

Study of the gender gap between male and female schools in Ajloun, East Amman, Madaba and Tafila governorates

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INTRODUCTION

Education is the fourth goal of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). According to the UNDP, since adopting the SDGs, the results have been tangible in the Arab region, with an increase in education in general, reaching 91% in 2015, and an increase by 50% in the number of children enrolled in schools, especially females, in addition to a significant decrease in illiteracy.

Policies in Jordan have contributed to pushing education forward, according to Article 20 of the Jordanian constitution “basic education is compulsory for Jordanians and is free in public schools.” Article 5 of the Jordanian constitution states that all Jordanians are equal and there is no discrimination among them in rights and duties, even if they differ in race, language, or religion. Therefore, the Constitution guarantees basic education (identified till the tenth grade) for all males and females without any discrimination.

SDG4 aims that by 2030 all girls and boys in the world complete free primary and secondary education, it also aims to provide equal opportunities to obtain vocational training and making it accessible to all, eliminate differences in access to education because of sex or wealth, and achieve universal access to higher quality education. According to UNDP, most Arab countries have achieved equal opportunities in primary education for both sexes but are still in the phase of quantitative not qualitative success.

According SDG5, gender equality is an essential factor to accelerate the achievement of the development process, and female empowerment has major implications for driving economic growth and all areas of development. As per UNDP’s analysis of SDG10, it is observed that due to inequality in education, the average economic loss in the Arab region is 24.9% compared to the global average loss of 22.9%, and the equality gap is the widest in the education component of the Human Development Index, at 38% as the percentage of inequality.

Jordan has ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which entered into force in 1976; according to the first clause of Article (13) “The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to education. They agree that education shall

be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They further agree that education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups, and further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.”

Tawjihi scores are one indicator of learning for the final years of secondary school education in Jordan. During 2017-2019, the average success rate for *Tawhihi* was 54% according to Ministry of Education statistics. Boys-only schools have lower scores, and some schools have no students that pass the national exam, referred to as non-achiever schools. Gender-related constraints contribute to and are amplified within schools with low learning outcomes and addressing gender constraints is one important part of solutions for improving learning outcomes. ANHRE’s Universal Periodic Review (UPR) recommendations (November 2018) highlighted the relationship between education, child labor, and early marriage. Lack of a quality education leads students to look for other options,¹ contributing to child labor for males and early marriage for females. Parents within communities of low performing schools are less likely to prioritize and be involved in their child’s education, and schools with low learning outcomes are less likely to improve without the engagement of parents and community-based organizations who lack effective mechanisms to communicate local needs to the Ministry of Education.

The 2019 Human Development Report places Jordan in the “High Human Development” category ranking at 102 out of 189 countries and territories included in the survey. Jordan’s “Inequality in Education” percentage stands at 15.4% compared to 32.5% for Arab States, while the overall “Gender Inequality Index” stands at 113 out of 162.

Despite all of this, there are many factors that prevents Jordan from closing the gender gap in education. This research aims at exploring factors that affect both boys and girls and their education and build on it to devise an implementable set of recommendations that leads to designing community-based initiatives that could solve issues related to the gender gap in education in targeted communities.

Study challenges

Corona pandemic

The Corona pandemic posed many challenges in conducting the study, particularly with regard to field work and the determinants of the numbers of participants in the meetings. Although partner institutions have overcome these challenges by adhering to government-set standards, this has delayed the implementation of some information gathering activities and community initiatives.

The cooperation of some of the staff of the Directorates of Education

Although the Ministry of Education sent official letters to facilitate and facilitate the work, some of the staff of the Directorates of Education were not interested in the subject of the study and their cooperation with the research team was very limited. This is because these officials have never dealt with civil society organizations before, so it is necessary to work to integrate these officials further into the preparations for the project so that they have a sense of ownership and greater support for the project.

Confusion between the national and the local context

When holding various sessions with parents and teachers, discussions initially focused on educational policies and curricula, which relate to the national level, which required the team and facilitators to make a greater effort to clarify the difference between the purpose of the project and the solution of problems at the local level. In the future, it is best to add a preparatory phase that includes meetings and events to explain the purpose of the project before starting the activities.

Time constraints

The time available for the implementation of the project was very limited, which caused the implementation of the study to interfere with the planning of community initiatives. It is necessary to allocate sufficient time to such projects in the future, especially with regard to the start of planning and implementation of initiatives after the completion of the study and preparatory activities.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Using a participatory community-led approach, ANHRE has conducted this study to verify localized gendered constraints within basic and secondary schools, focusing on those with low learning outcomes in order to verify and pilot ways to increase school-community engagement to address these gender-related constraints. The focus was on the experiences of the three grades before Tawjihi. The study targeted 8 communities in 4 governorates (Ajloun, East Amman, Madaba and Tafleeh) and worked with the Community Partners (Community-Based Organizations, Parent Teacher Associations “PTAs”, and/or School Development Boards “SDBs”, in addition to Governorates Councils). ANHRE worked with the Community Partners to understand the gender issues in targeted communities, build relationships with relevant stakeholders, and pilot strategies that Community Partners can apply to addressing these gendered constraints. Each Community Partner led outreach to school officials, youth (18+), parents, and other community organizations to be part of verifying local challenges and potential solutions. ANHRE presented gender analysis of problems facing schools of low learning outcomes and recommendations to the MoE.

The community engagement approach in the research was an original component through organizing consultations with all stakeholders throughout different phases of the research, as follows:

- Community partners provided feedback on the hypothesis and data collection tools.
- Community partners conducted field research activities under the supervision of ANHRE and the research team.
- Community partners were part of the data sources used in the analysis.
- Community partners validated the final findings and recommendations of the research.

HYPOTHESIS

Based on ANHRE's experience, desk research, and validation workshop with MoE and CBOs partners, the following gender constraints are expected to be found within the project's target communities, and they form the hypothesis on which the project is based on and examining:

- Insufficient resources (Financial or human resources) such as educational material, chemistry labs, computer labs, etc. might influence parents' enthusiasm to send their boys and girls to the school especially in the latest grades.
- Unsuitable infrastructure (such as, but not limited to, toilets, playgrounds, spaces for sports, etc.) in public schools does not meet the minimum safety measures and create a feeling of discomfort among parents. In addition, it could decrease male and female students' motivation to attend school.
- In some girls' schools, extracurricular activities may affect the girls' educational choices and their potential to develop their competencies to enter the labor market.
- In 10th grade when students decide which educational and vocational paths to pursue (scientific, arts, etc.), parents often pressure their child to pursue traditional paths for their gender. In some communities, parents discourage girls from pursuing education and building skills for working outside the home and in nontraditional fields. Some boys are stigmatized for continuing academic education instead of enlisting in the military or starting to work.
- Online learning and fewer in-person school days during the COVID-19 pandemic add competing priorities to education. It is expected that new schooling methods that rely on more online learning will compete with parental pressure for students to help at the home, care for younger children, and/or work outside the home.

METHODOLOGY

In order to have a clear approach in designing the data collection tools, a set of international standards were adopted and adapted to be the main reference in designing the data collection tools questions. These standards consisted of the 4As, SDGs 4 and 5, and the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) standards. For more information on these standards, please see ANNEX 1

For the purpose of conducting this research, a special methodology that takes community engagement as an original part of the research was designed, it is as follows:

Desk review

Based on available information and resources, especially those related to the proposed research hypothesis, a desk review was conducted to available literature in order to examine each point of the hypothesis, in addition to identifying issues that may have not been captured in the hypothesis. The findings of the desk review were then used to amend/update the hypothesis and validate the findings with stakeholders in targeted communities. The final outcome of the desk review was designing the data collection tools that consisted of a survey, interviews questions for the different stakeholders, and focus groups questions for the different groups approached during the field research activities.

Validation workshop with partner CBOs

A workshop with partner CBOs and MoE from the four targeted governorates was organized in order to present the hypothesis, methodology and draft data collection tools questions, in addition to agreeing on the partners roles in conducting the research. The main outcomes of this workshop were amending the research hypothesis as per the feedback and discussions and editing the drafted data collection tools questions. In addition to that, sessions with people involved in education on the local level were conducted with the aim of testing the data collection tools in each of the targeted governorates, and the questions were amended accordingly.

Field research

The field research consisted of the following:

1. A survey targeting parents of students in grades 9 – 11 in targeted communities. Questions of the survey were designed based on the desk review and indicators, taking into consideration the availability of data (what's missing and what's need to be captured). For the survey questions please see ANNEX 2
2. Interviews with education officials on the local level, those include heads of education directorates and schools' principals; the interviews questions were designed based on the desk review and indicators. The main aim of the interviews was to compare parents' perceptions with officials' perceptions in order to identify gaps in their understanding of

gender gap in education and the different approaches both groups see best in tackling the issue. For the interviews questions

3. Focus groups meetings with different groups (teachers, PTAs and SDBs, and CBOs and activists in the field of education); the focus groups questions were also designed based on the desk review and indicators. The aim of the focus groups was to add more insights on the gender gap in education and possible interventions that could be implemented on the community level to tackle the issue. For the focus groups questions

Data compilation and analysis

After documenting all the data collected from the field research, the research team analyzed the data using a direct interpretative approach and linked it to the desk review. Based on the compilation and analysis, initial recommendations were drafted in collaboration with MoE.

Validation

After finalizing the research paper, validation workshops were conducted for stakeholders in each of the targeted communities; their feedback was documented and reflected to the final draft, especially in relation to the recommendations on community initiatives.

CONTEXT

Comparing to many countries in the MENA region, Jordan is considered advancing in the field of education, but this progress is quantitative rather than qualitative, as the education sector faces major challenges to reach real qualitative indicators to measure this progress.

During the past ten years, many requests have been submitted from the families of students in public schools addressed to the Ministry of Education (MoE) regarding the quality of education; but the government's response remained within the quantitative scope providing the simplest and quickest solutions instead of tackling problems and resolving them, with arguments related to bureaucracy and lack of resources.

Investment in education has declined as the ratio did not exceed 3% of the GDP in recent years, compared to 15% of GDP in the 1990s, when – at that time - there were bigger problems with

the infrastructure and the schools' environment, so the focus was on building eligible schools to accommodate natural population growth and migrations from neighboring countries.

Public schools are overcrowded, which increases the burden on the teacher, and affects the quality of educational service, and instead of building new buildings, MoE tends to rent buildings with bad and old infrastructure, and if there is a need to increase the number of classrooms, the ministry resorted to establishing caravans for students. In addition to the lack of resources, the lack of a suitable and safe educational environment for students, like squares, playgrounds and libraries, and the lack of hygiene standards, especially drinking water, toilets, and health services made the situation even more difficult.

The number of public schools has increased, but teachers were not been sufficiently qualified before entering the field of education, adding that to the income low income of teachers, the situation gets even more complicated. Over the years, many studies voiced that the income of teachers need to be improved, as their salaries does not correspond to the high cost of living, so they do not feel secured and lose the motive to improve.

With the absence of good governance and the lack of community involvement in developing plans and drawing educational policies, in addition to the lack of laboratories and equipment, schools have neglected both curricular and extracurricular activities, which significantly lower the opportunities to supporting students in order to enhance their capabilities to gain useful life experiences and expand their awareness to developing their talents and capabilities to compete in the labor market.

The opportunity to learn through doing is lost, because the educational process needs to focus on students in order to achieve mental, physical, moral and social development, in order for them to accept learning and build a character that is capable of facing practical life and overcoming life's problems. This also include students with physical and mental disabilities and learning difficulties, who must be included in such activities.

There is also the issues of secondary schools where no students succeeded in Tawjihi exams, which is mostly noticeable outside of the capital Amman; the reasons for this, according to MoE,

were attributed to the failure of the students' families to follow their children and inefficiency of the teaching staff, in addition to students being absent from their classes.

The choice of academic specialization begins at the secondary stage; it has been observed that the percentage of male and female students enrolled in vocational secondary education is low compared to academic education, this is due to the prevailing culture that considers vocational education less than academic education. The percentage of male students in the vocational education is higher than the percentage of female students; in addition to that, studies showed there is a statistically significant relationship between the educational level and the income level of male and female students families, which plays the main role in the direction of their children towards branches of education; the more higher the level of parents education, the lower their encouragement for their children to go to vocational education, and families with less income, are more into sending their children to vocational education. In the case of female students, vocational education is limited to home economics, which confirms the society's view of women as housewives. On another level, vocational education is linked to the idea that students who engage in it are less achieving than those engaging in academic branches. In addition, it was noted that employers are not encouraged to employ graduates of vocational education, decreasing the importance of vocational education in eradicating poverty and creating job opportunities.

On the level of the curriculum, it plays a big role in perpetuating the stereotypes on women among students from a young age. Women are portrayed as housewives or workers in specific occupations such as education and nursing. In addition to that, there are several social obstacles preventing women from continuing in higher education, or limiting their academic specialties, such barriers are early marriage and economic conditions that give preference to male education. Gender roles and stereotypes are still well established, it maintains the distinction between males and females and consecrates the traditional roles assigned to both; this is evident in the opinions of male and female students, and male and female teachers when it comes to professional topics, where it was noted that Jordanian vocational education curricula does not reflect gender differences; and a very small percentage of male and female students mention the need to train females equally to males. This is a product of the families and schools, which is accumulated from basic education to secondary education and beyond, broadcasting the

traditional image of gender roles assigned to both men and women and the roles that they will play in a later stage.

The Jordanian school curricula, especially social culture and reading texts, mentioned the rights and duties of citizens. In that regard, the percentage of female rights were higher than the ratio of male rights, such as the right to education, training, work, public freedoms, and justice. This may constitute discrimination against men in a male dominated society. When it comes to the duties of citizenship, it was mainly directed to males; preserving the country, belonging to it, protecting and defend the homeland, duties related to political affairs such as the right to nominate and elect, and duties towards work and workers. When it comes to the duties of females, preserving the environment, voluntary work, and social spirit, etc. This implies an incomplete citizenship and entrenching the stereotypical roles of women in the educational curricula beyond the school stage. This leads to focusing on stereotypes related to portraying women as emotional, loving, friendly, and calm (the mother role). In addition to cooking and arranging food in a timely manner. Women are also portrayed as submissive to the requests of their fathers, brothers, and husbands. Images in which women appear realistic and open to the outside world are very few, reproducing traditional stereotypes.

DESK REVIEW

The education sector in Jordan is grossly underfunded. Over 92% of the Ministry of Education's (MoE) budget is recurrent expenditures, and less than 8% or 77 Million JD remain for capital expenditures, which are used to maintain old buildings, build new ones, acquire land for new schools, and provide machinery as well as other equipment for schools for learning purposes¹. This situation presents many challenges for schools trying to provide safe and enabling learning environments for their students. As a result of this, the MoE resorts to renting commercial buildings as a substitute for the absence of schools in certain areas. These buildings are usually not designed to function as schools, and therefore they lack many aspects that are important to

¹ Ministry of Education Budget 2020, Jordanian General Budget Department, Retrieved on August 26th 2020 <http://www.gbd.gov.jo/uploads/files/gbd/law-min/2020/en/2501.pdf>

the learning environment. A report published² by Japan Emergency NGO's (JEN), states that rented schools in Jordan have different classroom sizes, inappropriate designs for classrooms which negatively affects the learning process, limited outside spaces for students, and insufficient outdoor latrines. According to the Annual Statistical Report issued by the Ministry of Education (MoE)³, the ministry operates 3,865 schools, of which, 777 schools or 20% are rented facilities. The rented facilities are divided as 179 or 23% male schools, 86 or 11% female schools, and 512 or 66% mixed schools; 434, or 59% of these schools are located in rural areas.

The socio-economic status and gender of students also plays a major role in their learning achievement, UNESCO's 2018 Parity Index for measuring the effect of socio-economic and gender on learning achievements found that in Jordan's secondary schools only 30 poor students achieved minimum proficiency in mathematics comparing to every 100 of the richest, and that around 115 girls achieved minimum proficiency in mathematics comparing to every 100 boys.

A USAID report⁴ states that security measures taken by the MoE to ensure the safety of students are good overall, it also indicates that security measures are stricter in girls' schools when compared to boys' or mixed schools. These measures help in encouraging students to attend school, and helps in convincing parents to send their children to schools, especially girls. As for playgrounds, they exist and are sufficiently maintained to cater for in-school activities. However, in some schools, the pavement used for playgrounds in girls' schools is different from the one used in boys' schools; those in boys schools are designed to accommodate different types of sports especially football, where at girls' schools the used materials are more suitable for

² Jordan Nationwide Assessment in Public Schools for Strategic Planning 2015, Japan Emergency NGO's (JEN) – Retrieved August 26th 2020

<https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/jordannationwideassessmentinpublicschoolsforstrategicplanning.pdf>

³ Annual Education Statistical Report 2018 – 2019, Jordanian Ministry of Education – Retrieved on August 26th 2020
http://www.moe.gov.jo/sites/default/files/ltqyr_lhsyy_llm_ldrs_y_2018-2019.pdf

⁴ Enhancing School Management & Planning (ESMP) Project, Gender Analysis Report 2019, USAID – Retrieved August 26th 2020

https://usikamp.s3.amazonaws.com/prod_uploads/system/resources/attachments/000/004/661/original/ESMP_Gender_Analysis_Report.pdf?X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIAJNKAKIDZBGBBOKQA%2F20200826%2Fus-east-1%2Fs3%2Faws4_request&X-Amz-Date=20200826T181409Z&X-Amz-Expires=10&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host&X-Amz-Signature=d46a4aa1fd39faab80896525e97104d1912b09da8707ef81c8643272ff7e8084

basketball or volleyball. Such factors aid, whether directly or indirectly, to entrenching traditional social norms and gender roles, and contributes to strengthening institutional gender perceptions.

Another aspect that affects students' attendance is the availability of clean and functioning latrines at schools. It is reported⁵ that on average, there are 45 female students per toilet, compared to 75 male students per toilets, and in general, females' toilets are cleaner and more suitable for use than boys' toilets, which can be a reason for boys' lower attendance. Yet, it is worth mentioning that the majority of girls' schools lack necessary sanitary disposable pads and tampons as well as the containers used to dispose of them, which may lead to the abruption of girls' attendance during the menstruation period.

Lastly, support for students with disabilities, whether it was on the level of the learning process or the required infrastructure to enable them to attend school in the first place remains very limited; only 9.5% of schools provide special support related to education, while only 11% of schools with students with disabilities have suitable WASH facilities that can accommodate them⁶.

On the level of inclusion, UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring Report of 2017 (GEM) states that Jordan acknowledged that most schools are not well prepared to practice inclusion, especially with insufficient transportation and access to safe physical activities to complement the learning environment. The result is that more than 35% of Jordanian students feel like outsiders in their schools; and all Jordanian students have no sense of belonging to their schools, regardless of their socio-economic status.

In relation to persons with disabilities, according to the Jordanian government, the 1993 disability law transferred responsibility for the education of most students with special needs to the Ministry of education from the Ministry of Social development, which retained responsibility for diagnosis, care, training and rehabilitation of those with mild to severe learning difficulties. The

⁵ ibid

⁶ Jordan Nationwide Assessment in Public Schools for Strategic Planning 2015, Japan Emergency NGO's (JEN) – Retrieved August 26th 2020

<https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/jordannationwideassessmentinpublicschoolsforstrategicplanning.pdf>

Higher council for affairs of Persons with disabilities was established to coordinate actors at the national level. However, lack of coordination persisted. MoE had a special education directorate, while MoSD and the Higher council set their respective separate standards for licensing and accrediting special education centers. The 2017 disability law aimed to resolve these issues, and the 10-year strategy to implement the law's inclusive education commitments envisaged developing inclusive school standards and curriculum development standards, but until now, only 10% of schools in Jordan are accessible for those with reduced mobility according to GEM.

Jordan has student/computer ratio of 14:1⁷, that is 14 students for each PC/laptop; which translates to very poor, especially if compared to the OECD average of 4:1; Jordanian schools have in total 95,750 computers that accommodate over 1.4 million students, 8,800 of which were reported to be not functional due to lack of maintenance, permeant damages, or missing parts. Recalculating the ratio using only the number of operational computers increases the ratio to become 16.3:1; overall, the total number of computer labs stands at 5,900 labs, this includes private schools. The lab per school ratio stands at 1.3:1 while the computer per lab ratio stands at 11:1

The MoE report⁸ also shows that 85% of schools have access to the internet regardless of the speed or type of connection, and indicating a significant disparity between schools in urban areas, where 95% of them have internet access compared to 75% of schools in rural areas. The reasons reported by schools that prevents them from using computers for teaching were slow internet speed, technical issues, lack of time due to the huge size of the curricula, and lack of teachers training on using the Internet in education. As for In-School usage of computers, 56% of male students reported using computers compared to 58% for female students, and for in-school usage of internet, 38% of male students reported using the internet compared to 36% for female students.

⁷ ICT Use & Penetration in Schools of Jordan 2012, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Communications & Information Technology – Retrieved August 26th 2020
http://www.moe.gov.jo/sites/default/files/5-8-20122-32-35_pm.pdf

⁸ ibid

Jordanian society remains a conservative and a traditional one in the sense that it sticks to traditional gender roles where men work and provide for their families, while women stay at home and take care of their husbands and children. This reality is also reflected in the schooling system, where boys are more encouraged to seek job opportunities or continue higher education after completing the 10th grade, while girls are encouraged to engage with and learn housekeeping skills as well as pursuing marriage as soon as possible. This trend is manifested in vocational schools or schools that offer vocational learning, where boys' vocational classrooms are equipped with tools for welding and carpentry, while girls' vocational classrooms are equipped with sewing machines, cooking tools, and equipment for housekeeping classes⁹.

In the 2018 – 2019 academic year, it was reported¹⁰ that a total of 6,708 students have dropped out of school in the basic education phase divided as 3,440 or 51% female students and 3,268 or 49% male students. The numbers of dropped-out students are almost equally divided between female and male students. However, it tends to slightly increase for female students as they get closer to the secondary education phase. Since there are no available figures for the secondary phase -where continuing education becomes optional and not mandatory as opposed to the basic phase and according to the Ministry of Education's Law¹¹- it is expected that the number of female drop-out students is much higher than that of males. Yet there are many conflicting figures and gaps on the numbers and percentages of out-of-school children due to many reasons, one of which is that the "School Drop-Out Bylaw" of the MoE stipulates that a student is only considered a "school dropout" after being absent for more than 60 days, leaving much room for students to work for a prolonged period of time without being counted as dropouts. Moreover,

⁹ Evaluation of the Jordan School Construction and Rehabilitation Project 2013, USAID, Retrieved August 26th 2020 https://usjkamp.s3.amazonaws.com/prod_uploads/system/resources/attachments/000/000/498/original/Evaluation_of_the_Jordan_School_Construction_and_Rehabilitation_Project_2013.pdf?X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIAJNKAKIDZBGBBOKQA%2F20200826%2Fus-east-1%2Fs3%2Faws4_request&X-Amz-Date=20200826T173856Z&X-Amz-Expires=10&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host&X-Amz-Signature=219eaaa1a3fcfa12656aeba02f078446d1656c5890259352cb5e315444fc99e7

¹⁰ Annual Education Statistical Report 2018 – 2019, Jordanian Ministry of Education – Retrieved on August 26th 2020

http://www.moe.gov.jo/sites/default/files/ltqryr_lhsyy_ilm_ldrsy_2018-2019.pdf

¹¹ Ministry of Education Law No. 3 of 1994 and its Accompanying Amendments, Ministry of Education – Retrieved August 26 2020

<http://www.moe.gov.jo/ar/node/19179>

the MoE law stipulates mandatory education for the basic phase, yet it does not provide a clear mechanism on how this can be enforced, where the standard procedure is to summon the parents of the dropout student and have them sign a commitment letter stating that they will commit to having their child attend school, but there are no penalties or punishments that could be applied in case the student remains absent, and all what can be done is to have the parents sign another commitment letter without any assuring measures. A UNICEF¹² study published in 2014 stated the total number of school dropouts in the primary and lower secondary phases (which both come under the mandatory basic education phase stipulated in the MoE law), amounts to 30,768 students divided as 12,251 or 39.9% girls and 18,517 or 60.1% males. Additionally, the same report stated that the number of students at risk of becoming dropouts is 53,783 students divided as 30,981 or 57.6% females and 22,557 or 43.4% males.

If we look closely at the teaching methods in public schools, it is still dependent on traditional methods such as memorization rather than creativity, critical thinking and analysis, which drives parents to send their children to private schools in search of a better infrastructure and a better education; this increases the financial burdens on parents. In addition to that, the social attitudes are still prevailing at schools, where, according to 2018 GEM report, 58% of Jordanian schools still apply corporal punishment.

An investigative report published by 7iber¹³ shows that there are multiple technicalities that results in lower figures of dropouts and does not give a full picture of the situation on the ground. For instance, the percentages of school dropouts are not linked to certain geographical areas, rather they are presented on a national level, which helps in concealing some important facts about the number or percentages of school dropouts in certain communities or governorates. Another approach compares the numbers of a certain cohort of students registered in the 10th grade in the 2015 – 2016 academic year to the numbers of registered students in the fifth grade in the 2010 – 2011 academic year showing that the total number has decreased by 11,000 or 8%,

¹² Jordan Country Report on Out-Of-School Children October 2014, UNICEF – Retrieved on August 26th 2020
https://www.unicef.org/mena/media/6546/file/Jordan%20Country%20Report%20on%20OOSC_EN.pdf%20.pdf

¹³ School Drop-Out in Jordan: How The Small Percentages Conceal Larger Number May 5th 2017 – Retrieved on August 26th 2020
<https://www.7iber.com/society/school-drop-outs-in-jordan/>

and although one of the contributing factors can be related to having some students leaving the country with their families, yet it does not cover the total number. Lastly, the MoE does not have separate figures for the number of refugee students, mainly Syrian refugees, and they are included in the overall official figures; one implication of this is that the enrollment rates of Syrian students in schools is very low, yet interestingly when the government started allowing Syrian refugees to enroll in Jordanian public schools back in the 2010 – 2011 academic year and forward, the percentage of school dropouts kept on decreasing until it reached 0.25% in 2016 according to the MoE, and compared to 0.34% before the beginning of the Syrian crisis, which shows an illogical trend in the figures provided, taking into consideration that a report¹⁴ published in 2017 stated that at least 10% of families in host communities mainly in Amman, Mafraq, and Irbid, which includes both Jordanians and Syrian refugees, have pulled their children out of school either to work or to get married, keeping in mind that the current dropout figures include both Jordanian and Syrian students according to the MoE; this could also be referred to the criteria of calculating schools drop-outs. MoE numbers shows a total of 16,870 students with disabilities enrolled in its schools, yet the total number of children with disabilities in Jordan remains unknown as there are no official figures to support this, which means that the total number of dropped-out or not enrolled students could be much higher. Taking into consideration the global standard percentage of people with disabilities per country, the number in Jordan could reach one million people; in addition to that, UNESCO¹⁵ estimates that around 90% of children with disabilities in developing countries do not attend school.

In the 2016 – 2017 academic year, the total number of students enrolled in the 10th grade has reached 99,066, students divided as 45,772 or 46.2% males and 53,294 or 53.8% females¹⁶. Moving ahead two years later in the 2018 – 2019 academic year, the total number of Tawjihi enrollees reached 104,297 students divided as 49,463 or 47.4% males and 54,834 or 52.6%

¹⁴ Stand & Deliver, Danish Refugee Council, Oxfam and Save the Children January 2017, Retrieved on August 26th 2020

https://www-cdn.oxfam.org/s3fs-public/file_attachments/ja-stand-and-deliver-syria-230117-en.pdf

¹⁵ Factsheet on Persons with Disabilities, United Nations – Retrieved on August 26th 2020

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/resources/factsheet-on-persons-with-disabilities.html>

¹⁶ MoE Statistical Report 2016 – 2017, Ministry of Education – Retrieved on August 26th 2020

<http://www.moe.gov.jo/ar/node/22738>

females¹⁷. The increase in the number of students can be referred to incoming students from abroad, Syrian students who have enrolled for Tawjihi, UNRWA students -as UNRWA schools do not provide secondary education- and previous students who are repeating the Tawjihi. Yet what is interesting here is the number of students who passed the Tawjihi exam in 2019 where it has reached 77,724 students divided as 30,223 or 38.9% males and 47,501 or 61.1% females, which means that there are 26,573 students, most of which are males, who could not make it to universities or colleges, and have probably resorted to work as craftsmen or enrolling in the military in the case of men, or getting married in the case women. The above figures also correspond very well to employment and unemployment figures published by the Department of Statistics (DoS)¹⁸ where in 2019 it was estimated that a total of 692,085 workers in the labor force have less than secondary education, most of them being males. Additionally, the total number of unemployed youth between the ages of 15 and 19 amounted at 25,647, and between the ages 20 and 24 amounted at 114,107, registering the highest number in any given age group and with males being the majority in both groups. Moreover, a total of 758,201 laborers work in sectors that do not necessarily require a degree such as services, sales, skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers, crafts and related trades, plants and machine operators, and assemblers.

Additionally, the Jordanian Armed Forces (JAF) issues an annual call for recruits which requires a high school degree or less, which constitutes a source of attraction for many youth who cannot or do not intend to continue tertiary education, while promising a safe career and acting as an advantage when deciding to marry in the future.

The currently ongoing COVID-19 pandemic have had a tremendous impact on education. A World Bank Group report¹⁹ estimated that COVID-19 could result in a loss of 0.6 years of schooling

¹⁷ MoE Statistical Report 2018 – 2019, Ministry of Education – Retrieved on August 26th 2020
<http://www.moe.gov.jo/ar/node/71731>

¹⁸ Employment & Unemployment Figures 2019, Department of Statistics – Retrieved on August 26th 2020
http://www.dos.gov.jo/dos_home_e/main/linked-html/Emp&Un.htm

¹⁹ Simulating the Potential Impacts of the COVID-19 School Closures on Schooling and Learning Outcomes: A set of Global Estimates, World Bank Group – Retrieved on August 26th 2020
<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/education/publication/simulating-potential-impacts-of-covid-19-school-closures-learning-outcomes-a-set-of-global-estimates>

adjusted for quality, bringing down the effective years of basic schooling that children achieve during their schooling life from 7.9 years to 7.3 years. Some countries were better able to respond to the crisis than others, primarily due to the availability of supporting infrastructure that helped students and teachers to transition smoothly from traditional in-class learning to online learning. However, for countries that did not have such an infrastructure, it is believed that many students have missed the opportunity of learning without the possibility of having it back.

The figures of the Jordanian government, and the Minister of Education press conferences²⁰ mention the “outstanding” success of the Jordanian experience in online or distance learning. The Jordanian government have employed multiple mechanisms to mitigate the impact of the crisis on the education sector by developing the “Darsak” platform, a new learning platform for K-12 students that provides content in the form of structured videos aligned to the curriculum and its sequencing which can be viewed online and through TV, in addition to the emergence or re-calibration of other platforms such as “Edraak”, “Mawdoo3”, and “Abwab” which have served as aids to the online learning process²¹. However, after easing the lockdown and granting people the freedom of movement, many organizations have started assessing and investigating these claims by conducting field assessments, and the initial results turned out to be the opposite of the government’s claims. In an online survey²² conducted by the WANA institute, only 18.9% of the respondents answered that they watch educational material on TV regularly, indicating a massive failure for this approach. Another Study²³ conducted by Ruwwad Jordan, which targeted 7 areas in East Amman and Zarqa, and have included 773 families, of which 80% have children under the age of 18, indicated that 62% of the respondents are connected to the internet through mobile phones owned by the parents and through limited internet data packages, while 19% do not have any kind of internet connection available for them, and the remainder 19% of families

²⁰ The Minister of Education Praises the Success of the Distance Learning Experience in Jordan, Roya TV 28th of May 2020 – Retrieved on August 26th 2020

<https://royanews.tv/news/214992>

²¹ Educational Response to COVID-19 from Jordan & Other Arab Countries, Queen Rania Foundation – Retrieved on August 26th 2020

<https://www.qrf.org/en/latest/blog/educational-response-covid-19-jordan-and-other-arab-countries>

²² “Distance Learning” in Jordan During the COVID-19 Pandemic, West Asia North Africa (WANA) Institute

²³ Field Assessment of Students and Their Families During COVID-19, Ruwwad Jordan – Unpublished

were distributed between using MiFi's and WiFi; additionally, 149 families or 19.3% do not have any gadgets such as mobile phones, laptops, or PC's that would enable them to connect and use the internet. Lastly, 71% of surveyed families have indicated that they do not know how to use the internet or the designated educational platforms.

All of the above-mentioned results suggest that the distance learning experience was not as good and effective as the government claims. These results are also substantiated by the "Survey of The Use of Information Technology in Homes for The Year 2017" report²⁴ conducted by the Ministry of Digital Economy & Entrepreneurship (MoDEE)²⁵ and the Department of Statistics (DoS), where it shows that only 34.8% of individuals above the age of 5 use a PC/laptop. The internet penetration rate is indicated at a staggering 97.3% with the most common type of connection being mobile broadband. However, when looking at the percentage of WiMax subscriptions it stands at a low 7.2%.

Additional statistics do not seem very encouraging where it is also reported that the percentage of families that have a PC/laptop is only 38%, and 68% of PC/laptop users reported using it only for personal reasons; while 46.5% of the people who do not use a PC/laptop refer that to the fact that they do not need one in the first place. Additionally, 47% of the survey respondents reported that they do not use the internet at home (referring to a stable WiFi connection) because they do not need it, most of them resided in urban areas. It was also reported that the ages group between 20 to 24 uses the PC/laptop the most reaching 90.6%, while 98.5% of people aged 5 or above reported accessing the internet through mobile phones or tablets from anywhere. Lastly, 93.5% of respondents reported using the internet for social media purposes and only 0.4% use it for other purposes.

These figures clearly show that the Jordanian population are not even close to being ready to adopt and transition to online learning as most people do not have the necessary equipment. Many of them use the internet only for social media, and their available internet packages cannot

²⁴ Survey of The Use of Information Technology in Homes for The Year 2017, Ministry of Information & Communications Technology & Department of Statistics – Retrieved on August 26th 2020
<https://modee.gov.jo/uploads/studies/Households/ICT%20Households%20Survey-%202017.pdf>

²⁵ Then called the Ministry of Information & Communications Technology (MoICT)

cater for the long and daily viewing of educational materials. Therefore, one can only conclude that most students did not engage with educational materials and have missed the opportunity for learning; and given the cultural trends in the society where girls are expected to help the mother in taking care of the household, one can also conclude that the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on girls' education have been much bigger than that of boys.

Field search results

The Arab Network for Civic Education – ANHRE- collected and analyzed data in general and at the level of schools in the governorates in the eight targeted areas in the primary schools (9th and 10th , 11th grade) in male and female schools in 32 schools in East Amman, Madaba, Ajloun and Tafila with low learning outcomes associated with gender challenges, and related to the role of society and surrounding environments, using the following measurement and analysis tools:

- 24 *interviews* (6 interviews in each governorate) with senior education officials, school principals (male and female).
- 24 *focus groups* (6 groups in each governorate) were held with teachers, parents' councils, and School development councils.
- Distribution of 50 *questionnaires* to parents of students in each governorate.

Analysis of information collected from the field in the field search phase

This analysis was done by combining views from questionnaires, focus groups and interviews with different parties

The questionnaire was based on the explanations and recommendations received, which is the information collected from all parties using all the tools mentioned.

Respondents (male and female)

The largest proportion of responses from mothers was 73.12% compared to 25.3% for fathers, which explains the low quality of education and the high proportion of unemployed respondents, with the majority of responding mothers being non-working housewives who did not complete university education. 32.62% of the respondents completed university education and more than 57.61% of them are unemployed.

Interviewed people (male and female)

			Percentage of answers	Total answers
1	Father		25.30%	64
2	The mother.		73.12%	185
3	Guardian (male)		0.79%	2
4	Guardian (female)		0.79%	2

Education






			Percentage of answers	Total answers
1	Less than secondary degree		15.42%	39
2	Secondary		37.55%	95
3	Community College		12.65%	32
4	Vocational education		2.77%	7
5	Bachelor		22.13%	56
6	Higher than a bachelor'		9.49%	24

Working status

			Percentage of answers	Total answers
1	Working.		42.69%	108
2	Not working.		57.31%	145

The nature of the responses indicates that the possibility of community engagement with female schools is higher than that of male schools because of the time mothers have to collaborate with schools as most of them do not work and have more time to engage in community activities only with female-schools. Many parents, activists and educational officials have indicated They believe that mothers cannot accompany their male children even in the early primary because their children refuse to do so due to social norms, and it becomes almost impossible in grades 9 to 11, which requires the design of interventions that encourage parents to engage in community initiatives with male schools at these stages.



The majority of respondents (54.55%) had only a son or daughter in school between the ninth and eleventh grades, while the proportion of those with two children was 27.67%, the proportion of those with three 12.25%, and the proportion of those with four 3.95%, while the proportion of those with was only 3.95%. This indicates that most parents have no experience in dealing with these stages, which opens the way for **initiatives related to cooperation between parents, schools and civil society institutions to help parents deal with their daughters and sons at these stages.** More experienced parents in dealing with these classes could provide advice and assistance to less experienced parents.

How many of your children are in grades 9 to 11, whether they complete the stage or are still in school?				
			Percentage of answers	Total answers
1	0		0.00%	0
2	1		54.55%	138
3	2		27.67%	70
4	3		12.25%	31
5	4		3.95%	10
6	5		1.58%	4

Coordination between parents and schools

39.53% of respondents indicated that they coordinate with schools, and we find that the percentage of respondents who answered yes is rather high. This is due to the fact that most respondents considered parents' visits to schools to be a form of coordination, although those visits are not coordination visits but a routine follow-up visits, especially since most of them are invited by the school.

The majority of respondents who visit schools as parents (57.14%) believe that their visits to schools as parents are effective and useful, yet, a significant percentage of parents believe otherwise. **This opens the way for community initiatives aimed at persuading parents to participate as much as they can and routinely visit schools as parents, even if these visits are limited to the times where schools invite parents to participate.**

Is there coordination between you, as parents, and schools to discuss challenges and proposals?				
			Percentage of answers	Total answers
1	Yes		39.53%	100
2	No		60.47%	153



Helping sons and daughters in school

61.28% of respondents indicated that they help their sons and daughters in school, but the percentage drops when sons and daughters enter secondary school, since teaching becomes dependent on teachers and teachers due to the difficulty of the curriculum at the secondary level and the inability of parents to remember the curriculum at this stage.

Interestingly, 78.14% of those who answered yes believe that their participation in teaching their sons and daughters has a positive impact on the results of their education. Yet, there is still a percentage that believes otherwise, also because of the difficulty of the curriculum and the inability of some parents to help their sons and daughters academically.



More than half of respondents (54.81%) believe that their participation in teaching varies between their sons and daughters, while more than 75% believe that girls benefit more from their participation as parents in teaching. This is due to the widespread belief that girls are more interested in studying and their desire to prove it to their parents, and that parents believe that girls' presence at home is much higher than that of males, which leads girls to give more time to study than males. Restrictions on the movement of girls and the lack of times where they leave home are not necessarily the main reason why they excel at school. This is only a situation that requires further special studies to identify and determine the real reasons behind this.

It may be possible to organize some events gathering parents and teachers where teachers advise parents on how best to help their sons and daughters' study, specifically with parents who cannot or do not want to help their sons and daughters study.



Who do you think benefits more from your participation?				
			Percentage of answers	Total answers
1	Boys		24.71%	43
2	Girls		75.29%	131

Additional financial costs

The additional financial costs here are indirect costs such as transportation, while normal costs are related to school fees and book purchases. Here we note that these costs are increasing even more in cities where the need for transportation due to distance and insecurity is greater, unlike most rural areas where distances are closer and security is greater, with some exceptions. 39.92% of those who answered yes were mostly in urban areas.



Are there financial costs associated with schooling that limit your ability to send your children to school?				
			Percentage of answers	Total answers
1	Yes		39.92%	101
2	No		60.08%	152

The majority of parents believe that the additional costs vary between males and females, but with slight differences, the fear for their children is not only related to females only but also to males. As we have pointed out earlier, this increases in urban rather than rural areas, where the percentage of those who believe that the costs do not differ between males and females is close to half. When asked about where the cost is greater, more than half (51.48%) answered that schooling girls has a higher cost.



Who costs you the most?				
			Percentage of answers	Total answers
1	Boys		48.52%	82
2	Girls		51.48%	87

Participating with schools

The majority of parents participate in parent meetings in schools, but a large proportion of them do not even participate in these meetings, which is an important point to deal with. We see this more widely in urban areas, where parents tend not to participate in parents' meetings, while they participate more in rural areas due to the nature of social relations and everyone's relations with each other. Such meetings are an opportunity for social communication, and they become easier due to the ease of movement in rural areas compared to urban areas.

Do you participate in meetings at the school?				
			Percentage of answers	Total answers
1	Yes		61.66%	156
2	No		38.34%	97

With regard to committees' membership, the vast majority of parents (90.91%) are not members of any permanent or temporary committees in schools, and this applies to all targeted areas, whether rural or urban. This is due to the centrality of education policies, where parents believe that participation in committees is futile because of their lack of influence on educational central policies. We need to emphasize that community participation does not necessarily have an impact on central policies with the possibility remaining open in the case of national coordination. Community participation could nonetheless be fruitful in discussing some local challenges and finding community solutions. **The meetings could address the resolution of local school problems, such as improving the conditions of buildings, the gatherings of males before female schools, and cooperation in the delivery of educational services, particularly with regard to distance education.**



Are you a member of any permanent or temporary committee at the school?			Percentage of answers	Total answers
1	Yes		9.09%	23
2	No		90.91%	230

When asked about schools inviting parents to participate in problem solving, we find that most respondents, 62.06%, (male and female) were not invited by schools to participate in solving any problems, while 37.94% of the respondents were invited. Yet, the topic of their invitation was specific to their sons and daughters and not to school in general. Few schools have involved parents in solving some of the problems of schools in general, mainly in rural areas where personal relationships play a greater role in society in general. **This may open the way to building on this and using the nature of these relationships to expand community engagement with schools by organizing additional meetings and events.**

The means at the disposal of schools

65.61% of respondents believe that teaching resources (tools, references, illustrations, etc.) are available in schools, that's nearly two-thirds of the sample, but they distinguish between male and female schools, and clearly, most of them believe that the availability of resources is greater and better in female schools. This is due to the widespread belief that school principals, teachers and female students tend to pay more attention to educational resources and school projects than male schools where there is much less attention. This is due to a community culture that gives responsibility for preserving the possessions of the home to females and not males, which applies to schools.

This may open the way to joint events between teachers and parents to discuss the best ways and practices in terms of maintaining and preserving teaching resources so that they last longer and ensure that they are not lost, especially in male schools.



Which schools are the best in terms of availability of teaching resources?				
			Percentage of answers	Total answers
1	Boys' schools		13.17%	22
2	Girls' schools		86.83%	145

Safety and security



The majority of parents believe that their sons and daughters enjoy a safe environment at school, but 15% believe otherwise (most of them are based in urban areas, particularly East of Amman, which is directly linked to the higher additional costs associated with sending boys and girls to school in urban areas).

Although this part is not directly related to community initiatives, it is an important topic that can be discussed at a national level between parents, schools, education directorates, relevant authorities and civil society institutions in general, so that a public debate is opened in this regard

and practical and realistic proposals are made to deal with this issue. This will ensure that the community participation is based on a constructive dialogue.

Do boys and girls enjoy a safe schooling?			Percentage of answers	Total answers
1	Yes		85.38%	216
2	No		14.62%	37

Regarding the school facilities, 61.66% believe that the facilities are designed in a way that considers the needs of students, 38.34% think otherwise, and these. For the most part, their children and daughters go to schools that are either old, rented or not well maintained over the years. This may open the way for community-level collaboration between parents and schools in fundraising to improve the overall infrastructure and school environment and provide a distinguished experience at the local and national level.



Have school facilities been constructed and maintained taking into account the needs of boys and girls?			Percentage of answers	Total answers
1	Yes		61.66%	156
2	No		38.34%	97

Nearly three quarters of respondents (72.73%) believe that schools take the safety and protection of their children into account, and this percentage is more concentrated in female schools due to the greater precautions and protection provided at those schools, especially since most female respondents are mothers. Therefore, their views pertain to more female schools

than male schools, and this applies to protection, public safety and protection against school violence in general.

Regarding the gender-based violence in girls' schools, like the safety of the premises, measure taken to dissuade boys from gathering at school gates and the presence of an efficient social counselor, we note that percentage drops slightly. This due to the absent role of social counselors at girls' schools where they simply do administrative tasks. 30.43% of respondents believe this type of protection is not provided.

This opens the way for community initiatives aimed at working with social counselors (male and female) and activating their roles in schools. This may be achieved through partnership with civil society institutions and providing the necessary training and qualification to these supervisors to activate their roles and improve the services they provide to students in schools.



Are there any precautions taken by the school to reduce gender-based violence in female schools (e.g. the security of the school building and its walls, measures to reduce the gatherings of males close to the school building when female students arrive and leave, the presence of a social worker and the effectiveness of its role?			Percentage of answers	Total answers
1	Yes		69.57%	176
2	No		30.43%	77

IT Resources

When asked about IT resources, 31.62% of respondents did not believe that IT resources are available in schools. At the same time, they have the same views regarding the resources of education and IT. Parents believe that IT resources are available in schools, but they distinguish between male and female schools, where most respondents and respondents believe that IT resources are more and better available in female schools. This is due to the tendency of female school principals, teachers and students to pay more attention to computers and school laboratories than at male schools, where there is much less attention, and this is due, as

mentioned earlier, to a community culture that gives responsibility for preserving the possessions of the home to females rather than males. 47.43% of respondents believe that there are differences between male and female schools in terms of availability of IT resources, 84.21% of whom believe that these resources are more available in female schools.



Computers are available in the vast majority of schools in the Kingdom, but the problem is that a large part of these devices are damaged, and this opens the way for community initiatives to maintain these devices, especially devices with minor malfunctions, by collaborating with young people in the community with the necessary knowledge in the maintenance of these devices.



Are IT resources available at school?				
			Percentage of answers	Total answers
1	Yes		68.38%	173
2	No		31.62%	80

Extracurricular activities

With regard to the provision of extracurricular activities, nearly two thirds of parents (67.59%) believe that they are offered, and a large proportion of them think that these activities are good, but they distinguish between male and female schools, where 76.3% believe that the level of such activities in female schools is better. This is due to the tendency of teachers in male schools to use the time allocated for these activities to compensate or replace classes or to compensate for the last classes and to finish the school time earlier.

In terms of the overall quality of extracurricular activities, 81.86% of respondents believe they are good, but the vast majority of respondents expressed their views regarding female, not male, schools. This opens the way for community initiatives related to cooperation between parents with certain skills that may be useful in this area, civil society institutions and schools to provide new and appropriate extracurricular activities, especially in male schools. This may be implemented within the frameworks set by the Ministry of Education, so that these activities are in line with the ministry's general policies.

Are extracurricular activities offered in schools?				
			Percentage of answers	Total answers
1	Yes		67.59%	171
2	No		32.41%	82

Do you think these activities are better in boys or female schools?				
			Percentage of answers	Total answers
1	Boys' schools		23.70%	41
2	Girls' schools		76.30%	132

On another level, most parents believe that the way their children spend their time outside school has a direct impact on their learning outcomes, and parents believe that this varies between males and females, with 78.47% of respondents believing this to have a more positive impact on females. According to the parents, this is due to the fact that females stay at home most of the time, and therefore focus more on studying, while males tend to go out of the house and spend most of their time outside. **It is possible here to propose community initiatives related to the targeting of boys through activities designed to help them better use their time and focus on study to raise their educational achievement and thereby improve educational outcomes in the targeted areas, while also providing part of these activities to less achieving students with a focus on cooperation with teachers, especially since the vast majority of parents (91.3%) believe that the quality of teaching provided by teachers from grades 9 and up has a direct impact on the General secondary school certificate preparation.**

Do you think that the way boys and girls spend their time outside school has an impact on their learning outcomes?			Percentage of answers	Total answers
1	Yes		81.42%	206
2	No		18.58%	47

The educational process

Most parents believe that their sons and daughters' expectations are different regarding the educational process, but at the same time they are almost equal in answering the question about the impact of teaching methods on their sons and daughters. Students tend to want to finish school, complete schooling or enter the job market, while parents tend to expect increased knowledge and culture of their sons and daughters from the educational process. This may be an introduction to the **proposal of community initiatives involving parents to design and present cultural activities as part of extracurricular activities in schools.**



As parents, do you think boys and girls have different expectations from yours than yours regarding the educational process?			Percentage of answers	Total answers
1	Yes		79.05%	200
2	No		20.95%	53



According to your sons/daughters, do teaching methods contribute to better results?			Percentage of answers	Total answers
1	Yes		54.94%	139
2	No		45.06%	114

When asked how teaching methods affect better outcomes, parents pointed out that 70.36% believed the methods could lead to better outcomes, while the percentage is lower when it comes to the views of their male sons. This is because the school environment in female schools is more closed to males than male schools, so there are more interactions between the students and teachers is more, while males may be more affected by external factors from their environment. This becomes more evident when asking about who thinks the impact of teaching methods is greater, with parents indicating that the largest percentage lies among females (74.86%) compared to 25.14% among males.

This opens the door to community initiatives that provide support for the educational process so that these activities transform the teaching process into a more interesting and attractive topic for students, and this may be achieved through the use of psychosocial support, life skills, arts and extracurricular activities.

Nearly two-thirds of parents (64.82%) indicated that they do not interfere in the academic choices of their sons and daughters, leaving it either to their level of academic achievement, in accordance with the instructions of the Ministry of Education with regard to the achievement required to determine academic branch, or teachers' advice when all options are open to the student. Those who interfere in the choice of their children indicated that their intervention is greater in the case of females than males, with 62.2% indicating that they interfere more with the choices of females. This tendency opens the door to community interventions that bring the school, parents and civil society organizations together to give freedom of choice to boys and girls by choosing the academic branch they desire and not what parents and teaching staff want.

Do you interfere in choosing the specialty for your sons and daughters after the tenth grade?				
			Percentage of answers	Total answers
1	Yes		35.18%	89
2	No		64.82%	164

In whose choices do you interfere the most?				
			Percentage of answers	Total answers
1	Boys		37.80%	48
2	Girls		62.20%	79



A quarter of respondents (24.9%) believe that their sons and daughters do not have the self-motivation to go to school, which is due to the educational experience of their sons and daughters, which opens the way for many initiatives that improve the **school environment and create self-motivation among students to go to school**. These initiatives could mainly be conducted in male schools, because the majority of females are self-motivated compared to males, according to parents. Parents pointed out that the self-motivation to go to school is 86.96% higher among females, which is a very large percentage that requires more research into the phenomenon of low self-motivation among males to go to school, and such research may be the nucleus of a **community participation initiative involving parents, teachers, educators and civil society institutions to look into these causes and find appropriate solutions for them**. Especially that 80.63% of respondents believe that the educational experience of their sons and daughters has a direct impact on this aspect.



In addition, we find that the sample is almost equally divided when asking about the parents' degree of satisfaction vis-à-vis the educational experience of their sons and daughters, 51.38%, of parents expressed satisfaction and indicated that there are differences in terms of their satisfaction among males and females. Most tend to be much more satisfied with the female experience (86.54%), which is due, according to parents, to the more disciplined school environment in female schools, as well as the more available materials due to the tendency of females to better keep resources as mentioned earlier.

Education and the Corona Pandemic

The vast majority of parents are dissatisfied with the educational experience during the Corona pandemic (90.91%), 60.87% believe that the negative impact on boys was greater and as boys tend to be out of the house most of the time or work, while females remain at home, and therefore pay more attention to study than males, according to parents.

Education during the Corona pandemic is one of the most disturbing topics of concern to parents recently, and there is ample room for the design of many community initiatives to improve the situation in partnership with schools and civil society institutions. These initiatives may focus on providing additional education to support students, using school resources, specifically in relation to information technology, or activating the role of school counselors and social workers to better support students.

Are you satisfied with the educational process during the Corona pandemic?				
			Percentage of answers	Total answers
1	Yes		9.09%	23
2	No		90.91%	230

Who do you think distance learning has had a greater impact?				
			Percentage of answers	Total answers
1	Boys		60.87%	154
2	Girls		39.13%	99

Community initiatives implemented using information collected

Based on the analysis of the results and outputs of the data collection phase and after exploring the reasons behind the low learning outcomes in the sample of schools in East Amman, Madaba, Tafila and Ajloun and identifying ways to increase community engagement with schools to solve these problems and improve the results of education from a gender perspective, The Arab Network for Civic Education – ANHRE in partnership with local civil society institutions implemented four community initiatives in the governorates and targeted areas as follows:

1. Support the online learning process by increasing the digital skills of 60 students from the targeted grades (9, 10 & 11) who are currently dropouts from DARSAK platform (mainly male students) and 60 of their parents (mainly fathers) in the targeted public schools.
2. Raise awareness on gender equality in education and local gender constraints
3. Engage all relevant Stakeholders in implementing gender sensitive community initiative to enhance the learning outcomes

The stages of the initiative implementation experience: each initiative includes the following activities:



Lessons learned/recommendations

A number of initiatives have been implemented in the targeted governorates of this study (Madaba, Tafila, East Amman and Ajloun), and these initiatives have aimed to improve the results of distance education by building the skills and abilities of students and their parents in relation to the use of *Darsak* platform, as well as raising awareness and triggering a deeper understanding of gender equality and the importance of observing the fundamental principles of the right to education. The success indicator was to increase the number of female and male students using *Darsak* platform in grades 9 to 11 and train their parents to help them.

This part of the study revolves around the lessons learned through the implementation of the community initiatives that emerged from this study, and these lessons can be limited to:

Forming committees

A steering committee and a support community committee were set-up in each of the targeted governorates. Those committees were composed of heads of associations, school principals, parents, members of the educational development committee, members of parents-teachers committees and teachers. In spite of the existence of School Development Councils and parents-teachers committees, the role played by civil society organizations who ensured follow-up, called members for meetings, prepared agendas, kept the minutes of the meetings and issued general recommendations, led to certain achievements, since the civil society played an important role as a coordinator. This demonstrates the necessity and importance of having civil society organizations in supporting the educational process and community involvement.

Availability of distance learning supplies

The distance learning process requires the fulfillment of some conditions related to the infrastructure of Internet services and their availability in the targeted areas, the presence of devices or tablets suitable for the effective conducting of the distance learning process, and the technical knowledge necessary to use *Darsak* platform. It is necessary before starting such initiatives in any region to ensure that the necessary infrastructure and equipment of the distance learning process are available, and if not, they must be provided before similar initiatives can be initiated. Training in using *Darsak* platform using smart devices and limited Internet packages is a good start, and may be the only option in some cases, but on the long run, it is necessary to work to provide education supplies remotely by addressing relevant government agencies, the private sector or even fundraising at the local and national levels.

Working with community organizations

In implementing initiatives, one of the challenges was to identify the beneficiaries most in need of such interventions, and this was done fairly well, but it would have been better to communicate more with all community institutions that provide services in the targeted areas and to rely on their deep knowledge of the population of the communities in which they work, and thus enhance the ability to identify and choose those most in need of such initiatives. For example, some of the parents participating in the exercises were illiterate, so they did not benefit from *Darsak* platform. If community organizations working in these areas were more present in the initiatives, they would have been able to better the platform and its functionalities. It is possible to target those who know how to read and write in regards to using *Darsak* platform, and to target everyone in awareness and educational activities.

The duration and sustainability of initiatives

Initiatives have been implemented relatively quickly, while initiatives targeting the education sector must be designed in the medium and long term because of the time it takes to measure the actual impact and to reach larger numbers of beneficiaries by replicating activities for groups in need to be covered. This is also directly linked to the sustainability of education-related initiatives and projects by encouraging civil society institutions, educational institutions and the community to maintain and develop mechanisms and channels of coordination to include debates and bringing up solutions to more problems. This may require more effort from everyone and some financial support from different actors in the beginning, but over time it will become a sustainable community practice that will have a positive impact on the educational process at the local level.

Sustainability

The project is a good start to working with local communities to solve some of the problems facing education at the local level. The sustainability of such projects is essential to strengthening the partnership between government, civil society and citizens. This can be done by coordinating to ensure a continuous implementation of the initiatives that have been initiated. In addition to continuing dialogue with the community to come up with new ideas and proposals to continue the activities of community integration.