

# The Story of Youth Deprived of Family Ties in Jordan

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## Abstract

In 2014, the Information and Research Center – King Hussein Foundation (IRCKHF) designed and implemented a project to address the discrimination and challenges facing one of Jordan's most vulnerable group of youth: Youth Deprived of Family Ties (YDFT). This project was implemented over a 3 year period with the support of a Democracy and Governance Grant from USAID's Civic Initiatives Support Program.

The first component of the project was **research** and was implemented in partnership with the grassroots organization, Sakeena. It comprised of a legislative, literature and media review, a quantitative survey with society, and qualitative participatory research with YDFT. It showed that YDFT face multiple challenges and forms of discrimination throughout different stages in their lives – resulting in their social alienation and exclusion. A large part of the stigma stems from the negative labels that are used to describe them. Additionally, it was found that this group of youth is forced to integrate into society without an appropriate support system and without the necessarily skills and knowledge to survive in an increasingly challenging world. The research concluded that while a large part of the problem was due to society's social discrimination towards these youth, care leavers were not prepared to be independent and this was preventing their ability to socially integrate into Jordan's diverse yet already fragmented society.

For this reason, the second component of the project was **awareness and advocacy**. This component aimed to use the findings of the research to mobilize key stakeholders in order to reduce the social discrimination faced by YDFT in Jordan. An important objective of the advocacy work was to change the way this group of youth was perceived by society. Therefore, extensive advocacy and awareness work was done with different stakeholders including the government, media, society members, caregivers as well as the youth themselves. The methodology was holistic and participatory, recognizing the different roles that these agents can play in enforcing or reducing social stigma.

While the stigma against YDFT has not been eliminated, it has been reduced over the campaign period. Throughout the campaign, government officials and media reporters started to adopt positive terminologies including "orphans" and "youth deprived of family ties".

Additionally, in the advocacy and awareness component YDFT were given a platform to share their voices in discussions, as well as through the 'Humans of Amman' stories. They contributed to the development of the '**Care Leavers Kit**' which ensured that the kit targeted the actual needs of YDFT. Thereby, the youth were effective participants throughout the research, advocacy, and awareness components which gave them a sense of empowerment.

Another crucial aspect that the project tackled during the advocacy phase was to create a mechanism that helped care leavers transition into an independent life. This was done by establishing a **network of civil society organizations** (CSOs) that can effectively help the youth upon leaving the care centers. Different CSOs that have experience in providing care leavers with legal, health, education, accommodation and other services were first identified. In 2018, a **referral mechanism** was developed by the experts in the field of alternative care and Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs); Dr. Rawan Ibrahim and Ms. Muna

Hakooz, to enable the CSO network to refer cases amongst themselves, allowing them to expand their outreach, and most importantly, ensure that several services are being made available to all YDFT.

In 2019, IRCKHF in collaboration with DATA4CHANGE created and launched **BEDAYA** ("The Beginning" in Arabic) which is a data-driven digital platform that empowers YDFT with practical information whilst also raising awareness about their experiences.

The work of the IRCKHF is built on the King Hussein Foundation legacy and the Social Identity Theory, which argue that only by recognizing and addressing the needs of the most vulnerable can we have a positive impact on the overall well-being and development of our society.

## Read More:

- Report volume 1: [Empowering Care Leavers in Jordan - Volume 1](#)
- Report Volume 2: [Empowering Care Leavers in Jordan - Volume II](#)
- Infographic: [Youth Deprived of Family Ties in Jordan: The Discrimination in the Name](#)
- Infographic: [The Problems Faced by Youth Deprived of Family Ties](#) (Arabic only)
- Infographic: [Terminology Used for Orphans Deprived of Family Ties](#) (Arabic only)
- Play: ["Born To Be"](#) (Full play in Arabic only)
- Project Presentation: [Empowering Care Leavers in Jordan: The Story of Children and Youth Deprived of Family Ties](#)
- Digital Platform: [Albedaya](#) ("The Beginning" in Arabic)
- Kit: [Care Leavers Kit](#) (Arabic only)