

# Right to Education Index

Country Brief - 2016

## Palestine



**RESULTS**  
the power to end poverty

### The right to education in Palestine: RTEI 2016 findings



#### Introduction

In 2016 Teacher Creativity Center (TCC) in Palestine participated in following contains Right to Education Index (RTEI). The results consist strictly of scores for the overall index, themes, subthemes, and cross-cutting themes. This is not a comprehensive report but solely the scores to be shared across the RTEI community of practice for immediate information. The RTEI results will help TCC and all partners all Partners for deeper analysis of key issue areas and the development of country briefs. TCC participation in RTEI contributed to review deeply of the situation of education in Palestine, based on international indicators, where the findings that resulted will contribute to the knowledge of the areas that should be focus on in the coming years to carry out policy and advocacy activities, to achieve greater equity and inclusion, quality teaching and learning, and stronger educational systems to the achievement of the education sustainable development goal (SDG 4)

#### RTEI Results

Regarding to the preliminary result, Palestine Index Score was 76for each of the five themes, and it got a low rate in the acceptability (55%) and this includes the following: Aims of Education and Palestine, rate was 95%; Learning environment, Palestine rate 58%; Learning outcomes, Palestine got the lowest level 30%.

## **Issue Area:**

### **1- Quality of education**

Results of students' performance in the tests (standard, national, and in the study of international trends in math and science) indicate the low levels of the students, and the volatility of ups and downs over the years.

The most important challenge facing the quality of education in Palestine is a weakness in including the basic competencies and skills such as communication, collaboration and critical thinking, problem solving and creativity. Education in Palestine lacks the development of measurement and evaluation system to check the knowledge and skills of students in a holistic manner, and focus on the conservation and memory skill only.



### **2- Education under occupation:**

Conflict and insecurity situations have long proved to be major obstacles to the realization of the right to education as well as the Education for All (EFA) goals. Both the right to education and the EFA goals have remained unfulfilled as a result of the ongoing conflict and military occupation. The frequent military attacks on Gaza Strip and discriminatory policies inflicted upon the Palestinians in the West Bank have prevented investments in education. As a consequence, schools are not available in adequate numbers and are difficult for many students to access. The barriers related to accessing education are varied and may be physical, administrative and socio-economic in nature. Children are unprotected and at risk of violence from the armed conflict while on their way to and from and also inside their classrooms. The learning environment for children is difficult, with negative consequences for the quality of education received.



### 3- Spending On Education/ Educational Budgeting Processes & allocations:

Only 19% of the general budget of the PNA is allocated for education. About 94% of the education budget is allocated for running costs and salaries. The limited budget available for the educational development programs in comparison to the Palestinian people's needs and demands has negatively influenced development and reform of education. With the increase in student enrolment rates, the budget per student is decreasing in a manner that endangers provision of quality education for all. This mainly impedes the efforts made to meet the needs of vulnerable groups such as girls and children with disability. Ensuring enrolment of children with disabilities for example, needs obvious financial policies that allow for more spending on educational resource rooms and centers, qualified assistant teachers and adequate infrastructure to allow for inclusion of those children in the formal education. Ensuring girls equal access to education, on the other hand requires implementation of policies that allow for awareness among teachers, parents and girls, in addition to ensuring infrastructural needs are met. Moreover, this will affect teacher training and development, not to mention the need to hire more than 6000 teachers in order to meet the standards according to UNESCO report (2012)<sup>1</sup>. Most of the existing schools also suffer from inadequate sanitary facilities (sinks and toilets); their condition is in most cases significantly below international standards. Governmental schools also lack the equipment and facilities that help in creating a sound school environment as 70% of schools do not have a library and the majority lack halls for lectures and non-academic activities. The percentage of schools that have computer laboratories does not exceed 46 % in the West Bank and 60% in the Gaza Strip. Audio visual equipment such as TVs, VCRs and projectors, which are important educational tools are also limited. The majority of schools lack sport fields and gym facilities. In the majority of schools there is an overcrowding problem in classrooms increasing the burden on teachers

<sup>1</sup> GCE & EI. (2013). Teachers: Closing the Gap Report.

and making it very challenging to control the classrooms. The needs and shortages in education in Palestine lead to overcrowded classes where the burden on teachers to manage the class and control it is very heavy. The double shifts for students, the rote teaching, and the lack of necessary equipment and the exposure of children to trauma and school closures are among the few challenges that need new and innovative practices to improve quality of education.



#### **4- Early childhood and Preschool Education**

International standards of preschool education give the criteria of all aspects of education such as curriculum, teaching methods, communication techniques, infrastructure requirements and teacher education. Educational psychology research shows that care given to children in their early years can have great impacts on development of their personalities, life-skills, social skills and cognitive development. What happens with children at this stage of their life determines how many aspects of their lives as adults will be like. Statistics of a study issued by the Ministry of Education (2013) reveal that less than 30% of Palestinian children receive preschool education. This leaves the majority of children in the childhood age without education. MoE states that this has significant impact on children and cause behavioral problems. According to the study, parents don't send their children to kindergartens because of the required fees on enrolment, which is relatively expensive as the vast majority of kindergartens, are private businesses. Other reasons also include lack of nearby kindergartens in many locations and lack of awareness about the importance of preschool education on parents' part. In addition, lack of qualified teachers for this phase of education is referred to the lack of college degrees in the Palestinian Universities. MoE's statistics show that most of the teachers in kindergartens are not qualified and do not carry a college degree. As for the infrastructure of kindergartens, the standards put by MoE specify a group of criteria for a child friendly accessible safe and reinforcing environment. However, most of the existing kindergartens don't implement these standards.



### **Gender & Girls Education:**

According to statistical data drawn from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, women and girls' presence has increased at all education levels in Palestine. Despite such a magnitude of educational achievements, the Palestinian women are still marginalized and their participation at various levels is limited. The negligible impact of the Palestinian education system on the lives of Palestinian women considered as an evidence of the failure to turn the educational advances into reality in terms of women's empowerment, protection and participation, is indeed manifested in all public life domains in Palestine. And this was the meaning of the low score for Palestine in Learning environment, and Learning outcomes in the RTEI Results 2016.

Additionally, gender stereotypes are still dominant in the current Palestinian education system. In school curricula, for instance, women image is still limited to that traditional image viewing women's roles limited to household activities.

According to local and international research, the limited impact of education on the lives of Palestinian women can be interpreted in terms of the fact that the education of girls is not viewed as a Human Right, an investment or a form of social security.



### **5- Inclusive Education for children with disabilities in general**

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) indicates in its disability survey (2011)<sup>2</sup> that more than one third of the Palestinians with disabilities didn't receive any education (37.6%), 35% of them in West Bank and 42% in Gaza. The survey findings show also that one third of those who were enrolled to schools dropped out again, and that 22% of the dropouts were attributed to the individuals' disability. These statistics correspond with the RTEI results which indicated low score for Children with Disabilities 67 and out of school education for children with disabilities 50, this score was cause of the reasonable accommodation measures available for children with disabilities in mainstream schools.

According to the MoE the unprepared school environment would increase psychosocial problems for PWD and would affect their wellbeing. Therefore, the Ministry is putting increased efforts towards making the school environment more accessible for PWD and towards increasing school preparedness in terms of resource rooms, counseling and inclusive classes. The Ministry states that there is ongoing cooperation with other stakeholders such as the Ministry of Social Affairs and civil society organizations in this regard. However, the Ministry of Education also points out considerable challenges that need to be addressed such as dependency of developmental programs on external funding and projects that has limitations in targeted locations, timeframes and/ or beneficiary groups. There is also the challenge of duplicity and lack of clarity of laws and regulations regarding PWD education.<sup>3</sup> Since 2007, MoE has started a partnership with UNESCO in developing the formal teacher qualification programs and systems and in developing child friendly and inclusive educational programs. In the pilot of this project, more than 1000 teachers received training on concepts of inclusive education. However, the strategic plans that have been developed by the Ministry don't reflect the policies and practical procedures needed to mainstream and implement such program in all schools

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<sup>2</sup> PCBS (2011) Disability Survey: Report of Major Findings.

[http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/\\_PCBS/Downloads/book1812.pdf](http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_PCBS/Downloads/book1812.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> idem



## Data Availability:

In the case of Palestine which it under occupation, regarding to the international law the State of Israel is responsible for enforcing the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Israel as well as in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In fact, according to the International Court of Justice it is – as the occupying power – responsible for the human rights situation in Palestine as well. However, the Israeli state refuses to recognize this obligation. Consequentially, numerous child rights violations have taken place and remain unpunished. For example, Israel is a responsible to facilitate the right to education in the area which it under control by occupation (like Area c). In this area the Palestinian State have limited control on it so it's difficult for Palestinian to develop the education. In these areas there are many challenges and obstacles to development the education because of the Israeli occupation. <sup>4</sup>

## Recommendations:

- 1- Making significant improvements in the educational infrastructure, like the constructing and restoring schools, improving the educational environment ,providing the educational system with the required physical assets, and accommodation measures available for children with disabilities in the public schools
- 2- Important it is to sustain and enhance more efforts exerted to advance the educational realities and to make use of all opportunities for advancement in the future.
- 3- The MOE have to achieving improvement in students' performance, which is evidenced in the achievements of Palestine students in national and international tests such as Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study.
- 4- Need to continue improving the quality of education, and innovative practices at the local and international levels
- 5- To enhance community partnership and collective responsibility for educational advancement, which would lead to an inclusive state of coordination of efforts that will invariably help achieve the national vision and overall goals of the education system.

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<sup>4</sup> Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI), report about the education under occupation (2013).

- 6- Achieve balance between openness to the external world on one hand and preservation of national identity and cultural heritage on the other.

