

فيروس  
كورونا  
COVID\_19

بصيص من الأمل في زمن الكورونا:  
قصصنا من الأردن

Glimpses of Hope in the Era of Corona:  
Our Stories from Jordan

KING HUSSEIN FOUNDATION  
مركز المعلومات والبحوث  
INFORMATION AND RESEARCH CENTER



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# Glimpses of Hope in the Era of Corona: Our Stories from Jordan

The Information and Research Center – King Hussein Foundation (IRCKHF) team recognized that it was a scary and fearful time for everyone, especially at the beginning of COVID-19 crisis escalated in Jordan, and they wanted to capture the challenges while still seeing the positive side, to give people hope, hence the title of the series was ‘Glimpses of Hope in the Era of Corona: Our Stories from Jordan’.

The IRCKHF team tried to cover all those people that they have done research with or about, the most marginalized. People in Jordan often think that the most marginalized are only refugees, but the team brought the stories of women, single mothers, women married to foreigners, children of Jordanian women married to non-Jordanians, care leavers, people with disabilities, as well as some others that were just uplifting.

The series showed that during the curfew and COVID-19 crisis time: 1) those who were already suffering from social injustice were suffering even more, because they are the ones most left out. 2) that the series reminded us something important about society in Jordan, the importance and value of thinking of and helping one other, whether through neighbors, volunteers, grassroots initiatives, or CSOs.

The IRCKHF team collected and published 25 stories, and these stories reached **93,667** people on IRCKHF social media channels (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram), and got **4,819** as total engagement. The team published the series on March 27 until May 21, where the team published three stories in each week.

## Stories

As mentioned above, all the stories are published on ‘[COVID-19 Stories](#)’ Album on Facebook, and on [IRCKHF account](#) on Twitter, as well as on [Instagram](#).

The following are the 25 stories that the IRCKHF team collected during the COVID-19 lockdown and have been published on the IRCKHF social media channels:

Glimpses of Hope  
in the Era of  
Corona:  
Our Stories from  
Jordan



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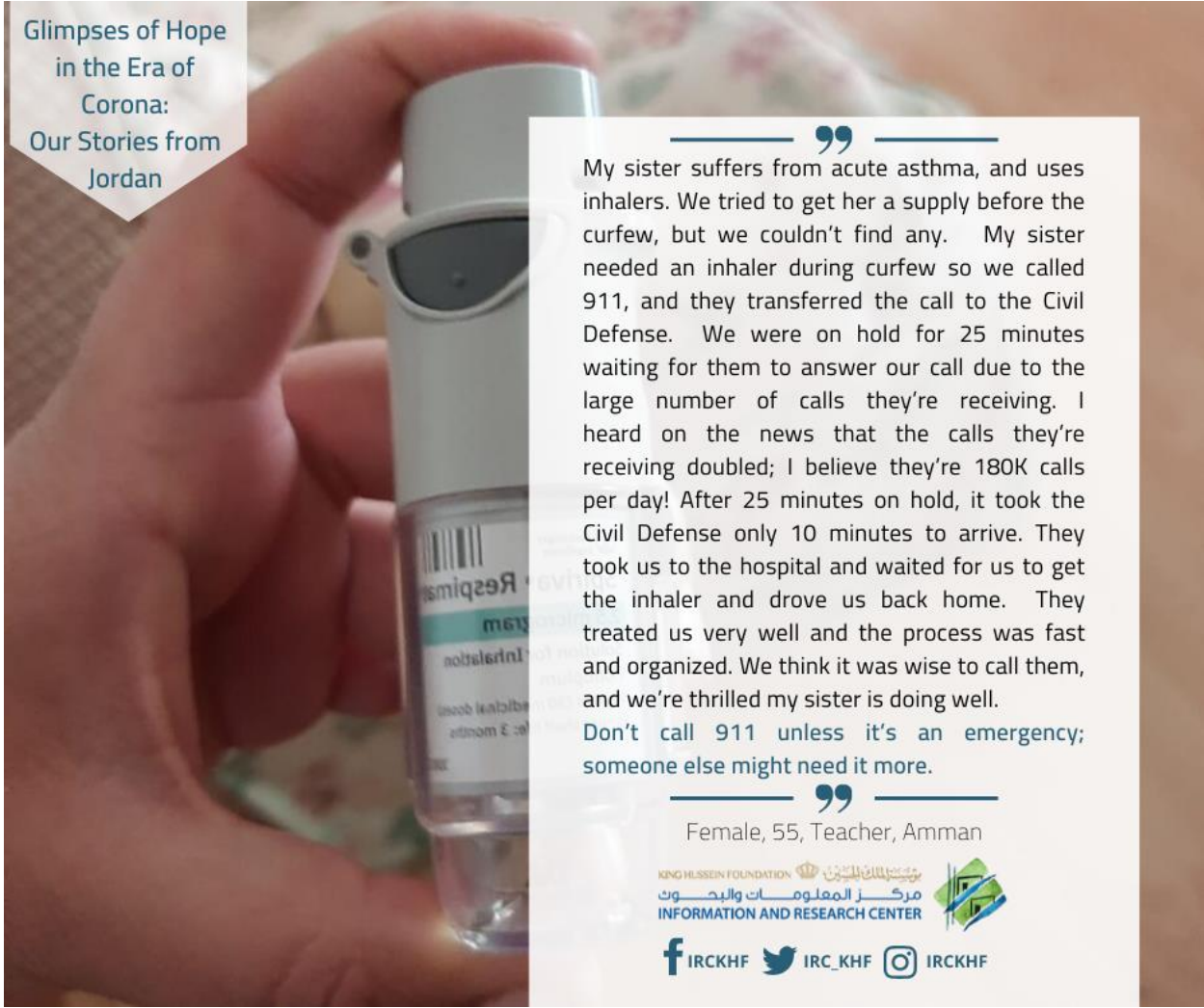
We have distinctive transparency in Jordan; the numbers are not hidden as the government shares them in detail each day, which is positive and makes us feel reassured. As for the Labor Law, the Defense Law and official leaves, they play a key role in protecting many private sector employees from the exploitation of employers and evasion of payments. My employers wanted to lay me off without paying me my salary, but I had already read about this and heard on the news that we can reach the Ministry of Labor if we encounter such problems which are considered a violation of the Defense Law. I shared this information with my employers and now I'm still on the job working remotely from home.

Get to know your rights and fulfill your obligations if it's possible in your line of work

”

Male, 29, Construction Manager, Amman

Glimpses of Hope  
in the Era of  
Corona:  
Our Stories from  
Jordan



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My sister suffers from acute asthma, and uses inhalers. We tried to get her a supply before the curfew, but we couldn't find any. My sister needed an inhaler during curfew so we called 911, and they transferred the call to the Civil Defense. We were on hold for 25 minutes waiting for them to answer our call due to the large number of calls they're receiving. I heard on the news that the calls they're receiving doubled; I believe they're 180K calls per day! After 25 minutes on hold, it took the Civil Defense only 10 minutes to arrive. They took us to the hospital and waited for us to get the inhaler and drove us back home. They treated us very well and the process was fast and organized. We think it was wise to call them, and we're thrilled my sister is doing well. Don't call 911 unless it's an emergency; someone else might need it more.

”

Female, 55, Teacher, Amman



Glimpses of Hope  
in the Era of  
Corona:  
Our Stories from  
Jordan



I worked with with a group of my friends on distributing food parcels, sanitizer, detergent, and bread to families in need and to our Egyptian and Syrian brothers and sisters who are not covered by the law in terms of wages and compensation (because they are day laborers). This has been sponsored by 'Joy Initiative' and in coordination with the municipality of Busaira. Yesterday (day 6 of the curfew), I was distributing parcels when I came across families who'd had nothing to eat for 4 days, God knows how they managed to survive. There was this one woman in a wheelchair, she has no one and lives by herself, she hadn't eaten in 3 days and when we visited her she started to cry. My message to my fellow citizens is to stay at home, but also be aware and if you can, try to help neighbors who are in need.

Musa'ab Al-Shroush, Tafilah Governorate -  
Busaira District



Glimpses of Hope  
in the Era of  
Corona:  
Our Stories from  
Jordan



I live in a building where we hardly know our neighbors. Everyone is friendly but we're all so busy it's mainly been hi and bye. The other day one of the neighbors came to tell me that there was a truck on our street selling vegetables in case I needed anything. Thankfully my family and I have food, but we have finished our fresh produce because we haven't stepped out of our apartment since the curfew began, and I wanted the kids to eat something fresh. So I went down to try to buy some but when I got there the truck had left. A few minutes later my doorbell rings, and I find three bags full of vegetables outside my door, the *hariss* says to me "these are for you," he explained that these were from one of the neighbors in our building who has a farm. The delivery had been for them and they were distributing vegetables to every apartment in the building. This random act of kindness during these very difficult times is extremely uplifting, especially considering we don't really know one another. A few minutes after that my doorbell rings again, one of my other neighbors had come to give us from her share of the vegetables not knowing that we all received some. I thanked her and explained to her that we already had our share. It is an extremely comforting feeling to know that everyone is looking out for one another. When this is all over, and we no longer need to worry about social distancing, I'm going to make a genuine effort to get to know all of my neighbors.

37 year old mother, Amman



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Glimpses of Hope  
in the Era of  
Corona:  
Our Stories from  
Jordan

“

One of the youth deprived of family ties is a 23 year old care leaver who lives in a student dormitory. He has a health problem where he has frequent seizures and we [Sakeena, a CBO for orphans deprived of family ties] usually get his medication, but he hadn't told us that he didn't have any left. He had a seizure and his flatmates tried to call for an ambulance but to no avail. They called me for help, not only because I am a part of Sakeena but also because they know I am a nurse. I explained to them step by step how to take care of him. They kept in touch with me all through the night to give me updates on the situation until he woke up; thankfully we were able to get past this hurdle. Once the pharmacies opened the next morning, we contacted our accountant, Othman, because he was the nearest to the dorm. Othman was able to get the medication, insisting to pay for it himself then walk over and deliver it. Everyone needs support from family and friends, especially during such times, and youth deprived from family ties have no one. We, Sakeena, don't have much and we can't reach them under the current circumstances because we don't have a permit, but we are in contact with them on a regular basis so they know we are there for them.

”

Adham Khader, Sakeena Organization for Orphans



Glimpses of Hope  
in the Era of  
Corona:  
Our Stories from  
Jordan

“

We felt terrible when we first arrived at the hotel because we didn't understand what exactly was going to happen and we were exhausted, but nothing is as bad as it first seems. In fact, those 2 weeks in quarantine made me discover new aspects about my personality I had no idea existed. I had a hectic schedule; I used to leave work at 6 pm, I also took classes and courses and went to the gym. Being quarantined, especially by the sea in solitude, made me relax and think about my future. I had the time to reflect and make some major decisions in my life. As a civil engineer who is considering changing her field of work, I'm now reading about other specializations. As a result of quarantine, I can say that, God willing, I now have a clear vision and I know what I want to do next! I will change my area of specialty to inventory management, a component of supply chain management, as I realized that it involves more mathematics and management which I enjoy, and is also a good and practical field. Take advantage of the quarantine period; it is an opportunity for reflection, to rethink your priorities and to plan for the future.

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Banan Qattous, Amman





Glimpses of Hope  
in the Era of  
Corona:  
Our Stories from  
Jordan

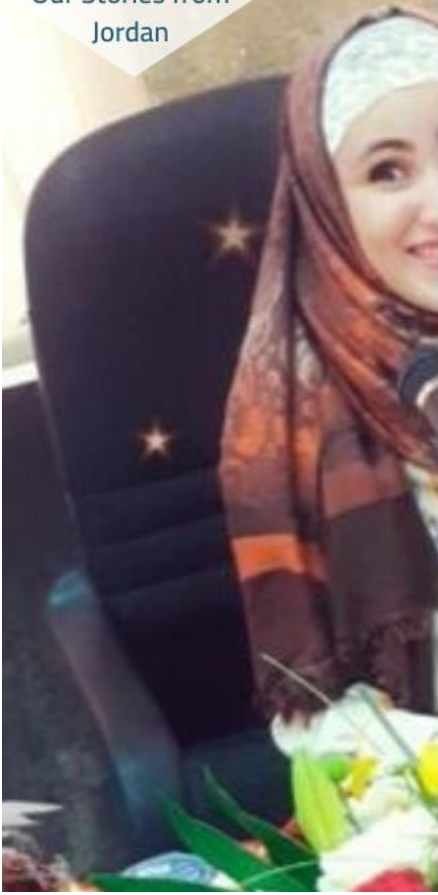


I am a day laborer; I make pastries and pickles and sell them. Our house rent is due and we don't have the full amount because the current situation has had a huge impact on day laborers and my business has stopped. Who would buy from me under such circumstances? I don't even want to sell food because I prepare it with my hands; one can't be completely sure and I can't risk spreading the virus. I've stopped selling food for more than a month now. Meanwhile, I bring plastic bags, wash, dry, then recycle them to make pencil cases, shopping bags, and other nice things. I started this business two months ago, and staying at home with my children has helped me be more productive. I am really happy now that we are making these products. Hopefully we can sell them when things get better. (As the Quran says) 'It may be that you dislike a thing which is good for you.'

Be creative and try to find new ways to make ends meet.

Syrian female, 46, Irbid

Glimpses of Hope  
 in the Era of  
 Corona:  
 Our Stories from  
 Jordan



“

The initiative began by us asking ourselves what role we, as people with disabilities, can play during this crisis? Our idea was to create several videos and publish them on social media platforms. The initiative started in Jordan, then we contacted people with disabilities in other countries such as Egypt and Lebanon. We also contacted a hearing-impaired person who knows sign language to help us create an integrated video which features a group of people with disabilities, each with their own message asking people to stay at home. Our point is to show that we too have an important role to contribute to society. Just as we claim our rights to education, work, and health, it's also our responsibility now to support our country. Hence, we created this initiative and video which features a group of people with disabilities, including myself (see video in the first comment below).

We need to remind others that people with disabilities are an integral part of society who must have their full rights in order to practice their citizenship.

”

Tuqa Al-Majali, Al-Karak



Glimpses of Hope  
in the Era of  
Corona:  
Our Stories from  
Jordan

When they [the Government] started delivering drinking water and bread on Tuesday (March 24) during the curfew, a company car came to sell us water. I asked them about the price and the supplier told me that the gallon is for 7.5 JDs. I am not familiar with the prices because we don't usually buy them, and honestly I would've paid! Luckily a policeman was nearby, he heard the conversation and joined the conversation; he argued with the supplier and asked to speak to his supervisor and in the end gave him a warning. The supplier's colleague sold us the same gallon for 2 JDs! I bought two gallons so instead of paying 15JDs, I paid 4.


We hope people won't take advantage of the situation and exploit others, and we thank the many who sell good in good conscience without the need to be supervised.

19 year old male, University of Jordan, Amman

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in the Era of  
Corona:  
Our Stories from  
Jordan

“

Ever since the Corona crisis escalated, I was worried sick about my four children and my ill husband. We only have God to look after us... I was worried that I wouldn't be able to provide the basics for my family, especially when the curfew started. Fortunately, I asked a friend of mine for help; she told me about a Facebook group for Jordanian mothers and shared my story with them. They did everything they could and provided me with the basic necessities. The government's actions have been excellent, but the important thing is that everyone complies. God willing, this virus will disappear, so that we may we all stay safe and help one other. The most important thing is that we are good to one another especially under these circumstances.

”

41 year old mother in Balqa

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Glimpses of Hope  
in the Era of  
Corona:  
Our Stories from  
Jordan

My husband is Egyptian and he hasn't been able to work for nearly 3 years now because of his old age. We have 5 children, and currently what is helping us the most is the work of active CBOs and initiatives who are providing us with the essentials. It's still a very difficult time for us as well hard for us and many other families, but thankfully, these CBOs and initiatives are doing some great work. I hope that the officials coordinate with the CBOs and initiatives to check on families in need.

43 year old mother, Jabal Al Naser Refugee  
Camp

Glimpses of Hope  
in the Era of  
Corona:  
Our Stories from  
Jordan

The government imposed a strict 48-hour curfew last week, during which random tests were taken by the epidemiological investigation teams in different areas in Amman, including the neighborhood I live in; the Prince Hassan District. The teams visited every house in our neighborhood, and we welcomed them into our home. They had a file in which they document the names and phone numbers of each person tested. They also had a box full of samples and swabs that they stick into one's nasal cavity, after which they put them in a tube labeled with the person's name, and then place them into a medical container.

I was pleasantly surprised that the test was very simple and not at all scary. The doctors who tested us were professional and treated us with care and respect; they asked for our permission before conducting the test and we agreed. The team was also respectful of our privacy; two doctors entered our house, one of them is called Dr. Adnan Isaac, who is responsible for collecting random samples, as well as two Civil Defense personnel who waited outside the house. It was a good experience because the team was so organized and efficient, plus being rest assured that my family and I were being tested.

Being tested is for our own good and the good of our country. The test is simple and effective, and the staff are making outstanding efforts.

(Part 1 of 2, to be continued...)

Nibal Awad, IRCKHF Researcher, Jabal Al Naser





Glimpses of Hope  
in the Era of  
Corona:  
Our Stories from  
Jordan

(Part 2 of 2) The results for my family and I came back negative, however 3 of our neighbors tested positive so the government imposed a comprehensive curfew on our neighborhood. The Ministry of Health's procedures were excellent; they sterilized houses and cars, and tested the entire neighborhood. Some volunteers took the initiative to visit every house, while safe distancing, and checked with residents to see if they needed bread or food. The army was very cooperative, and gave the volunteers permission to enter our street, now known as 'the hot spot' street. For our own safety, noone was allowed to leave their home.

On the second day of the comprehensive curfew, municipality cleaners wearing protective clothing started working at 9 a.m. collecting garbage bags from each house and cleaning the streets. Volunteers have done such a great job providing every household on our street with supplies and helping the 'camp improvement committee.' As for those who tested positive, the entire neighborhood sympathizes with them and their families. We all offer our support and continuously pray for their speedy recovery. Thankfully the test results of the family members of those infected came back negative. 'The hot spot' street residents have already decorated for Ramadan putting up bright lights to lift up everyone's spirits, and children have been flying kites raising them up high boosting the whole neighborhood's morale.

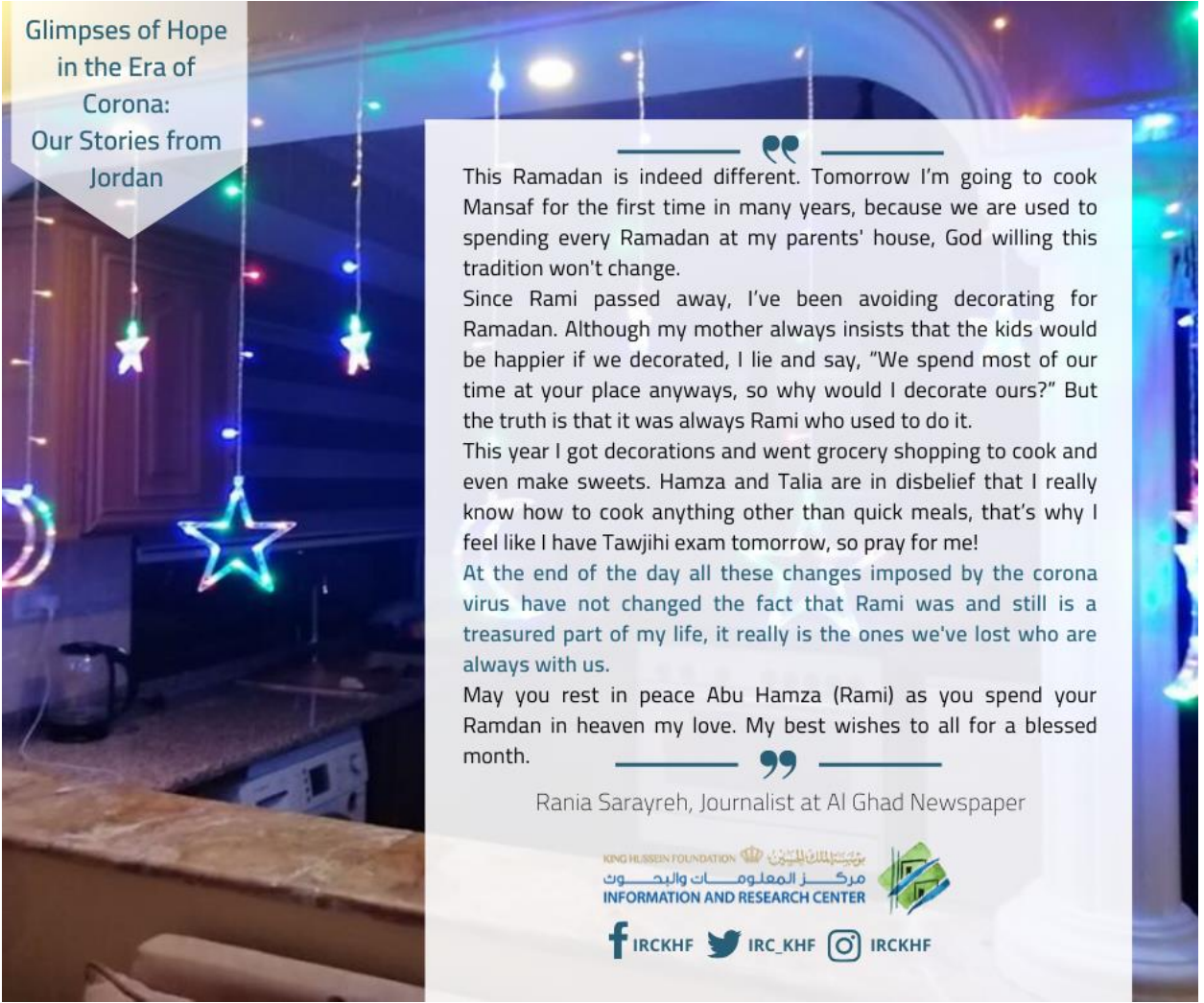
Through the joint efforts of volunteers, medical and security personnel, families, and children, our neighborhood came together with the hope that everyone will be happy and healthy once more.

Nibal Awad, IRCKHF Researcher, Jabal Al Naser





Glimpses of Hope  
in the Era of  
Corona:  
Our Stories from  
Jordan



“

This Ramadan is indeed different. Tomorrow I'm going to cook Mansaf for the first time in many years, because we are used to spending every Ramadan at my parents' house, God willing this tradition won't change.

Since Rami passed away, I've been avoiding decorating for Ramadan. Although my mother always insists that the kids would be happier if we decorated, I lie and say, "We spend most of our time at your place anyways, so why would I decorate ours?" But the truth is that it was always Rami who used to do it.

This year I got decorations and went grocery shopping to cook and even make sweets. Hamza and Talia are in disbelief that I really know how to cook anything other than quick meals, that's why I feel like I have Tawjihi exam tomorrow, so pray for me!

At the end of the day all these changes imposed by the corona virus have not changed the fact that Rami was and still is a treasured part of my life, it really is the ones we've lost who are always with us.

May you rest in peace Abu Hamza (Rami) as you spend your Ramadan in heaven my love. My best wishes to all for a blessed month.

”

Rania Sarayreh, Journalist at Al Ghad Newspaper

Glimpses of Hope  
in the Era of  
Corona:  
Our Stories from  
Jordan

During this crisis, I was very worried about my children and their education, but they are currently studying remotely through WhatsApp. Public schools have been very cooperative; they created a schedule for each subject and are holding exams. Thankfully everything is going well. Teachers record lessons for students to watch from home, they explain everything just like they would be teaching at school, God bless them. We interact with them and contact them to thank them for their efforts and for taking the time to teach our children, they even give them recreational classes. Exams are posted on Facebook, and of course, it's our responsibility as parents to prevent children from cheating.

Studying from home requires perseverance and commitment from students and parents to achieve excellent academic results.

Syrian mother, 46, Irbid



Glimpses of Hope  
in the Era of  
Corona:  
Our Stories from  
Jordan



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I am a barber. Unfortunately, I am in dispute with my family and had to move away from them to a different neighborhood. The Corona pandemic has proven to me that there is still good in people; while it affected my work as a barber, and my income, I didn't feel that I was alone. Everyone here treats each other as family and checks up on each other constantly. Now, when I buy bread, I unconsciously buy some to all my neighbors without being asked to. I've realized that this feeling is a blessing in disguise, and I appreciate knowing that I have family around me.

Social solidarity is the most important type of family to have in such circumstances.

”

Male barber, 43, Jabal Al Naser Refugee Camp



Glimpses of Hope  
in the Era of  
Corona:  
Our Stories from  
Jordan



I'm a resident in one of the Informal Tented Settlements (ITS) in Jordan and am in charge of the settlement in which I reside. At the beginning of the Corona virus crisis the situation was unclear to us because we work on farms for long hours and we rarely interact with other communities. We didn't know about the curfew and the lockdown, so we couldn't buy bread or food. The first few days were very difficult, until our Jordanian neighbors, who had curfew exemption permits, brought us bread and food; and the "Developing the Future Entrepreneurs Initiative" provided sanitizer to all settlement residents.

Sometimes checking up on your neighbors could save their lives!

Saleh, 44 year old Syrian

Glimpses of Hope  
in the Era of  
Corona:  
Our Stories from  
Jordan



During the curfew, I was collecting information about people with disabilities who were affected by this crisis, especially heads of households, in order to help them. When the holy month of Ramadan started, I raised funds from my friends and the response was great. We were able to help 20 people so far and the initiative is still ongoing. My initiative is for people with disabilities. Every initiative, however small, makes a difference.

Nehaia Radaideh, Social Activist, Irbid



Glimpses of Hope  
in the Era of  
Corona:  
Our Stories from  
Jordan

God bless my kind-hearted mother. We stayed home during the curfew and the bakeries had been closed for two days, leaving some families in the camp without enough bread. My mother decided to help our neighbors, she spent an entire day at home baking bread to feed women and children. God bless my mother and other do-gooders, I'm so proud of her.

In times of need, all our strength and energy goes into helping one another.

Maryam Azawi, Azraq Camp

Glimpses of Hope  
in the Era of  
Corona:  
Our Stories from  
Jordan



I am one of the Jordanian students studying abroad. I spent 50 days in quarantine in Turkey and have returned back home 4 days ago. My message to all my colleagues currently in quarantine is: remember that those returning from abroad pose the greatest threat to our country; if any of us fails to adhere to the instructions, this will recreate the entire Corona scenario, demolish the efforts of those on the frontlines, and disrupt the livelihood of many families.

When the nurse gave me the instructions, I asked him if I could walk by myself in the walkway and he said: "You can't. Please, bear with us. We also left our homes and families and are here quarantined with you. Do not ruin everything with an individual irresponsible behavior."

Let us all be patient so we can return to our families, let's do it for the sake of the soldiers standing outside under the sun at the lowest point on land... The ball is in our court for these 14 or 17 days; let's do the right thing.

Malak Al-Abbadi, Jordanian student in Turkey





Glimpses of Hope  
in the Era of  
Corona:  
Our Stories from  
Jordan



Honestly, when the Corona crisis started, no one paid attention to the children of Jordanian mothers married to non-Jordanians. However, thankfully, the Jordanian Government treated male and female Jordanians equally and considered Jordanian mothers as heads of households as they do with Jordanian fathers.

Children of Jordanian mothers married to non-Jordanians are allowed to apply for bread subsidies and day laborers' aid program provided they have the special identification cards for children of Jordanian mothers. Unfortunately, a large group of us are unable to obtain this ID for various reasons. I wish there was an exception for children of deceased Jordanian mothers to access these services. When Jordanian fathers are deceased, the mother or the eldest son become the head of the household; however, the government does not acknowledge a head of the household when the Jordanian mother (married to a non-Jordanian) is deceased.

Children of deceased Jordanian mothers contacted the government and were told that they can file an objection within the period allowed. I am hopeful that the government will take action in the coming few days to solve this problem.

Until Jordanian women are given full citizenship rights, the children of Jordanian mothers married to non-Jordanians should not be forgotten as members of Jordanian society.

Rami Al Wakil, Coordinator of the Campaign  
'My Mother is Jordanian and Her Nationality is a Right for Me'





Glimpses of Hope  
in the Era of  
Corona:  
Our Stories from  
Jordan



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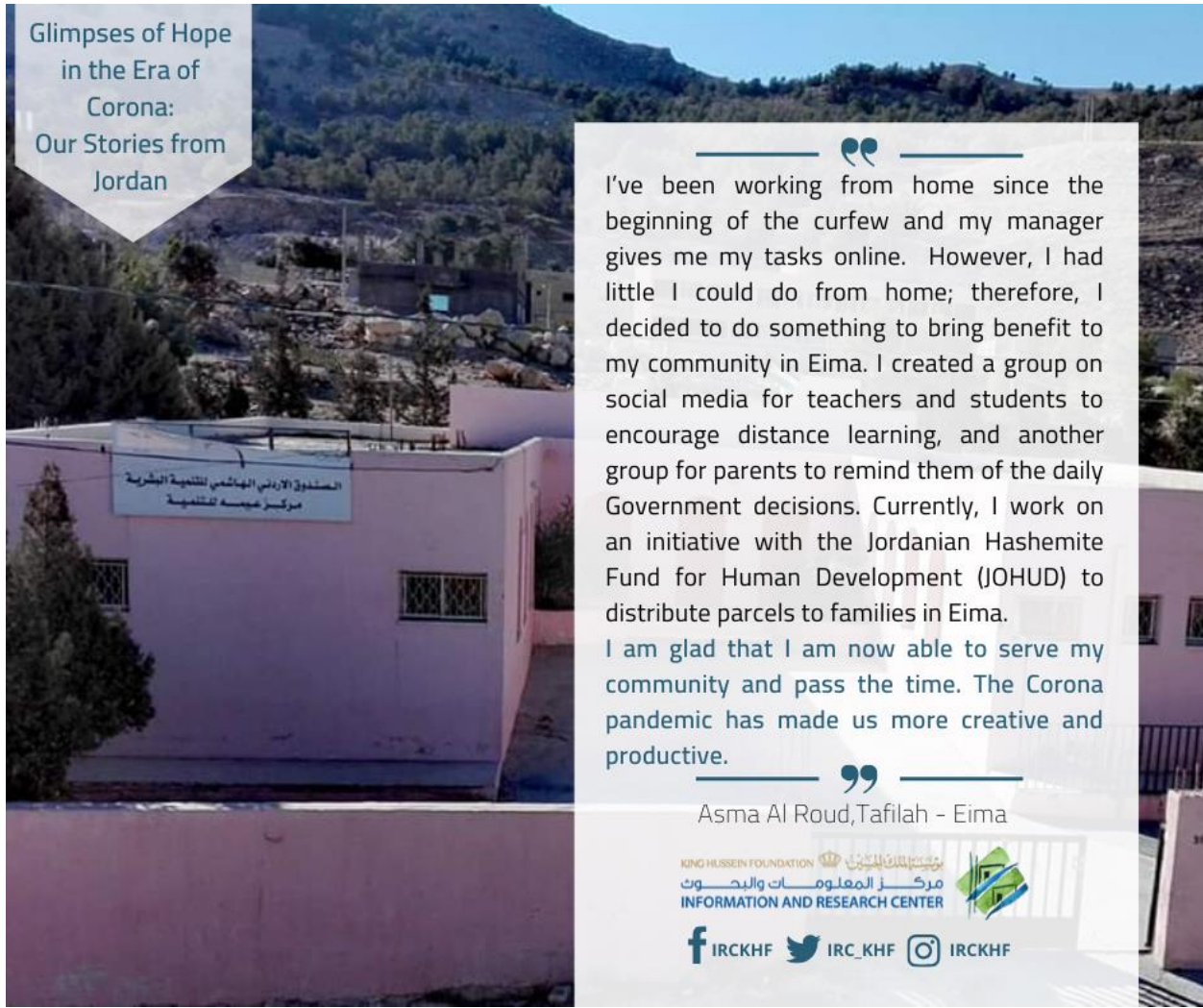
Before the curfew, I used to work on a private project of mine that automatically sorts waste through smart waste containers. In addition to the profit, the project is beneficial to society because it raises awareness of the risks of waste incineration and landfills. During the curfew, it was hard for me to leave home and work on it; so instead I focused on raising public awareness of waste management and the environment through videos I uploaded on social media. By doing so, I made sure that my project keeps going so that I can go back and continue my work once the crisis is over.

This crisis has made us think of creative ways to sustain our work and projects.

”

Abdullah Smeik, 28, Amman

Glimpses of Hope  
in the Era of  
Corona:  
Our Stories from  
Jordan



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I’ve been working from home since the beginning of the curfew and my manager gives me my tasks online. However, I had little I could do from home; therefore, I decided to do something to bring benefit to my community in Eima. I created a group on social media for teachers and students to encourage distance learning, and another group for parents to remind them of the daily Government decisions. Currently, I work on an initiative with the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development (JOHUD) to distribute parcels to families in Eima. I am glad that I am now able to serve my community and pass the time. The Corona pandemic has made us more creative and productive.  
”

Asma Al Roud, Tafilah - Eima

Glimpses of Hope  
in the Era of  
Corona:  
Our Stories from  
Jordan

Since the schools closed and the curfew began , my children have been arguing with one another a lot more. I would get upset, but then I remembered what I learned from the Early Childhood Development Family Education Kit with IRCKHF. I decided to intervene and started applying what I had learned in the training: I exercise with my children; make toys; we made puppets and used them for storytelling, and my daughter even learned how to make play dough and uses it to make beautiful pictures.

I used to deliver things for women in my neighborhood. However, the curfew prevented me from working, so I try to make the most of my time doing something for me and my children.

Under these circumstances, we must do everything we can to protect the psychological and physical well-being of our children.

Um Aysar, Irbid - Kufur Sum



Glimpses of Hope  
in the Era of  
Corona:  
Our Stories from  
Jordan

I am a nurse at Al-Bashir Hospital. When the pandemic first started we had mixed feelings. On the one hand, there was the fear of the unknown, and on another, the need to fulfill a noble mission and treat quarantined patients who had no one but doctors and nurses to offer support. We do not deny the fact that we were emotionally affected by having to leave our homes and families to protect them, however, with time, we became accustomed to this situation and made a new family of colleagues and patients. We could feel the team spirit of all the staff and their humane treatment of patients, and recognized the importance of the health sector and its services. We remained in the field round the clock when everyone else was home. We are grateful every time a patient is cured and does not transmit the virus to their family or community.

Fadwa Al-Daqs, Nurse at Al-Bashir Hospital

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