



QUEEN RANIA  
FOUNDATION  
مؤسسة الملكة رانيا

# QRF FACT SHEET

## **GENDER AND EDUCATION IN JORDAN**

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### **GENDER AND PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM STRUCTURE**

- Public school classrooms in Jordan are segregated by gender after grade 3.<sup>[1]</sup>
- 68% of public schools are classified as mixed, 9% are female-only and 23% are male-only. Many mixed schools are classified as such since as they have mixed grades in the early years but above grade 3 their classrooms are female-only.<sup>[2]</sup>
- The teaching workforce at public schools is also gender-segregated in accordance with the school's gender classification (i.e. boys' schools have an all-male workforce, mixed schools and girls' schools have an all-female workforce).

While QRF does not neglect the low performance of both girls and boys in the Jordanian education system, the substantial gap in favor of girls has led QRF to focus on exploring efforts to improve learning outcomes for boys.

### **GENDER AND EDUCATIONAL ACCESS**

- Jordan achieved gender parity in primary education enrollment in 1980,<sup>[3]</sup> and women are enrolling in secondary and tertiary education at higher rates than men.<sup>[4]</sup>
- The adult female literacy rate in Jordan was 97% in 2012.<sup>[5]</sup>
- A 2014 UNICEF study suggested that when girls under 18 marry and become pregnant, they are unlikely to return to their education, and low school performance followed by dropout is also cited as a risk factor for early marriage.<sup>[6]</sup> A 2017 Higher Population Council report

found that 13% of girls in Jordan married before turning 18 in 2015<sup>[7]</sup> and among Syrians in Jordan the rate was 35% in 2015 (up from 11% in 2011). While early marriage is common in Syria, the Syrian Crisis has exacerbated this.<sup>[9]</sup>

## **GAPS IN EDUCATION QUALITY AND STUDENT EXPERIENCES**

- On the PISA 2015 survey, 27% of 15-year-old boys agreed with the statement that they feel like an outsider (or left out of things) at school in comparison to 18% of girls.<sup>[10]</sup>
- Male teachers were less likely than female teachers to report a passion for teaching as their primary reason for joining the profession and more likely to say they intend to leave their current teaching position.<sup>[11]</sup>
- Parent-Teachers Association (PTA) commitment and participation is weakest in boys-only schools according to principal reports in a 2016 study.<sup>[12]</sup>

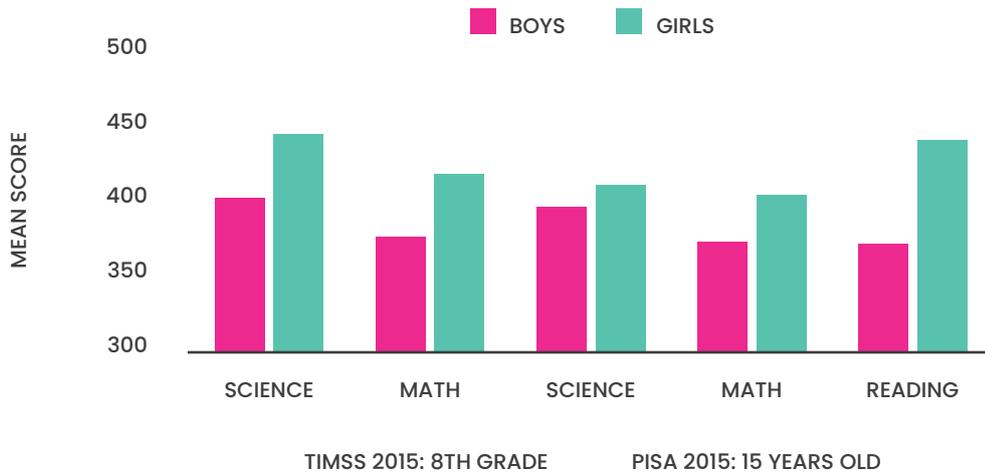
## **THE GENDER ACHIEVEMENT GAP**

The Ministry of Education commissioned a Gender Gap in Student Achievement in Jordan in 2014, to identify the factors contributing to the wide gap in learning outcomes.

- In 1999, a reverse gender achievement gap in favor of girls was observed among Jordanian students on the international TIMSS science assessment, and subsequently became apparent across standardized national and international assessments of reading, math and science skills.
- Jordan's reverse gender gap in reading was the largest among all participating countries and the widest among all subjects in the 2015 PISA assessment. Girls scored 72 points ahead of boys in reading, a gap considered equivalent to more than 2 years of learning.<sup>[13]</sup>
- On the 2015 PISA, Jordan also had the largest reverse gender gap in science (equivalent to more than a year of learning), and the second largest reverse gender gap in math (14 points).<sup>[14]</sup>
- Jordan's reverse gender gap is a trend shared by other Arab countries. For science, for example, of the 6 Arab countries participating in PISA 2015, 3 of them were among the top 5 globally for reverse gender gaps: Jordan ranked 1st, UAE second, and Qatar 4th.<sup>[15]</sup>
- Gaps equivalent to half a grade level were also found in the TIMSS 2015 science and math assessments for 8th graders.<sup>[16]</sup>
- In 2015, 15-year-old male students were twice as likely as female students to report repeating a grade at the lower secondary level.<sup>[17]</sup>



**FIGURE 1. JORDAN'S TIMSS AND PISA MEAN SCORES BY SUBJECT AND GENDER, 2015:**



Source: TIMSS 2015 and PISA 2015 datasets

## **EDUCATIONAL VS. ECONOMIC OUTCOMES**

- Educational attainment has not translated to economic participation of women in the Jordanian labor market. In 2014, only 13% of the female working-age population was in the labor force, compared to 60% percent of working-age males.<sup>[18]</sup>



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