demands for fairer labor rights. In an interview done for the online newspaper Middle East Eye, [16] Narimaaan Shawaheen (coordinator of QMM) said “Our cause is the same. We took to the streets with the public-school teachers. We participated in the protests with them.”

[15] For more information see: <https://www.reuters.com/article/idINKCN1WK0KM>

[16] <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/teachers-jordan-feel-neglected-and-unappreciated>



They have been one of the most prominent and legitim actors representing private education teachers demands, and thus step by step gaining recognition and visibility at the public level. Since 2017 the QMM has appeared regularly in media interviews of different kind, appearing in some occasions the coordinators of the campaign, but in others, other of their members. And the underlying rational for this is clear according to the QMM members:

“ *Our goal is to be stronger and encourage other teachers to join the campaign. Teachers need to know about their rights, they need to know about them to be capable of negotiating with employees. They need to know who is in charge of putting in place the regulation, most of us didn't know on the difference of being the Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Labor. And for this, counting on the media is pivotal for the campaign. With the media and also spreading the campaign among Facebook, and other social networks. Because of course, we can do it. It's not being easy, but we are walking towards it*

*(Ihsan, teacher, daily life story)* ”

Overall, these impacts at the sociocultural level have in turn affected two other aspects. The first one is that the QMM campaign has contested gender dynamics, thus generating alternative gender role models. Acknowledging the graduality of this process, women involved in the QMM campaign have dared to challenge gender dynamics within the private and public sphere which were constraining their agency. The organizing and leadership promoted in the QMM campaign has egged their agentic capacities with deep implications in the way how they perceive their family relations, as well as the relations of themselves as political actors and an organized group claiming for power, in a context where labor right vindications do not tend to be led by women. Majd elaborated this point in our conversation:

*The situation for female teachers in Jordan is not easy. Several teachers suffer problems in schools and in the campaign we have managed to help make this at least public. Teachers in private schools do not have all the rights, they are not treated well in schools. We have received a lot of complaints from teachers explaining situations of abuse and harassment by employers, including sexual harassment. The campaign is next to the teachers, for their dignity as people and as workers, so that they are stronger and so that they have better conditions, both financially and emotionally, in their rights. Apart from this, we are managing to train and educate teachers, so that they themselves become leaders, so that they know how to lead a campaign, how to lead an institution (...)*

(Majd, teacher, daily life story)

In a window of just five years, women who were unorganized and perceived as working because of “wanting to work”, and not because of having the need to, as many of the teachers explained, are perceived at the public sphere differently, with a stronger sense of power and agency. Linked to this, the QMM campaign is being one of the actors pushing in generating these new gender role models, and at the same time, showing how women can organize effectively for their labor rights, navigating a male-dominated context using their own codes. This is another aspect that is observed also to have shifted in Jordan: those advocating for the rights of teachers in private education, are female teachers, and doing so in a particular way.

When doing the qualitative fieldwork for this research at early summer 2020, so many of them explained with a sense of proudness how one of the members of the campaign, Hadeel Kiswani (co-coordinator of the campaign) had recently been in a TV interview conducted in April 2020. Hadeel was co-hosted in this TV interview with the President of Private Schools Owners' Association. Teachers, Ahel coaches, and also the two stakeholders interviewed for this research commented on the same point, how well Hadeel Kiswani, the co-coordinator of the QMM and who represented the campaign, had been in that interviewed. In the interview Hadeel was attacked by the president of the private schools' owners' association, a man whose tone in the discussion showed his own angriness, accusing her and the QMM campaign of lying about what they were saying.



Photo courtesy of Qoum Moualem facebook page

Instead of replying in the same mode, Hadeel stayed quiet, and using her public narrative she explained her arguments, and responded being calm and argumentative.

Taking a public position step by step have made the QMM campaign to also influence other female workers in other sectors in Jordan, and whose rights are also being neglected. Teachers recognize this very element, and at the same time are aware that the potential for reprisals is a real threat that they face:

(Lina, teacher, daily life story)

*Last year there was a Conference on Labor celebrated here in Jordan. A lot of people from other countries and communities came to talk about the problems faced. And our campaign participated in the Conference. Nariman shared her experience. And when she finished many people came to us to say Thank You (...) There are so many people whom rights are being violated and who they keep silent, afraid of having their rights violated. But of course, yes, I do think that we are more respected now, but I also think that we are more threatened by those in positions of powers, and this is something that will keep happening*

Photo courtesy of Qoum Moualem facebook page



(Majd, teacher, daily life story)

*Because yes, they are becoming the difference in the media. They are helping other campaigns. They are becoming part of a bigger Coalition for women's rights. And they are organizing themselves in a very good and specific way to achieve that, the coaching that they have received from Reem is important. Reem has been coaching them to get that into a social movement level, not solely just a campaign. The press conference was before forming the progressive coalition of organized women for social justice, and after the ministry of education issued the 2018 regulation making compulsory transferring the salary of the teachers directly to the bank... And it was the teachers who lead all of that... the teachers from this campaign lead all of that. And they wanted to represent themselves as the one that made that law official in the in the legislation in the Ministry of Education. So they led that conference. And I don't know, but I am still on the WhatsApp group of the campaign and media is always getting back to them and they always represent the campaign in TV and in other media"*

In the narrative from above Rahaf explains the leading role that the QMM campaign played in putting together the press conference to release the news about passing the 2018 bylaw. Teachers organized the press conference to which attended media agents, as well as decision-makers. From that moment on, they have capitalized that momentum in creating several materials explaining the campaign, and their stories [17]. Public narrative have been central to craft and explain their stories as leaders which putting at the very center those values that they share, as women, and as teachers, have also set the boundaries of which conditions they are no longer going to accept.

### 3.3.4. Our salaries paid through the bank: impacts at the institutional level

Previous case study analysis has reported on the accomplishments of the campaign (Alami, 2019). Hitherto, the campaign has achieved to apply the unified contract in private schools, and in September 2018, the Ministry of Education passed the regulation of Private Schools, including provisions making the private schools licensing conditional upon the transfer of salaries through the banks. However, the QMM struggle is still unfolding:

*We have already achieved some of our objectives, the first achievement has been to raise the standard salary of teachers in the unified contract. Another very important thing is the implementation of a system that makes compulsory, to issue school licenses, oblige the transfer of teachers' salaries through the banks. But we are currently organizing to enact mechanisms that ensure that this actually occurs. The legislation is fine, but if the Ministry do not put in place mechanisms to check this, it can end up being just paper. So our struggle continues on both sides. On the one hand, pushing the government to enact this regulation, and on the other, organizing with teachers to prevent them to accept being paid on cash*

(Khyla, daily life story, teacher)



Photo courtesy of Qoum Moualem facebook page

Both are achievements observed at the institutional level as the QMM campaign has accomplished passing actual changes in the legislation. Of relevance for the analysis done in this investigation is how the very way of organizing that has made this possible can potentially be capitalized in both their own political advocacy, and the way how the campaign structures itself.

First, new ways to communicate with decision-makers (and channels) have been created because of the claims, and the different rounds of meetings and negotiations that the QMM campaign has done. The fact of being now recognized as a public actor increases the chances of the QMM campaign in being listened to at the time of holding decision-makers accountable.

Second, because of the visibility of the campaign and the extensive work done through social media, allies have been built with specific media actors in the country. As occurred with decision-makers, this also places the QMM in a position of being able to have a say in the public debate.



Photo courtesy of Qoum Moualem facebook page

*Nobody was listening to us at the very beginning. We were working in secret. But now we can say that slowly we have built on small successes, appearing in the media, being known. The campaign is well known in Jordan now, even the president of the nation and decision-makers are aware of the campaign, so this is a solid ground to keep working*

(Hala, teacher, daily life story)

Campaign members do recognize that although regulations have been passed, they still need to be enforced. According to campaign members, this requires from decision-makers to put in place mechanisms that at least ensure that school owners are properly inspected. This requires a two-sided work for the QMM. On the one hand, to keep pushing and holding decision-makers accountable. On the other hand, to continue rising awareness and working with teachers informing why it is important to do not accept being paid in cash, or why they should not accept working conditions that violate the unified contract.

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## 4. CONCLUDING REMARKS & TAKEAWAYS

- Public narrative was coached as part of the organizing methodology, facilitated by Ahel.
- Once members of the campaign were introduced to public narrative, they started adopting it as a way of communicating and connecting with each other, internally (as a team). The use of public narrative enabled them to make sense of their own journey as women leaders, sharing with each other what had been the challenges faced, as women, and as teachers, unearthing from those moments why they care for what they do, what their shared values as a team are, and eventually, what their shared purpose is.
- The use of public narrative facilitated building relationships of trust and solidarity among the members of the campaign, what is inherent to the type of leadership developed, promoted and practiced by Ahel itself.
- The role of Ahel coaching campaign members since its very beginning set a landmark about which type of leadership development was put in practice, that of grounded on interdependent leadership team, and in which social relationships are central. Thus, Ahel coaching to campaign members, but also peer coaching among teachers themselves throughout its different stages was pivotal for the leadership development of its members.
- In the context of the QMM campaign, public narrative served as a framework to communicate more effectively its mission to the public sphere, and to engage with others, and as a pedagogy which allowed members to boost their agentic capacities at both the private and the public sphere.
- The development of agentic capacities of campaign members because of the use of public narrative has been identified as one of the core aspects of the research. It should be considered that all teachers who have participated in the fieldwork, as well as those members of the campaign, are women with at least college degrees, or a certificate education that allow them to be employed as teachers. This is of relevance as it shows the roots of the gendered dynamics of unequal power relations on Jordanian society (as occurs worldwide), and it gives a sense of the difficulty of contest them.
- The agentic capacity gained by teachers led them to reclaim their spheres of power also within their families, renegotiating gender-roles, asking to be listened, or sometimes transferring to their own families the type of coaching that they were doing by using the public narrative pedagogy.

- The use of public narrative enabled teachers to construct, in dialogue with each other, their story as public leaders daring to accept taking the responsibility to lead. This decisiveness at the time of daring to confront authority is observed in different levels among leaders of the campaign. Some of the members have taken a more public role, others have been supporting the campaign, and their fellow teachers who have dared to speak up and go public. However, it has been observed that the use of stories in an intentional way and throughout time has served as a way of being aware of how power dynamics operate, and to reflect together where they stand as a constituency in those dynamics (e.g.: in relation to the struggle of public teachers; in relation to their employers; in relation to other teachers who are not yet willing to publicly support the campaign; at the time of navigating the unwritten codes and rules of a patriarchal society, etc.,).
- This way, the use of public narrative was crucial for laying common ground for agreeing how to work together, defining roles, setting up norms, and accepting to hold each other accountable. In intentionally constructing this ground the campaign itself acknowledges how relationships are sources of power, and how they need to be cultivated to enhance the strategic and organizational capacity of the campaign -such relationships can be influential, persuasive, carriers of hope, etc.
- This relational-centered aspect is a differential feature of the QMM campaign, and deeply contrasts with how female teachers perceive for instance, other male-dominated worker unions. The latter should reflect on this aspect if there is a real intention of including women workers.
- The campaign has already achieved institutional changes. However, its members are well-aware of the need to put in place mechanisms that enforce these changes on the ground. The campaign acknowledges that this should be done by working on two sides. First, pushing decision-makers and holding them accountable. Second, continue informing the campaign constituency on why they must not accept unfair conditions offered by their employees.

### **SOME OF THE ASPECTS TO BEAR IN MIND:**

- The initial results show that the use of public narrative as a leadership practice in the context of organizing can have a positive effect on leadership development and building organizational capacity. It would be interesting to see to what extent the campaign will be able to develop an organizational structure that ensure that teachers themselves retain power; that leadership within the campaign is renewed; and that the campaign keeps working for advancing the labor rights of all teachers.
- The campaign has been expanding to other Jordanian regions, some of them located in rural areas where private education school are of different socioeconomic traits. For instance, in some of these areas teachers are not familiar with newer types of electronic payments such as e-wallet, or even the access to banks is limited. The QMM needs to take this into account, acknowledging this diversity, and thinking strategically how offered solutions and demands payout for all of them can.
- While initially the role of the ILO or AHSL was pivotal in coaching members of the campaigns, the campaign functions in an independent way now. The QMM should keep looking towards how effective organizing methodology works, acknowledging the difficulty of putting in place democratic organizational structures, and counting on the advice if needed of its networks of support of experienced organizers, at the time of doing so.

## 05

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## 6. ANNEX

### **ANNEX 1. Transcription of the participation of Narimaan Al Shawhahin, current director of the QMM campaign, at the Conference “Women Empowered for Leadership”, hosted by the Dutch organization Hivos**

#### **Stand with the teacher campaign.**

I am Nariman Al Shawahin from Irbid. I have been working as a teacher for 15 years in private schools. My father was a teacher, and this is why I became passionate about becoming a teacher. I worked in many schools, and in one of those schools that I worked in during the first years of my working life, I encountered the following situation. I asked the owner of the school to help me by paying for social security, but instead, he deducted from the low salary that I used to take!

At the end of the year, I went to the Social Security officer to check the matter, but, shockingly, he told me that we do not have a number for you in the Social Security, and this means that all that I have paid went in vain. You can imagine how I was feeling. I was very sad, and I felt that there was a volcano inside me that would erupt, so I went and confronted him and submitted my resignation, and I went to look for another job opportunity in another school.

The good thing is that I worked in another private school with a higher salary, and the owner of the school joined me in paying for the social security, and I worked with him for many years, and this is clear evidence that I have been sincere and dedicated to work.

One day, I attended a workshop in the Teachers Club conducted by the Ahl Foundation for Community Organization, and we were 35 teachers from private schools. We shared our stories that were similar to each other; the violations and injustice that private school owners used to inflict on female teachers including unpaid bus rides, a large number of classes, no summer wages, less than minimum salaries, and no vacations for the teacher.

After we shared these stories, and at the end of the workshop, Ahl Foundation asked us if we wanted to join a campaign to demand our rights and the rights of female teachers in private schools. Seven teachers and I raised our hands without hesitation. We took an approach called community organization, and we became an organized team with a clear methodology.

We are the owners of the right, so we must defend it. At the start of our campaign in 2015, I was invited to a pay-equity conference under the patronage of Her Highness Princess Basma. But when the owner of the school received this invitation, which was for me, he became very angry and called me out from my class in a hurry, and he insulted me, and after that, he fired me from work.

I know he fired me, but from this exact point, my campaign strength began, and my leadership raised. I trained a lot to be able to educate other teachers. We started the campaign with each other, and I was never alone; I work with a team, and this team has a clear dream: to reach social justice and to demand our clear rights related to wages and vacations.

We started our way together. Safia, who was not receiving the minimum wage, stood up and demanded her right and took the minimum wage, and now she is the coordinator of the local team in Zarqa. Among our team: Maali, who did not remain silent about her right and would not accept anyone to take it, became the coordinator of the local team in Amman. Enaam, who was working overtime and was not paid for those hours, also demanded her right and now she is the database coordinator for the "Stand with the teacher" campaign. We were 7 teachers in Irbid, but now we have become 70 teachers distributed over 5 governorates in the Kingdom of Jordan. We work in an organized way, meet periodically, develop our plans and strategies, evaluate our work, and plan for the future.

The database includes about 3000 teachers. We got them to know more about their rights and the law. Besides, we supported them to become distinguished teachers in their classrooms.

The thing that I want to tell you is that our Facebook page has 13700 followers, and it has become an important place to receive teachers' complaints. In 2019, we used to receive about 300 to 400 messages per month, and we used to transfer complaints to the Ministry of Labor or Social Security Institutions. But I want to inform you that there are two teachers in the "stand with the teacher" campaign team working under the name of the mediation team, has solved 100 cases by negotiating with owners of schools and returned to the teachers their rights without complaining.

Our team is strong and solid, but the biggest challenge facing our campaign, which was launched 4 years ago, is that we still cannot remove fears from teachers. This fear is justified due to economic inflation, and because the teacher wants to help her husband and her family financially. But we thought of a way to put an end to these fears, and through which we could enable the teacher to stand up and claim her right, and not be content to take less than her minimum salary, and to take her full vacations, and that if she had the experience, she would take a bonus in the salary.

We found that there is an organized and studied methodology called the popular learning methodology. I told you that we have 5 teams distributed in 5 governorates, each team members meet with each other, and then they transfer these acquired experiences to the new teachers so that they can be educated and aware of their rights. Among the advantages of the popular learning methodology is that it gave strength and leadership for the new teachers, and the proof for this is that we have two teachers: Hawazj and Maha, who had collectively rejected the school in which they worked and were not fired though. They succeeded and renewed their contract in the same school with another group of teachers, and this strength came from the popular learning methodology.

One of the rights that we sought to achieve is that all teachers' salaries be transferred to official banks instead of receiving them from school owners, and this matter required our effort for six months. At the beginning of March 2018, we took a collective stand in front of the Ministry of Education, and the adults and children supported us until this demand is fulfilled. Indeed, we succeeded, and the decision was issued in September 2018. We also made changes to the Jordanian constitution legislation, and this happened when the private schools' system imposed the school owners to transfer the teachers' payroll to the bank, otherwise the schools' license will not be renewed. All thanks go to those two teachers who were able to change through the popular learning methodology.

We thank the Typhus organization that supported the popular learning methodology, which many institutions do not believe in. We have indeed worked a lot to achieve these rights, especially the right to transfer teachers' salaries to banks, but unfortunately, and despite the issuance of this law, it has not yet been implemented by the Ministry of Education, but we will not remain silent about this right until it is implemented. We know that our journey is long and our road is difficult, because violations of workers' rights do not have social justice, and this thing is generalized as we have heard from stories and experiences in Lebanon and South Africa, but I want to tell you that we are getting stronger, and we will continue on our way because social justice is a right for every human being on this earth.

Thanks.

# PUBLIC NARRATIVE AND ITS USE IN THE STAND UP WITH THE TEACHERS CAMPAIGN IN JORDAN (QMM)

RESEARCH REPORT  
CASE STUDY 1 NARRATIVES4CHANGE PROJECT

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