



Policy Report

Reframing migrant workers and refugee policies: advocating for rights through the HAQUNA approach

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Executive summary

This report builds on four discussion sessions with the Migrant Workers Committee (MWC) led by ARDD within the framework of the *Advancing Haquna* project. The policy memos combine the central contribution of MWC members together with evidence from sectorial studies and analyses of available literature conducted by ARDD. They offer specific assessment and policy strategies addressing: (1) Legal aid access for migrant workers and refugees; (2) Labor rights framework; (3) Access to basic services; (4) Durable solutions for migrant workers and refugees. The policy memos put forward a set of actionable recommendations, transversal and intersectional to all themes, for enhancing the protection of refugees and migrant workers, favoring the achievement of better working and life conditions and their inclusion in the host country's social and economic environment. They all point out the need for direct engagement of migrant workers and refugee communities in advocating for their rights and protection. With the aim to keep developing the bottom-up approach that is at the core of the MWC and in cooperation with ARDD, new ways forward based on lessons learned through the implementation of the *Haquna project* were articulated emphasizing the broader, regional dimension of grassroots advocacy and mobilization for guaranteeing protection to vulnerable groups.

Specifically, the MWC calls for continuous efforts aiming at:

- 1- Continuing providing **pro-bono legal aid** for the protection and empowerment of migrant workers and refugees.
- 2- Organizing **legal awareness sessions** as part of the *Haquna* project, reaching more members of the community.
- 3- Organizing **specialized workshops with relevant stakeholders** and actors such as UNHCR that can share valuable knowledge on legal social and economic avenues available to migrants and refugees to protect their rights and improve living conditions.
- 4- Awarding **official certificates** to members attending awareness sessions in order to strengthen their role within communities.
- 5- Establishing **committees of migrant workers and refugees in the whole Arab region** so as to strengthen the regional resilience of people on the move, building on the achievements of the Jordanian experience.

“Haquna”: building a bottom-up approach

The *Advancing Haquna* initiative builds on the previous project *Haquna* which highlighted the importance and necessity of strengthening a **bottom-up strategy** that enables migrant workers and refugees to voice their needs and gain knowledge and tools to access and protect their rights. The *Haquna's* project began in 2021 and successfully launched the Migrant Workers Committee (MWC) in response to a multitude of human rights challenges facing the migrant worker community in Jordan. The MWC is composed of 30 women and men of 6 different nationalities and with either the status of migrant workers or that of refugees.

It is now evident that the challenges they face largely stem from the absence of social protection mechanisms and inclusive labor laws, as well as information about their rights. This is also compounded by significant misperceptions and mistrust toward refugees and mi-

grants, in the host societies.

Advancing Haquna aims at properly equipping the MWC members with the correct information on how to have access to and protect their rights and play a leading role in raising awareness of migrants and refugees' rights within their community. Each MWC member thereby indirectly benefits their community by bridging the gap between misinformation and accurately sourced advice on how to protect themselves under a variety of circumstances. A major step in strengthening the MWC and empowering migrant workers and refugees in Jordan to make their voices heard can be their connection with a variety of policymakers as well as, **The Migration and Refugee Forum for the Arab World (MARFA)** to create a **regional network** able to protect rights of refugees and migrant workers at the broader level.

“Advancing Haquna”: empowering communities

A major component of the *Advancing Haquna*'s initiative is the organization of four group sessions with migrant workers, aiming at collecting information and data on the most common challenges that refugees and migrant workers face in accessing and protecting their rights as well as providing clear indications on mechanisms and institutions that can provide legal and social support for the communities with the goal to empower them. The purpose of these sessions is to 1) sustain the work and momentum of the committee by gathering members to generate evidence regarding needs and violations, 2) discuss the outcomes, successes, and lessons learned of the *Haquna* project with the migrant workers, and explore ways to build on them, 3) act as a platform for the mobilization of migrant workers and act as a network for members to offer support to one another, 4) follow up on the initiatives and activities that migrant worker members of the Committee have committed to during the *Haquna* project.

The four sessions of Advancing Haquna took place in Amman between June and August 2022 and were led by ARDD legal advisers.

Overall, they facilitated a clear understanding of 1) the legal framework of refugees and workers with a specific focus on the different statuses of non-Jordanians (refugees, migrant workers, citizens) and what rights they are entitled to; 2) emphasizing the necessity and importance to create spaces for disseminating an understanding of the rights and their protections among migrant workers and refugees so to empower them in voicing their needs and challenges; 3) enacting mechanisms of knowledge-dissemination that allows refugees and migrant workers to access their rights.

In particular, the drafting and dissemination of four policy memos addressing specific issues related to migrant workers and refugees' living and working conditions were key to the advocacy efforts that inspire *Haquna*.

From experience to shared resources - WAY FORWARD

ARDD has been advocating for the improvement of status, working, and living conditions of migrant workers and refugees for over a decade. It has been building local and regional partnerships with civil society and human rights organizations to contribute to policy-making strategies able to address the constraint and challenges faced by these vulnerable individuals and groups, in obtaining legal recognition and improving living and working conditions.

In order to keep developing a bottom-up strategy that fully empowers the migrant workers and refugee communities, the MWC envisages a new **way forward** aiming at expanding the *Haquna* successes.

In particular, the Committee pointed out that **Pro-bono legal assistance** as provided by ARDD remains a fundamental element for the protection and empowerment of migrant workers and refugees. The MWC calls for continuous efforts to promote and strengthened legal support and knowledge of the legal framework and tools that are available to them. For this reason, the Committee insists on the relevance of **legal awareness sessions** and highlights the importance of covering topics such as regulations of online work and oracle commerce. It recommends continuing to organize awareness sessions on a broader scale, reaching more members of the community. Moreover, in order to advance a more concrete and solid understanding of legal framework and mechanisms to achieve rights, the Committee calls for **specialized workshops with relevant stakeholders** and actors such as UNHCR that can share valuable knowledge on legal social and economic avenues available to migrants and refugee to protect their rights and improve living conditions. This would also improve the communication and cooperation between all relevant stakeholders and allow for the voice of refugees and migrants to be heard more directly while also facilitating their understanding of legislation and approaches at the international and local levels. These sessions and training could be even more effective if they could be formalized and attested for: the MWC suggest exploring the possibility to award **official certificates** to members attending awareness sessions in order to strengthen their role within communities.

Finally, the CMW acknowledges and celebrates the empowered role that the Committee was able to develop within the community and recognizes the importance of such networks for migrants/refugees. It, therefore, recommends advocating for the **creation of similar committees and networks in the whole Arab region**. This regional scope would not only benefit migrants and refugees in the host country but also enable them to keep supporting their communities. Through their empowered role in the country of origin, they could share their experiences and lessons learned, to equip other members of the community with relevant knowledge before they migrate to other countries.

Advancing Haquna (Our rights)

In the context of the joint Haquna initiative, ARDD and Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung Palestine and Jordan (HBS) promote means that guarantee respect for the rights of migrant workers and refugees and raise awareness about ways to improve their living conditions to give rise to peaceful societies

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