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# Breaking through Glass Doors: A Gender Analysis of Womenomics in the Jordanian National Curriculum

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# Breaking through Glass Doors: A Gender Analysis of Womenomics in the Jordanian National Curriculum

Mayyada Abu Jaber



## OVERVIEW

**F**emale workforce participation in Jordan is among the lowest in the region of the Middle East and North Africa. This means that Jordan is missing a significant share of its qualified workforce that could strengthen its economic development and help maximize its growth premium. And though Jordan has achieved parity in access to education in both primary and secondary schools, Jordanian women's educational achievements are not being reflected in their participation in the economy.

The private sector and the government have intensified efforts to tackle barriers that prevent women from entering the workforce, including incentive systems, like the voucher system, and female-friendly policies, like the provision of child care centers. Despite these efforts, the "culture of work" in Jordan remains a persistent barrier for women and economics, or what can

be called "womenomics." Moreover, a woman's decision to enter the workforce is often made by the male members of her family, who are likely to weigh the social consequences of her leaving home for family cohesion.

Promoting women's participation in the workforce is not an easy task. It requires a shift in the subjective beliefs about women and economic life. Building on the social theory of belief mediation, Alexander and Welzel (2010) suggest that in order to achieve the economic empowerment of women, society would need to view women's economic empowerment as being both "desirable" and "legitimate." For Jordan, this means that female-friendly employment services, incentive systems and policies (i.e., objective conditions) must be coupled with a corresponding change in people's mindset (i.e., subjective beliefs) about women in the workforce.

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Ms. Abu Jaber brings over 15 years of experience in education strategy, advocacy and development. She is the founder and CEO of World of Letters, a social enterprise dedicated to promoting quality education in the Arabic language by providing innovative program solutions and consultancy services to the education sector. Additionally, she was the founding CEO of Jordan Education for Employment, which she continues to support as a member of the board of directors. In 2004, she contributed to the Education Reform for Knowledge Economy Support project at the Jordanian Ministry of Education, where she provided national teacher training and was instrumental in the development of the Management Information Stream curriculum. Moreover, she has also worked as an education consultant to Queen Rania Abdullah II of Jordan, and collaborated closely with USAID on projects related to youth and environmental education. Ms. Abu Jaber attained her M.Sc. in Environmental Geology from Duke University, and her B.Sc. in Geology and Mineralogy from the University of Jordan.

Shaping beliefs and values about the gendered division of labor starts early in a child's life, through the family, society and the school system. This study explores the role of the school curriculum, specifically the direct and hidden gender biases in textbooks, as a tool for the socialization of cultural and ideological messages about women and economic life. In doing so, this study evaluates the current desirability of women's economic empowerment through a systematic analysis of four subjects in the Jordanian national curriculum for grades 4 through 10.

In order to evaluate the legitimacy of the practice of women's economic empowerment, this study examines the gendered division of labor, especially the leadership structure, in the work environment, using the Ministry of Education (MoE) as a sample workplace. This analysis is based on an interpretation of Alexander and Welzel's (2010) theory that the greater the number of women role modeling positions of decisionmaking and leadership, the stronger the legitimacy behind the notion that women can take control of their economic and political lives.

This study's pertinent research findings for Jordan vis-à-vis the desirability and legitimacy of women's economic empowerment include the following:

#### ***Curriculum findings (desirability)***

- Vocational work is not desirable for women, even for jobs that require skills that have been stereotyped as feminine (e.g., chefs and waiters).

- Only a few culturally acceptable and economically feasible professional and public sector jobs are assigned to women (e.g., teachers).
- It is more desirable for females to stay home.
- The curriculum prepares women to enter the marriage market rather than the labor market.
- Women who work outside the home will not be able to meet their family's demands and expectations and their family responsibilities.
- Women are given very little control of finances and are afforded only limited mobility.
- Men are portrayed as being more entrepreneurial than women.
- There is a distinct absence of women performing productive tasks and an overrepresentation of women performing reproductive tasks.
- Females are represented in subordinate positions, while men are represented as leaders.

#### ***Leadership findings (legitimacy)***

- The number of females in the MoE hierarchy decreases with greater leadership responsibility and higher decisionmaking power, legitimizing the stereotype that females do not have the ability to lead or make decisions in the public and private spheres.

Likewise, this study's pertinent policy findings

for Jordan vis-à-vis the desirability and legitimacy of women's economic empowerment include the following:

**Policy findings**

- Previous gender-sensitization efforts at the MoE have fallen short.
- The number of female textbook authors does not correspond to the degree of gender-biased content in the textbooks.
- The process of textbook development is unnecessarily redundant, and holds no one accountable for ad hoc amendments to content.

The study concludes that the hidden curriculum underlying both the formal curriculum at school and the culture of the workplace makes female economic empowerment socially undesirable. Gender-biased content in textbooks directs males and females toward employment futures that are socially desirable to and culturally acceptable for society, rather than those that make economic sense for individuals, families, communities and the nation. The leadership landscape in Jordan further legitimizes the un-

desirability of female economic empowerment through a gendered division of labor, whereby males move into leadership positions while females are kept in culturally acceptable jobs behind glass doors and under glass ceilings.

This study recommends a theory of action that involves diverse stakeholders and a multistage approach to promoting the positive, subjective beliefs necessary to transform mindsets about female participation in the workforce. This theory suggests that a national coalition be created to promote "womenomics" as a patriotic strategy for the economic progress of Jordan. The theory also includes a systematic reform of gender concepts in an integrated and blended school curriculum and a training program that identifies communities of educationalists. A crucial element for the success of these efforts is to tackle the leadership gap and to develop a blended gender training, mentoring and counseling program.

## INTRODUCTION

About 70 percent of the Jordanian population is under the age of 29 years. Although this statistic might suggest strong workforce potential and economic opportunities for Jordan, 29.9 percent of these youth are unemployed (Steer, Ghanem, and Jalbout 2014). The youth bulge has left young people frustrated and unable to become economically active members of society.

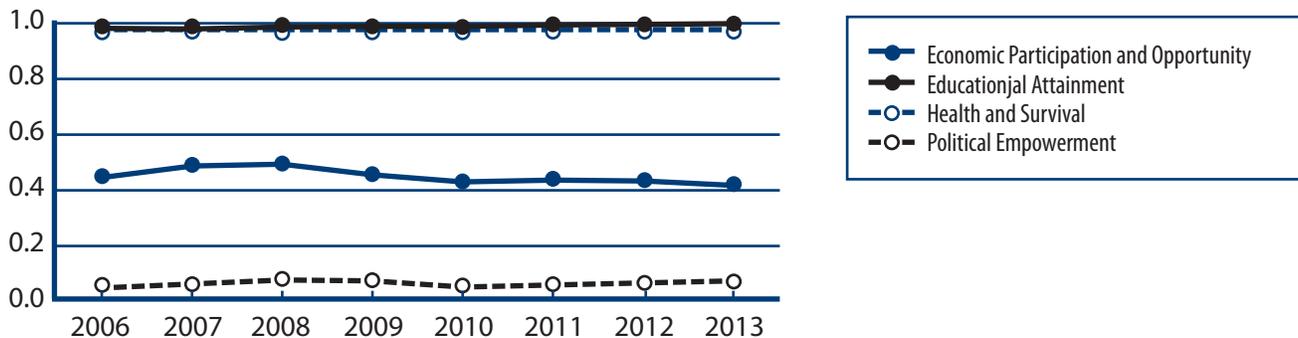
Jordanian women are especially affected by high unemployment, with a female unemployment rate of 46 percent, compared with 23 percent for men (Razzaz 2011).

Although Jordan’s literacy rate among female youth of age 15 to 24 is among the highest in the Middle East—99.2 percent (World Bank 2013)—and females achieve higher grades than males in almost all levels of education, Jordan’s female workforce participation rate is the lowest in the region, at 15 percent (Razzaz 2011). A total of 2 million of Jordan’s eligible workforce of 3.5 million are categorized as inactive (Razzaz 2011). About 54 percent of this inactive popu-

lation is categorized as “stay at home females,” with a secondary education degree or less in education, employment or training. If Jordan does not close this workforce gender gap, the country will miss out on the “growth premium” that female employment can yield, and will continue to suffer from lower potential growth in gross domestic product of 0.5 to 0.9 percent a year (Dollar and Gatti 1999; see also World Bank 2005).

Jordan, like the rest of the Arab world, has worked diligently toward fulfilling the United Nations’ Education for All goals. In 2012, the net primary school enrollment rate was 97 percent in Jordan, compared with 89 percent for the Arab world; and in 2011, the net secondary school enrollment rate was 88 percent, compared with 77 percent for the Arab world (Brookings Institution 2014; UIS 2014). Women in Jordan have made significant progress. Gender parity at the primary school level is 1.00; and at the secondary school level, it is 1.06 (UIS 2014). Yet Jordanian women’s achievements in education are not being reflected in their participation in the economy (see figure 1).

FIGURE 1. EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC INDICATORS IN JORDAN, 2006–13



Source: World Economic Forum (2013).

## ***The Relationship between Women and Economics: “Womenomics”***

The term “womenomics” was championed by Japanese prime minister Shinzō Abe to “capitalize on the power of women,” whom he described as “the most underutilized resource,” in order to help boost Japan’s slowing economy (Abe 2013; National Public Radio 2014). According to this economic strategy, women have a vital role in the economic growth of nations. If female workforce participation was on par with male workforce participation in countries like Japan, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt, their economies could grow, respectively, by 9, 12 and 34 percent (Aguirre and Rupp 2012). The ideas behind “womenomics” are thus crucial for a country like Jordan, where the relationship between women and economics is even weaker than in Japan, the United Arab Emirates, or Egypt.<sup>1</sup> According to a World Bank report (2005), female labor force participation in Jordan is half its potential. Women with less than a secondary education or with only vocational training are the most absent. This study explores the reasons behind the chasm between women and economics in Jordan and offers recommendations for ways to promote women in the workforce.

## ***Culture as a Barrier to Economic Productivity for Jordanian Women***

In the monitoring and evaluation data collected by the Jordan Career Education Foundation (JCEF), women had a distinctly low participation rate in vocational jobs, even when the jobs were made readily available to them. In 2010, 63 percent of the women who held a high school degree or less rejected the vocational jobs offered to them upon completion of demand-driven (i.e., employer-driven) training programs (JCEF

2010). In-depth focus group discussions conducted by JCEF revealed that cultural attitudes toward women in the workforce constrained women’s actual participation in it. Women declined jobs because they were pressured by their families to stay home, on the grounds that the jobs were not culturally suitable. The vocational jobs, which included both nonroutine and routine positions (e.g., on assembly lines and in retail sales), required the women to work in a mixed-sex work environment or with other foreign females, both of which are culturally unacceptable. Furthermore, some of the nonroutine jobs, such as working in retail sales, required long hours and night shifts.

A similar trend of culture as barrier was observed for Morocco in a recent study conducted by the Japanese International Cooperation Agency of a female employment training and job placement program (Morikawa 2014). There, almost 50 percent of females with lower primary education and 49 percent of females with lower secondary education rejected their job placements for cultural reasons or because their husbands and their families did not allow them to participate.

In both Jordan and Morocco, women stated that culture and the inability to make their own decisions deterred them from entering the workforce, especially vocational jobs. Observations in Jordan show that younger men are becoming even more stringent in their roles as economic providers and authoritative household members, and thus are dictating to women when they can or cannot work. A female living in a Jordanian family headed by her grandfather or father therefore has a greater likelihood to join the workforce than her counterpart living in a family headed by her brothers or husband (JCEF 2010). Culturally, females are typically social-

ized to become good housewives and mothers. Because some of the vocational jobs that were offered to these females were viewed as potentially reducing their chances for marriage, brothers often forbade their sisters from assuming these jobs. Similarly, criticism from family, neighbors and society led husbands to forbid their wives from taking socially unacceptable vocational job (JCEF 2010).

When asked where they would see themselves in five years, almost half the women who participated in the JCEF program said that they would see themselves “married,” because, in their words, “there is no hope of getting a job, [so] marriage seemed to be the only other route” (JCEF 2010) This perspective echoes the findings of a study conducted by Stockedale and Nadler (2013), who suggested that occupational choices are dictated by the requirements of both the labor market and the marriage market. Of particular importance, Stockedale and Nadler explained that while the skills for both the labor and marriage markets for males are similar, they are often different and sometimes contradictory for a female, leading her to have to make a choice between which market to enter.

In Jordan, the Ministry of Labor has implemented many interventions to tackle the high rate of female unemployment in the vocational sector, including gender-specific labor laws, such as providing maternity leave and child care centers. Other interventions include building female-only factories closer to rural communities in order to minimize transportation costs, as well as providing technical training at community-based organizations to ensure a culturally safe work environment for women. Yet, despite these efforts to address the objective opportunities and conditions needed for Jordanian

women’s economic empowerment, the subjective beliefs about and cultural attitudes toward female employment in vocational jobs have yet to be addressed. Based on the trends observed by JCEF and the Japan International Cooperation Agency, one could argue that culture—particularly the beliefs, values and attitudes held by men and women about women and economics—are a persistent barrier to female economic empowerment in Jordan.

### ***Improving the Desirability and Legitimacy of Female Economic Empowerment: A Theoretical Framework for Cultural and Behavioral Change***

Removing this barrier of cultural beliefs and attitudes is not an easy task. It requires shifting perceptions of what Alexander and Welzel (2010) call the “desirability” and “legitimacy” of women in the workforce, especially the subjective beliefs and assumptions about women’s economic empowerment. Drawing on social theories of belief mediation, Alexander and Welzel conducted a study of the influence of emancipative beliefs—such as equity, liberty, autonomy and expression—on the empowerment of women. They found that much effort has been directed toward addressing the objective opportunities and social conditions of women, like providing women-centered services and women-friendly employment opportunities. However, what has been overlooked is a “corresponding change in subject states of minds” (p. 366). Referencing Chafetz (1988, 10–22), the authors write:

“Gendered” patterns of work organization diminish women’s opportunities to advance to higher status in an objective sense, yet subjective beliefs in the legitimacy of women’s lower status are necessary to appease women and make them accept their dimin-

ished opportunities. By logical implication, changes in the structure of work organization can open new opportunities for women to advance to higher status but these opportunities will only be effective if the beliefs arise that a higher status for women is legitimate and desirable. (Alexander and Welzel 2010, 366)

In other words, if both society at large and men and women specifically do not find the idea of female economic empowerment to be desirable and legitimate, then any effort toward structural, objective change will have negligible influence. In order to change the objective state of women's economic empowerment, it is imperative to look closely at the subjective beliefs that both women and men have toward the desirability of economic empowerment and the legitimacy behind it. Alexander and Welzel (2010) suggest that both the objective and subjective states of affairs are complementary, and that the route to female empowerment is through the promotion of emancipative beliefs. For Jordan, this means that women can only become truly economically empowered by coupling employment services (i.e., objective conditions) with a change in mindset (i.e., subjective beliefs).

Alexander and Welzel (2010, 381) also state that "women's emancipative beliefs translate easier into public action when an overall emancipative climate encourages such action." Thus, in addition to attending to employment conditions and people's mindsets, we must also consider how the workplace environment, in terms of its representation of women in both the vertical and horizontal hierarchies of the organization, generates a climate that legitimizes or delegitimizes the idea of women in the workforce. That

is, the gender composition of organizations creates a climate of either acceptance or unacceptance about the choices females make regarding their desired careers. If women are equally represented in positions of power and authority, then public action toward changing mindsets and economically empowering women will be easier, even in vocational fields.

### ***The Research Focus***

Where are mindsets shaped? While the family and society help shape values and attitudes toward women and the workforce early in a child's life, these perceptions are reproduced and reinforced in the school system. The role of schooling in general and the curriculum specifically is critical in shaping the behaviors and attitudes of youth toward gender equality (World Bank 2005). Moreover, school curricula and textbooks are important tools for socializing cultural and ideological messages about gender roles and gender bias—through the formal curriculum, with concepts being further emphasized through the informal curriculum.

But more important, students also learn gender bias about women and economics from the "hidden" or implicit messages embedded in textbooks—in pictures, in occupational role allocations, and in the way textbooks victimize and derogate females (Blumberg 2007). The fact that teachers spend 80 percent of their time teaching from textbooks suggests that these indirect messages can completely undermine any gender-sensitization efforts of explicit textbook content: "Gender bias in schoolbooks is 'hidden in plain sight.' Their stereotypes of males and females are camouflaged by the taken-for-granted system of gender stratification and roles, and

this constrains girls and boys' visions of who they are and what they can become" (Blumberg 2007, 347). Despite what we know about the "hidden curriculum" and its role in shaping ideologies and subjective beliefs, the content of Jordanian textbooks has been overlooked in attempts to improve the conditions for women's economic empowerment.

My first argument in this study is thus for there to be greater female participation in Jordan's workforce, the country's formal curriculum must move the mindsets of both men and women toward desiring gender equity in occupational roles. Therefore, in order to determine the current desirability of, or attitudes toward, female economic empowerment in Jordan, I analyzed both the hidden and direct messages about women and economics in Jordanian school textbooks. Identifying the gender bias in textbooks is crucial for changing ideologies and values about women and economics because these "hidden" messages affect the desirability and acceptability of women's participation in the workforce.

However, to change cultural beliefs about the desirability and legitimacy of women as economic agents, it is not enough to only address the educational curriculum. Alexander and Welzel's (2010) call for an "emancipative climate" to encourage action means that a "culture of work," with more role models of women at work and in leadership positions, will increasingly legitimize public action that promotes women's economic empowerment. Therefore, if occupational role modeling at, for example, the MoE—the very institution responsible for developing a gender-sensitive curriculum to empower girls to enter the workforce—is not sufficiently gender

sensitized, little can be expected vis-à-vis the occupational socializing of students through textbooks and the curriculum.

The second focus of this research is thus on the larger "culture of work" in Jordan. By using the MoE as a sample "workplace," I analyzed its "emancipative climate" with respect to the legitimacy of the idea of women in the workforce. The MoE's leadership can be seen not only as a microcosm of managers, teachers, inspectors and technicians role modeling occupational jobs but also as an example of Jordan's commitment to women's economic empowerment. A higher number of females in diverse roles at the MoE would indicate stronger legitimacy for the idea that women can assume different economic roles in society, including leadership roles.

## METHODOLOGY

**G**ender equality has many social, political and economic dimensions, which are difficult to capture in one single academic subject or discipline. Gender concepts are often integrated in an interdisciplinary manner across different subjects. This results in a spiral development of concepts going horizontally across subjects and vertically across grades, leading to a holistic understanding of gender concepts like women and economic life.

This understanding results in deeply entrenched, gendered ideologies and a set of desired behavioral possibilities. Furthermore, gender concepts are introduced either directly in the form of text, or indirectly through images and illustrations. To capture these concepts, I mapped those subjects that would most likely contain messages pertaining to women and economics—social studies, civic education, geography and vocational education.

Due to the low attainment of early elementary school students in mathematics and reading for academic year 2013, the MoE decided to limit the subjects taught in grades 1 through 3 to languages, mathematics, sciences and English. Thus, the textbooks mapped for the purpose of this research begin with grade 4. At grade 10, students select subjects from six streams—five academic ones, and one vocational stream that is also divided into subspecialties. Since Jordanian students' career decisions are generally made by grade 10, textbooks beyond grade 10 were not included in the analysis.

The following research activities were conducted:

- Map 38 Jordanian textbooks from grades 4 through 10 in four subjects (social studies, civic education, geography and vocational education) to evaluate the direct and indirect gender messaging about women and economics.
- Map a sample of 12 teacher's guides in the subjects of social studies, civic education and geography to evaluate them for gender bias in pedagogy, assessment and the support materials.<sup>2</sup>
- Assess the relationship between the gender of authors and the level of gender equity in textbooks.
- Assess the leadership role modeling at the MoE as a workplace model for students.
- Conduct a desk review of the general policies regarding curriculum development and gender mainstreaming at the MoE, on both the strategic and implementation level, to explain the overarching policies.

### ***Mapping the Curriculum***

An interdisciplinary mapping technique was used to identify isolated gender concepts related to women and economics and to derive a fuller picture of the interrelationships between these concepts across subjects and grades. More specifically, the mapping highlighted which concepts were covered in each subject; which concepts were underrepresented, ignored or repeated; and whether relationships between concepts across subjects and grades created negative or positive feedback loops.

The conceptual framework used to gender-map the textbooks was adapted from the Harvard University Analytical Framework and the model used by Netherlands Development Assistance (March, Smyth, and Mukhopadhyay 1999). The Harvard model focuses on analyzing the gender activity role and answers the question, “Who does what in society?” The Netherlands model focuses on the gender social relationship and answers the question, “How are they functioning together in society?” Messages in the textbooks that pertain to occupational segregation were analyzed in light of the social and power

relationship between genders—for example, how the gender relationships are represented in both the private and public settings and the associated decisionmaking roles for both. By explaining these relationships and how they intend to gender-socialize their readers, we will gain a better understanding of labor market socialization and the division of labor in Jordan.

The gender framework for the mapping exercise can be divided into five main profiles (see table 1; see also appendix A).

TABLE 1. GENDER FRAMEWORK FOR TEXTBOOK MAPPING

Profile	Description
Activity profile	This profile focuses on gender roles and the division of labor. It is subdivided into two categories: roles in the labor market (production), and roles at home (reproductive). The production profile is further subcategorized into professional jobs, vocational jobs, self-employment and public sector jobs. The vocational jobs are further divided into agriculture, industrial, trade, tourism, sales, handicrafts, garments, carpentry and blacksmithing.
Access to resources profile	This profile is concerned with the ability to make use of resources such as land, cash, training, education, equipment and health.
Benefits from resources profile	This profile is closely related to the access to resources profile; however, this profile evaluates the benefits that females gain from resources. For example, females have equal access to education, thus achieving parity, while boys are given a disproportional amount of opportunities to attend educational forums. Consequently, women are left short of the full productive benefits of education as a resource.
Sociopolitical profile	The political component of this profile focuses on equal participation in decisionmaking, leadership and citizenship; the social component tackles issues related to stereotyping, social imaging and vulnerability. It also measures gender bias in cognitive skills and achievements in science and technology
Influence and control profile	This profile is crucial because it indicates the factors that could manipulate the earlier profiles. It thus measures women as active agents of change rather than as passive receivers of their rights.

The ratings criteria used to evaluate gender concepts in the textbook was adapted from the Longwe Women Empowerment Framework (International Labor Organization 1998), which

identifies three levels of recognition of women’s issues: gender negative, gender neutral and gender positive (see table 2).

TABLE 2. RATINGS FOR EVALUATING GENDER CONCEPTS MAPPED IN TEXTBOOKS

Level of Recognition	Evaluation Criteria
Gender negative	Content or the context of the textbook gives a biased opinion about women that leaves them worse off. This includes when the content is silent about women's issues or when women's issues have been completely overlooked.
Gender neutral	Content or the context of the textbook gives or attempts to give a neutral opinion but could be translated or weighed either negatively or positively depending on the delivery of content. This includes concepts that were doubted to be positive.
Gender positive	Content or the context of the textbook is favorable to women's issues, and women are left better off.

In order to systematically map the hidden messages in textbooks, images and illustrations were also mapped by counting the frequency of male and female images in textbooks. Images were further evaluated as representing professional or vocational jobs, and leadership or subordinate roles. Text references to males and females were also counted. Due to the lack of consistency in the gendered language used in the textbook, a profession was considered either male or female depending on the gender form in which it was presented, regardless of Arabic language limitations.

### **Mapping the Teacher's Guide**

An interdisciplinary mapping technique was Using the MoE website, a sample of 12 teacher's guides were selected for mapping to gain a better understanding of the gender responsiveness of guides (and, hence, teachers) to the concepts, and whether they legitimize and reinforce the messages delivered in the corresponding textbooks. The content was mapped as either gender aware or gender blind (table 3).

TABLE 3. RATING FOR EVALUATING GENDER CONCEPTS MAPPED IN TEACHER'S GUIDES

Gender aware	Teacher's guide includes responsive instructional methodologies and assessment strategies to tackle the gender concepts mentioned in the textbook.
Gender blind	Teacher's guide does not include strategies for either the delivery or the assessment of gender concepts mentioned in the textbook.

### **Scope and Sequence Chart**

In addition to mapping gender concepts in the textbooks, a Scope and Sequence Chart was also created to highlight the relationships between the gender concepts, both horizontally across different subjects and vertically across different grade levels (see figure 2 below). This

chart identifies the frequency of a concept and the number of times that a concept is repeated in and across textbooks. It also helps to show whether a concept is missing. The chart gives a visual representation of the spread of negative and positive gender concepts and how they feed or loop back into each other.

### ***Assessing the Policies Associated with the Authoring of the Curriculum***

A correlation was made between the number of female and male authors and a textbook's gender sensitivity. The textbook's overall gender sensitivity was evaluated as positive, neutral or negative, similar to the evaluation criteria used to map gender concepts in textbooks (see table 2 above). The positive textbooks had more than 10 statements addressing gender issues with some supportive argument(s). A negative rating was given to those books that had more than 10 negative clauses about females; these textbooks need to be either discarded or rewritten. Neutral books were those that had 10 or fewer concepts addressed in the form of factual statements without any reference or support argument. These textbooks can be amended to become more gender inclusive.

### ***Assessing Leadership Modeling at the Ministry of Education***

A gender count of teachers and managers occupying positions at different levels of the MoE was conducted as a case study of a Jordanian workplace. This is essential for two reasons: (1) The MoE is the responsible government agency for developing and implementing curriculum that encourages women to enter the workforce. If the leadership of the MoE is not adequately gender sensitized, it would be difficult to envision that the curriculum would be fully gender sensitized. (2) As a microcosm of the Jordanian labor market, the MoE's gendered division of labor, for both entry-level and leadership positions, would provide insights into the attitudes of society toward female employment.

### ***A Desk Review of the General Set Policies at the Ministry of Education***

A desk review of the policies related to gender mainstreaming, curriculum development and textbook authoring at both the strategic and operational levels was carried out and evaluated based on the findings of the textbook mapping.

## WHAT ARE THE GENDER POLICIES AT THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION?

**B**uilding on His Majesty King Abdullah II's vision for Jordan to become the economic hub of the region, the MoE in its mission statement recognizes the importance of a qualified and competitive workforce whose members are lifelong learners and thus are able to respond to the country's current and future socioeconomic needs. The MoE's policy guidelines thus aim to foster a generation that is equipped with the skills needed in a knowledge-based economy. This is coupled with a strong vocational education program that meets the private sector's additional labor force needs. The MoE's philosophy stems from Jordan's Constitution, history, and culture. The Constitution states that all Jordanians have equal rights and responsibilities and calls for equal opportunities to ensure gender equality (MoE 2014a). The MoE's general objectives are in line with international frameworks on education and strive to fulfill the Education for All goals. The vision is also grounded in a strong cultural and value system stemming from the Jordanian Constitution and Islam. Translating the objectives into action is the mandate of every division and unit at the MoE.

The MoE embarked on a gender-mainstreaming effort in 1998, and this continued through 2002, as part of the fifth component of a capacity-building effort funded by the UK Department for International Development known as the Management of Education project. The focus of the fifth component was on developing women's leadership roles at the MoE, and the Management of Education project worked to address the professional and personal obstacles

that deterred women from assuming leadership roles.

In its gender-mainstreaming effort, the MoE worked closely with the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW), which was established in 1992. The mission of JNCW is to support mainstreaming of gender equality in all areas of policy and to "narrow the gap between formal acknowledgement of women's rights as detailed by legislation and actual societal attitudes towards women" (JNCW 2014, para 1). The JNCW formulated the first national strategy for women in Jordan. The JNCW assigns focal points from different ministries, including the MoE, to review this strategy and to act as liaisons to ensure that gender-mainstreaming efforts are translated into the strategies of the respective ministries.

From 2003 to 2009, the MoE embarked on the first Education Reform for Knowledge Economy (ERfKE) project, which focused on transforming the education system to produce graduates with the skills needed for a knowledge-based economy. To achieve this, the MoE developed new curricula, enhanced learning assessment linked with effective teaching, and underwent governance and administrative reforms. Under the reform's first component, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) funded a gender-mainstreaming project with the aim of improving the quality of education available for boys and girls in public school. This project addressed policy and institutional reform.

In response, the MOE launched the first four-year strategy for gender mainstreaming. Policies and action plans were set and implemented at all institutional levels. The strategy had four

main components: (1) to institutionalize gender within the MoE, (2) to build the capacity of the MoE's key staff to mainstream gender in their daily implementation, (3) to incorporate gender mainstreaming in strategic planning efforts, and (4) to monitor and evaluate the progress of mainstreaming efforts.

In 2004, the MoE formed a Gender Equality Technical Team (GETT) to follow up on the goals set forth in the four-year strategy. GETT's mandate was to act as a governance body and to oversee the implementation of the strategy. In 2006, a 160-hour gender-mainstreaming training program was implemented. The training targeted staff members at the MoE, including the GETT members and select directors from the field. The MoE team was trained in mainstreaming gender concepts as well as in communication and advocacy skills. A gender equality strategy for the MoE was also developed in 2008 (MoE 2013).

Between 2006 and 2008, a GETT subcommittee was formed to analyze the Jordanian school textbooks for gender bias and to recommend changes to the MoE's Curriculum Division. This effort coincided with the Demographic Education Project launched by the Higher Population Council (HPC). The collaborative effort between the MoE and HPC resulted in the sharing of family planning information and strategies with the Curriculum Division. As a result, the Curriculum Division integrated gender issues into the curricula for grades 1, 4, 8 and 10. A recommendation was also set forward to the MoE to increase the number of female textbook authors and to work closely with the JNCW and other organizations to provide authors with the documents needed for the gender integration of the curriculum (Hindawi 2010b).

GETT also recommended amending the textbooks' male-gendered language, suggesting—in collaboration with the Arabic Language Institution—alternative language that could be used to ensure gender equality, such as using both the male- and female-gendered language when referring to professions. Notably, vocational jobs were not included in this recommendation, or in efforts to gender-sensitize the language of textbooks (Hindawi 2010b).

With the start of phase II of the ERfKE project in 2010, the Directorate of Planning and Research founded its Gender Unit in order to institutionalize gender-mainstreaming efforts. The Gender Unit continues to work with other departments to monitor these efforts. However, many of the initial staff members who were trained in gender mainstreaming have retired or have since left the MoE.

In 2010 under the ERfKE II School Development Project, funded by CIDA, gender-mainstreaming efforts again intensified. The gender training manual developed earlier was revised, and a three-day workshop was carried out for field directorate staff members. The Gender Unit assigned a gender coordinator in each of the 42 directorates throughout Jordan (Hindawi 2007).

In 2011, the JNCW conducted a 12-day gender-mainstreaming training for all MoE focal points assigned by the gender units in the MoE's field directorates. That same year, the Gender Unit at the Directorate of Planning and Research conducted a study to evaluate the achievements of the MoE's gender-mainstreaming efforts. They concluded that a gender gap persists in the female enrollment rates in the vocational education stream. A suggestion was made that

the MoE examine its current policies and recommend new policies and programs to increase these enrollment numbers. The study also recommended that the Curriculum Division work closely with specialized organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to align vocational education outcomes with the requirements of the labor market (Hindawi 2010a).

## FINDINGS

### ***How Do Concepts Develop?***

**A** Scope and Sequence Chart—given here as figure 2—was developed to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the distribution of gender concepts between subjects and across grades.<sup>3</sup> This chart can also be used as a tool to assist teachers of different subjects at a grade level to teach collaboratively by using a common gender theme. In figure 2, the size of the dot indicates the frequency with which a concept appeared; the color of the dot indicates whether the concept was given positive, negative or neutral treatment in the textbook. Profiles and their related concepts are listed on the y-axis; the grade level of the textbook is distributed along the x-axis

As indicated in figure 2, most of the concepts related to the activity/productivity profile (codes beginning with #1.a) were mapped as negative (red), because most of the jobs are referenced to males (see appendix B for a description of each code number). These concepts became more frequent (thus larger in size) as the grades progressed toward grade 10. This is due to the increase in the number of gender concepts discussed in these textbooks. The few positive messages (blue) in the productivity profile were made in reference to females assuming professional jobs such as teachers, architects and judges (code #1.a.1). The vocational productivity profile (code # 1.a.2) is mainly coded negative. The size of the dot is smaller, but their repetitions are more frequent because this profile was subcategorized into multiple vocational professions.

The concepts mentioned in the reproductive profile (codes beginning with #1.b) specifically related to reproductive health were predominantly coded as positive (e.g., code #1.b.3). However, reproductive domestic tasks, such as cleaning and cooking, had a greater frequency of negative dots (e.g., code #1.b.4).

The access of women to education, health services and social services (codes #2c, 2e and 2h) were also positive. However, while the benefits from health resources are prominently positive, showing several large blue dots across several grades (e.g., code #3g), there were minimal benefits for females from education or training courses, like receiving scholarships for further study or opportunities to attend youth conventions (codes #3d and 3e).

There were no references to women's access to elderly care, water and fuel-related resources (codes #1.b.6, 1.b.7 and 1.b.8), since females were presented in textbooks with very little mobility and were mainly confined to home activities.

The sociopolitical profile (codes beginning with #4) had the largest spread of red and blue dots across all grade levels. This indicates that textbooks presented conflicting messages when represented females socially, specifically in the subprofiles of stereotyping, cognitive ability and vulnerability.

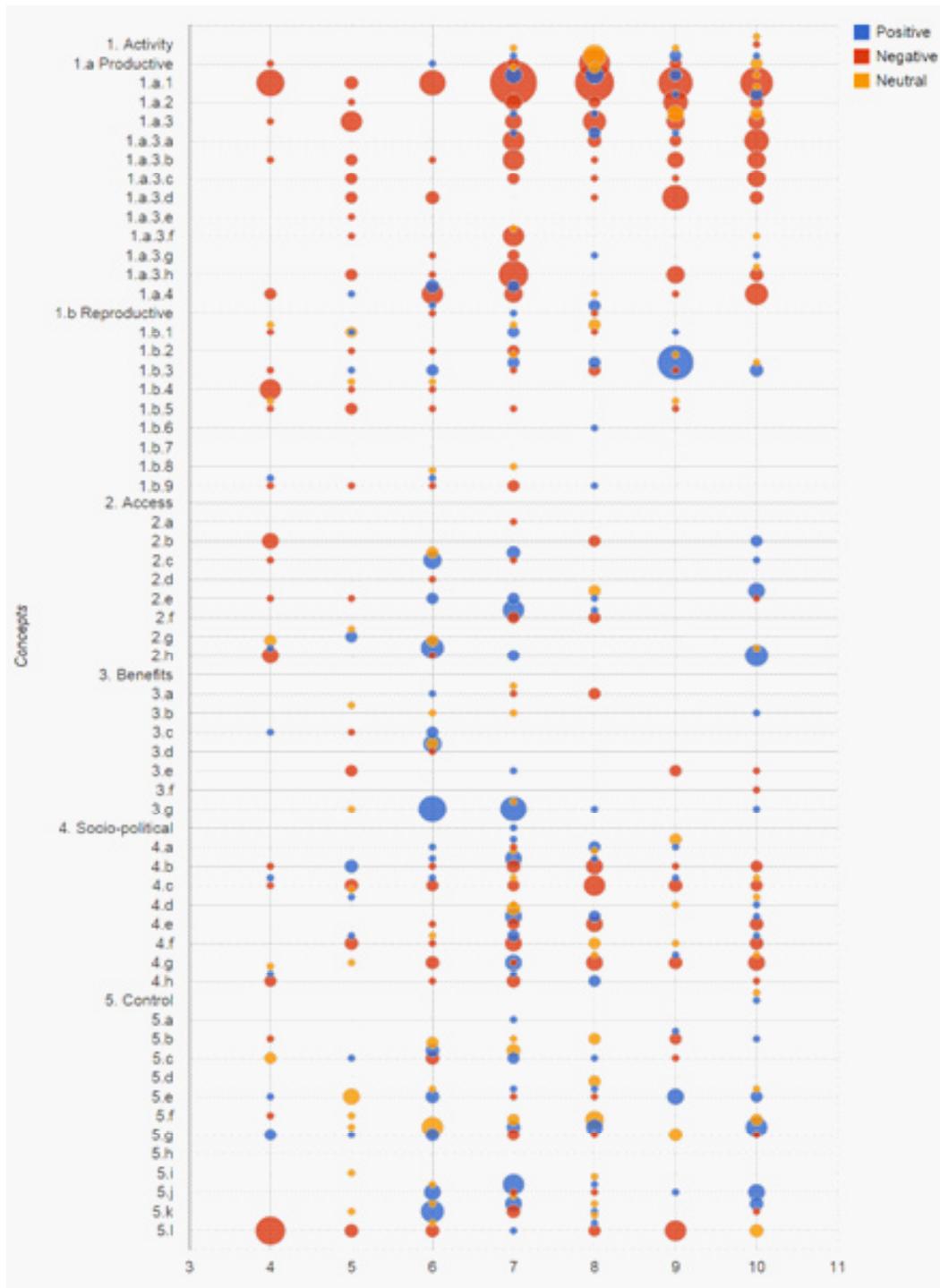
The control and influence profile showed the highest frequency of neutral messages (orange) in which concepts could be translated or weighed either negatively or positively—or created doubt—depending on the delivery of

content statements. These neutral messages include “challenge questions” that appear in the text after a female is allocated a social or political right, something that is discussed in more depth below. This is specifically evident in the legal, political, economic and demographic,

and social hierarchy concepts (codes #5b, 5c, 5f and 5g).

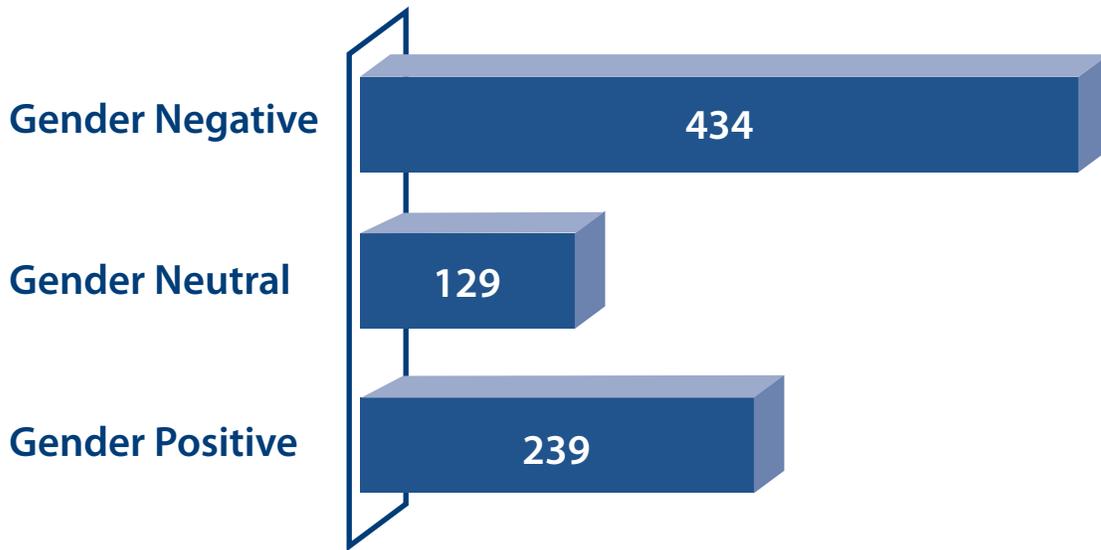
Finally, the control of finances (code #5L) was coded negative throughout the textbooks, especially in grades 4 and 9.

FIGURE 2. SCOPE AND SEQUENCE CHART



## What Do the Textbooks Tell Us?

FIGURE 3. THE RATING AND FREQUENCY OF GENDER CONCEPTS IN THE TEXTBOOKS



Source: Author calculations

Figure 3 shows that a total of 794 gender concepts were mapped in the textbooks. Of these, 434 concepts were evaluated as negative (54.6 percent), most of which were mapped in the activity/productive profile. An additional 129 concepts (16.2 percent) were evaluated as neutral, most of which were mapped in the sociopolitical profile. Finally, 239 concepts (30.1 percent) were evaluated as positive; most of these were mapped in the reproductive profile (i.e., family planning subprofile).

### General Findings

#### **The Arabic Language: The Textbooks Are Written for Males**

The Arabic language is a gendered language that differentiates between males and females in the noun and verb forms of words. When gender is not specified, the textbooks default to the

masculine norm. There are also explicit sentences that suggest the textbooks were written with the male student in mind. These work together to perpetuate gender bias throughout the different profiles, as follows.

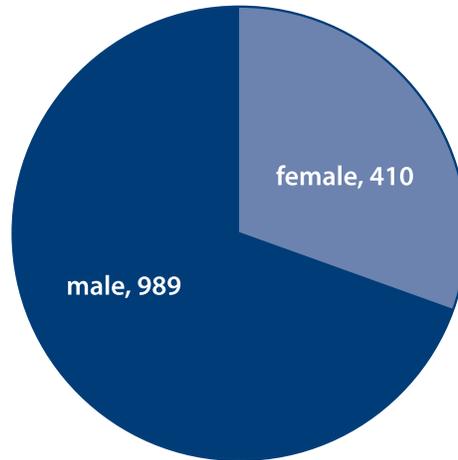
*The productive profile:* While textbooks were presented in the masculine, the division of labor is gendered to differentiate certain occupations that are suitable for females and those that are more suitable for males. For example, while all references to engineers, doctors and laboratory technicians are in the masculine, there are specific references to teachers and nurses in the feminine.

*The reproductive profile:* A lesson on stress management in the grade 9 vocational education textbook makes a reference to eight stresses that a person may undergo, one of which is the

“wife.” While marital stress includes both husband and wife, it was the choice of the author to affirm to a male reader this form of female stereotyping. The statement also shows implicit gender bias by way of using derogatory stereotyping of females as being irrational in their verbal fluency.

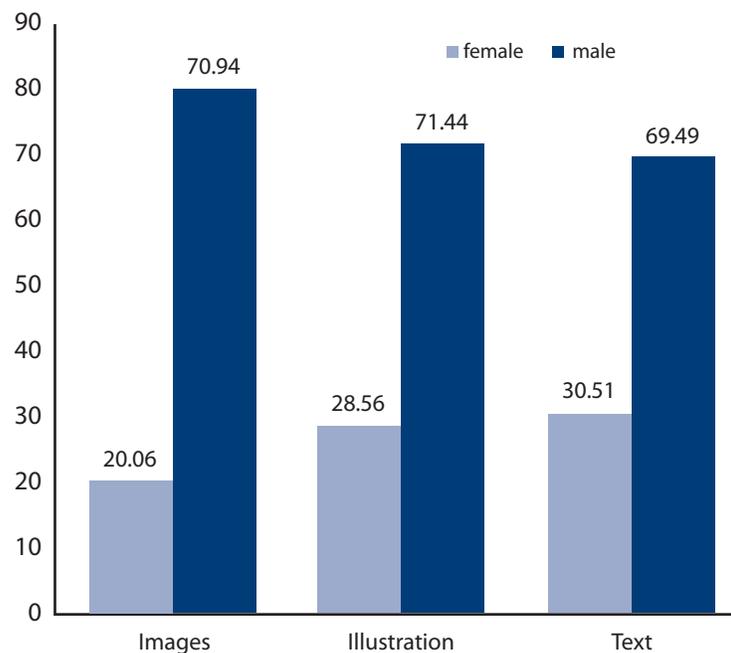
*The control profile:* In the grade 10 civic education textbooks, which were among the positive books mapped for gender equity, specific references were made to the female reader that she is “half the constituent” in society ( p. 52, part 1). With the exception of this direct message to the female student, the remainder of the textbook appeared to be speaking to the male student.

FIGURE 4. THE NUMBER OF IMAGES, ILLUSTRATIONS AND TEXT-BASED REFERENCES IN TEXTBOOKS BY GENDER



Source: Author calculations

FIGURE 5. PERCENTAGES OF MALE AND FEMALE REFERENCES IN IMAGES, ILLUSTRATIONS AND TEXT-BASED REFERENCES



Source: Author calculations

Figure 4 shows that there were 1,399 representations of males and females in images, illustration and text-based references in the textbooks, with 410 (29.3 percent) female representations and 989 (70.7 percent) male representations. The proportion of female representations in images, illustrations and text-based references varies between 20.06 percent to 30.51 percent (see figure 5).

## Gender Profile Analysis Findings

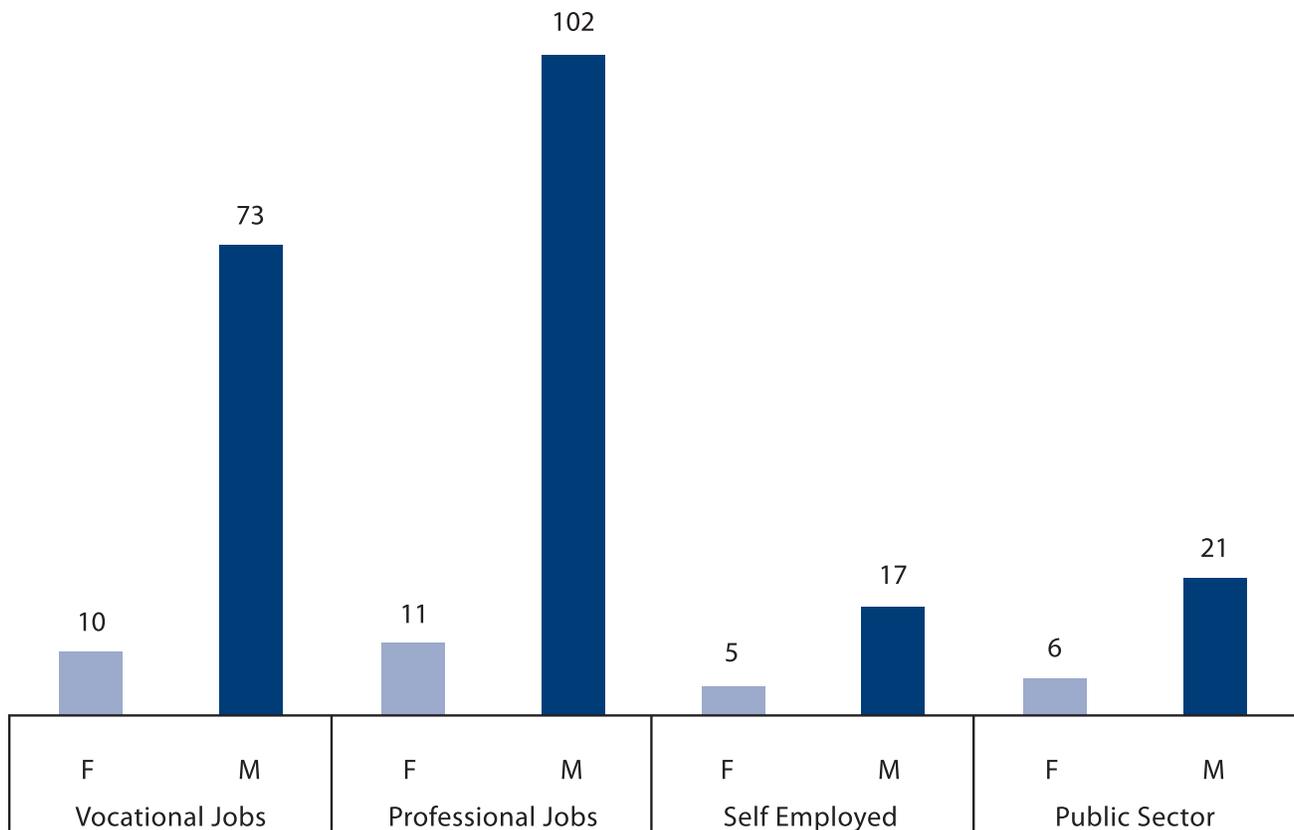
### The Productive Profile

#### Images and Illustrations

##### *Occupation is segregated by gender*

In total, there were 83 references to vocational jobs, including photographic and textual content. A total of 73 references were made to masculine jobs, and only 10 jobs were referenced in the feminine. And for a total of 113 professional jobs, 102 were referenced in the masculine and 11 in the feminine. With regard to the public sector, out of 27 total jobs only 6 were referenced in the feminine, and the remaining were in the masculine (see figure 6).

FIGURE 6. OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION BY GENDER



Source: Author calculations

The images of workers in vocational jobs are often dark, are poor in quality or were taken in a setting where workers seem to be unhappy, to be unmotivated and to lack enthusiasm, or where the health and safety measures at the factory seem to be below the acceptable standards (figure 7). The male workers in the photos never look directly into the camera, and they can be characterized by negative body language expressing the absence of confidence, or discontent and shame. At times, the photos depict foreign workers at a construction site or in other vocational professions.

Throughout the textbooks, images of workers performing manual repair work—such as welding, woodwork and electrical work—show stereotypical photos of males performing these tasks. Furthermore, when the textbook discusses any vocational occupations in the domestic service sectors—such as chef, waiter, and health care worker—all references are made in the masculine and the photos depict males performing these jobs (see figures 8 and 9).

FIGURE 7. MALES WORK IN A FACTORY, GRADE 7 CIVIC EDUCATION, P. 46



FIGURE 8. MALE CHEF, GRADE 5-2 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION



FIGURE 9. MALE WAITER, GRADE 8-2 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION



### Content

*Women's participation in professional occupations is conditional—that is, women can work, but...*

The most prominent profession for a man in both images and content was that of doctor. There were no references made to female doctors. Grade 7 and grade 9 civic education textbooks mentioned a few professional jobs intended for females, including engineers, teachers, nurses, judges and human resources managers. However, whenever a professional woman was mentioned, the text justified her participation in the workforce based on financial need. For exam-

ple, when discussing the unit on the economic factors that have led to social change in Jordan, the grade 9 civic education textbook (page 15) states that due to difficult financial times, women in Jordan, like women in Europe in the past, have entered the workforce and have become partners with men in carrying the economic burden of the family, working as teachers and judges and assuming leadership positions in Parliament and the national ministries.

Ambiguous messages regarding women and their participation in the economy prevail across the textbook. For example, the grade 8 civic education textbook (parts 1 and 2) was written in

2005 but was revised and republished in 2011. Never mind that a complete section of part 2 of the textbook presents outdated, gender-specific employment data from 2005; a reference is made to the low female workforce participation rate and highlights the need to increase the percentage of women in the workforce. However, the statements that are presented in part 1 of the same textbook in the “function of families” unit (figure 10.a, civic education, grade 8, p.16) addresses the negative social consequences of women leaving the household to work, particularly that women will not be able to balance the work/home demands and that this may result in a change in their value system that leads to the destruction in their family cohesion. The latter values refer to the emancipative values women develop as they become more economically empowered. A question follows that asks students to think critically about how the family’s cohesion could be restored. Based on the way the textbook has characterized women’s participation in the workforce as having led to the destruction of the family, one could argue that the textbook implies that the restoration of the family is achievable if women do not leave the home to work (figure 10a).

The culmination of the discussion in this textbook addresses the different institutions that were founded to assist in child rearing as a result of changes that have occurred in the family structure due to women going to work (figure 10b). The next page of the textbook, in figure 10c, includes a flowchart that, ironically, shows that equity in treatment is one of the six elements of a successful family.

In the grade 9 civic education textbook (page 21), a question asks the students to discuss the

negative consequences following the increase in the number of alternative mothers, or more accurately “domestic house help” or maids, taking over tasks that working mothers failed to manage. These statements implicitly suggest that women can work outside the home, but they will then fail at their primary responsibilities in the home.

*Vocational jobs were assigned consistently to males.* References to women in vocational jobs were mentioned only 10 times in the textbooks. These references were mainly to the agricultural sector and the garment industry. Meanwhile, there were 73 images or references to men in vocational jobs. Although the message that vocational occupations are intended for men was observed across all subjects, it is specifically evident in the vocational education textbooks. For example, the units that introduce carpentry, electrical maintenance, plumbing and mechanical work all include images where the work is performed by males. Females are shown performing domestic work like cleaning and cooking. However, as mentioned above, any job that formally requires domestic skills—like chefs, waiters and janitors—were depicted with images of males.

In the grade 10 vocational education textbook, a career guidance unit is included to advise vocational students on the options available to them in the vocational sector upon completing grade 10. The unit, however, limits the choices of women to home economics, the garment industry, and the food industry, while males are given the options of industrial vocational occupations—such as welder, electrician and mechanic—and of vocational occupations in the food and hospitality industry.

FIGURE 10A. SOCIETAL CHANGE: WOMEN WILL NOT BE ABLE TO BALANCE THE WORK/HOME DEMANDS, AND THIS MAY RESULT IN A CHANGE IN THEIR VALUE SYSTEM THAT LEADS TO THE DESTRUCTION IN THEIR FAMILY'S COHESION. QUESTION: THINK CRITICALLY OF THE WAYS IN WHICH THE COHESION OF THE FAMILY COULD BE RESTORED.



الشكل (١ - ٤): صورة لأطفالٍ يستخدمون الحاسوب.

تمرُّ المجتمعات بتغيراتٍ مستمرةٍ تشملُ مجالاتِ الحياةِ المختلفةِ؛ نتيجةً لتزايدِ أعدادِ السَّكانِ والتطورِ التكنولوجيِّ وغيرها، ومن أبرزِ هذه التغيراتِ انتشارُ التعليمِ وعملِ المرأةِ خارجَ المنزلِ، ممَّا أسهمَ في تغيُّرِ بعضِ وظائفِ الأسرةِ وخاصةً فيما أحدثتهُ من تغييرٍ في العلاقاتِ الأسريَّةِ ممَّا قد يعقِّدُ حياةَ الأسرةِ ويُضعِفُ قدرتها على القيامِ بمهامها التربويَّةِ والمجتمعيَّةِ على أكملِ وجهٍ، بالإضافةِ إلى تغيُّرِ النظرةِ لبعضِ القيمِ والعاداتِ المجتمعيَّةِ التي زادت من ضعفِ التماسكِ الأسريِّ.

\* فكِّر في وسائل تجعلُ الأسرةَ أكثرَ تماسكاً في وقتنا الحاضرِ .....

FIGURE 10B. SOCIETAL UPBRINGING: DIFFERENT INSTITUTIONS WERE FOUNDED TO ASSIST IN CHILD (SOCIETY) UPBRINGING AS A RESULT OF CHANGES THAT HAVE OCCURRED IN THE FAMILY STRUCTURE DUE TO WOMEN GOING TO WORK

## الدرس الثاني التنشئة المجتمعيَّة

تُعَدُّ الأسرةُ أساسَ التنشئةِ المجتمعيَّةِ للفردِ، وهي من أقوى المؤثراتِ في سلوكه، ففيها تتشكَّلُ شخصيَّتهُ وسلوكه، ويتعلَّمُ قيمَ المجتمعِ وعاداته، ومن خلالها تستمرُّ عمليةُ التعلُّمِ والتربيةِ وتنميةِ قدراته، لكنَّ التغيُّرَ الذي أصابَ الأسرةَ في تركيبها الحديثِ وعملِ المرأةِ جعلَ مؤسساتٍ متعدِّدةً تشاركُ في عمليةِ التنشئةِ المجتمعيَّةِ.

\* استخلص تعريفاً للتنشئةِ المجتمعيَّةِ.

FIGURE 10C. SUCCESSFUL FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS (EQUITY IN TREATMENT IS ONE OF THE SIX ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL FAMILY).



الشكل (١ - ٦): من مظاهر نجاح الأسرة.

Textbooks continuously address the problem of foreign labor filling local jobs (e.g., see geography grades 9 and 10, and civic education grades 7, 8, 9 and 10). Nonetheless, the negative images and illustrations and the negative delivery of the content regarding vocational jobs discourages Jordanian youth from taking these jobs, a move that implicitly promotes foreign labor. For example, a lesson in unit six of the grade 10 civic education textbook explains the causes of unemployment in Jordan, mentioning the skills gap between what the learner receives in school and what is required by the job market. It then refers to the competition for jobs between foreign and local labor and discusses the culture of shame that has further exacerbated the unemployment problem. The argument here is that the schools are not producing youth with the skills to get vocational jobs, which are then filled by the competing foreign labor force. These jobs are then characterized as shameful.

*Females can be entrepreneurs, but in home-based businesses.* Throughout all the mapped textbooks, there were 22 references to entrepreneurs. Only 5 of these references were made to females who start their small, home-based businesses doing sewing, nursery, or food production (vocation education textbook, grade 10, p. 96). However, there was one reference to a female who starts her own engineering firm.

Most entrepreneurial concepts were mentioned in the questions given at the ends of units, which were intended to introduce students to the concepts of profit and loss. For example, in the grade 8 geography textbook, Abu Ali (a male) decides to start a poultry farm and asks the students to give him entrepreneurial advice. Supporting material in the teacher's guide also

equates entrepreneurialism with males. For example, the assessment worksheet for grade 10 in geography gives examples of two male farmers, Abu Ahmad and Abu Khaled, initiating a farming business. Other examples in the grade 10 vocational education textbook refer to seven examples of male entrepreneurs starting their own small businesses, like a cattle farm or a medicinal herb shop. In the same book, there is only one reference to a female running a nursery.

*Women have limited jobs in the public sector.* Although females are generally encouraged to work in the public sector as teachers or in health centers, most references to other public sector jobs—such as police officers, drug control officers and army officers—were made in the masculine. If women are represented in a nonconventional job like policewomen (e.g., in the grade 8 civic education textbook), the reference is followed by a critical thinking question, which asks the learner if they agree to women assuming the role of policewomen. In sum, the author's portrayal of the public sector job market for women is limited to socially acceptable jobs like that of a teacher.

## **The Reproductive Profile**

### **Images and Illustrations**

Males are portrayed as concerned fathers in the family planning units of the civic education textbooks, and a male thus is often represented sitting in a central location with the family surrounding him. Similar to males, females are also seen in family settings when discussing the demographic unit in the civic education and social studies textbooks. However, females are mainly presented in their conventional roles as caretakers, whereas males are presented in a range of

roles. For example, in the vocational education textbooks, females are repeatedly seen in the house performing domestic work—like cleaning, cooking, planting and sewing—while men are seen performing electrical and mechanical work as well as carpentry, both inside and outside the home.

### Content

The demographic and reproductive health units were among the more positive concepts in the textbooks. There were continuous mentions of the importance of family planning for economic development. However, the messages given to girls in the civic education textbooks, supported by the social studies textbooks, is while the spacing of two to three years of pregnancies is encouraged, the prevention aspect of family planning remains forbidden. This implies that women are not given control over the number of pregnancies they have.

### Access to and Benefits from Resources

#### Images and Illustrations

In this profile, there appears to be less gender stereotyping when it comes to pictures of children. Both boys and girls are shown going to school, reading books, using computers, participating in antilittering campaigns and playing together in the playground. These show equal access by young boys and girls to education, training, entertainment, technology and social services. There are very few images of adult females accessing resources beyond education and social services—for example, in recreational settings.

### Content

There were fewer of these concepts in the textbooks. When they did appear, females were often given equal access to things like education and social services. However, for resources like water, energy and cash, there was an absence of references made to female access. Furthermore, the benefits gained from resources such as training and education were limited for females compared with males. For example, on pages 101 and 102 in the grade 5 social studies textbook, there is a reference made to a father attending a conference in Morocco and a businessman traveling to Egypt; these benefits are only portrayed in reference to males. Similarly, in the university setting, males are portrayed to participate in youth conferences and conventions while females are not mentioned.

### The Sociopolitical Profile

#### Images and Illustrations

When females are included in illustrations, their representation is usually debased, as shown in figure 11. This illustration shows a woman scolding her adult son for breaking a vase while the son looks puzzled in response.

The lesson in which this illustration appears is

FIGURE 11. VERBAL COMMUNICATION, GRADE 8 CIVIC EDUCATION, PAGE 33



part of the communication section of the unit. The specific illustration clarifies the meaning of verbal fluency and cognitive fluency. The illustration associates verbal fluency with females, and the textbook explains the irrationality of this form of communication. The textbook then refers to cognitive fluency, which is associated with males and is characterized as being more thoughtful and rational.

### Content

In general, textbooks throughout the grades address women's rights and gender equality in both the private and public spheres. However, these statements were often followed by conflicting messages. A sample of the messages delivered are as follows.

#### *Female leadership is a constitutional right, but ...*

Many of the textbooks address the concept of female leadership, through the lens of either human rights or constitutional rights. However, like female employment, these concepts are followed by critical thinking "challenge" questions that ultimately undermine the text's references to women in leadership positions. For example, in the grade 5 social studies textbook, when referring to the human rights clauses in the Jordanian Constitution, the text mentions that the Constitution has given females the right to vote, work and participate in politics and society. This statement is directly followed by a critical thinking question: "Do you think women should be members of Parliament?" However, neither the pedagogy in the teacher's guide nor the context in which this question appears in the text would allow the students to meaningfully analyze this question against cultural stereotypes

about women being unable to lead and, as a result, incapable of being members of Parliament. For example, on page 76 in the grade five social studies textbook, there is a statement pointing to a quota for the number of seats reserved for women in Parliament. The teaching strategy in the teacher's guide suggests a group discussion to analyze why women have been given the right to participate in Parliament. In the assessment criteria section, teachers are given the suggestion to use the "learning outcome checklist" technique, which is a simple class observation. Without strategic pedagogical guidance in the teacher's guide or a strategic discussion in the textbook about women's ability to lead, there is no guarantee that teachers would be able to guide discussions beyond cultural stereotypes about women's inability to lead and thus encourage students to reach the conclusion that women should not be members of Parliament.

#### *Women's employment is a right, but...*

In nearly every discussion of human rights—for instance, in sections that discuss the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals and the Jordanian Constitution—there is mention of equal opportunities and the right of women to work. However, these statements are either stand-alone facts or, like women's constitutional right to leadership, are accompanied by a controversial statement that would question the legitimacy of women working.

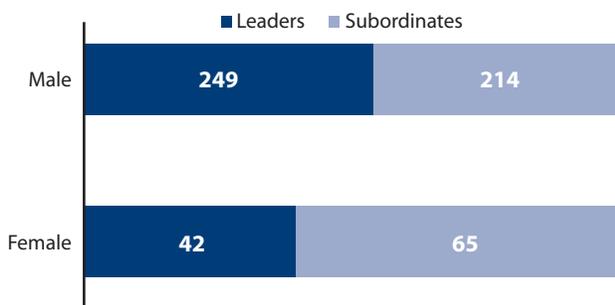
For example, a paragraph in the grade 7 civic education textbook starts with a verse from the Quran that encourages work. But then a conditional sentence follows, stating that women have the right to work if they work "in

moderation” (civic education, grade 7, p. 32). In the grade 10 civic education textbook, statements on women’s right to work were followed by “challenge” questions that undermined this right. To illustrate, the right of women to work was listed in the textbook as a constitutional right and was mentioned in order to encourage women to enter the workforce, but then a challenge question follows that associates the provision of child care centers with an indication that families cannot dispense with women working outside the home.

## **Influence and Control Profile**

### **Images and Illustrations**

FIGURE 12. NUMBER OF IMAGES SHOWING ADULT LEADERS AND SUBORDINATES



Source: Author calculations

Adult females are often portrayed as being confined to home activities. When represented in images, adult females are often seen in the background assuming a secondary role subservient to men; they are sometimes literally shown standing behind a male authority figure like the king or a minister. Meanwhile, males take the central position in images as powerful decision-makers and high-ranking political officials like generals and top army officials. The exceptions are Royal females, such as images of Her Majesty Queen Rania Abdullah II and Princess Sumaya Al Hassan. Figure 12 above shows that there were

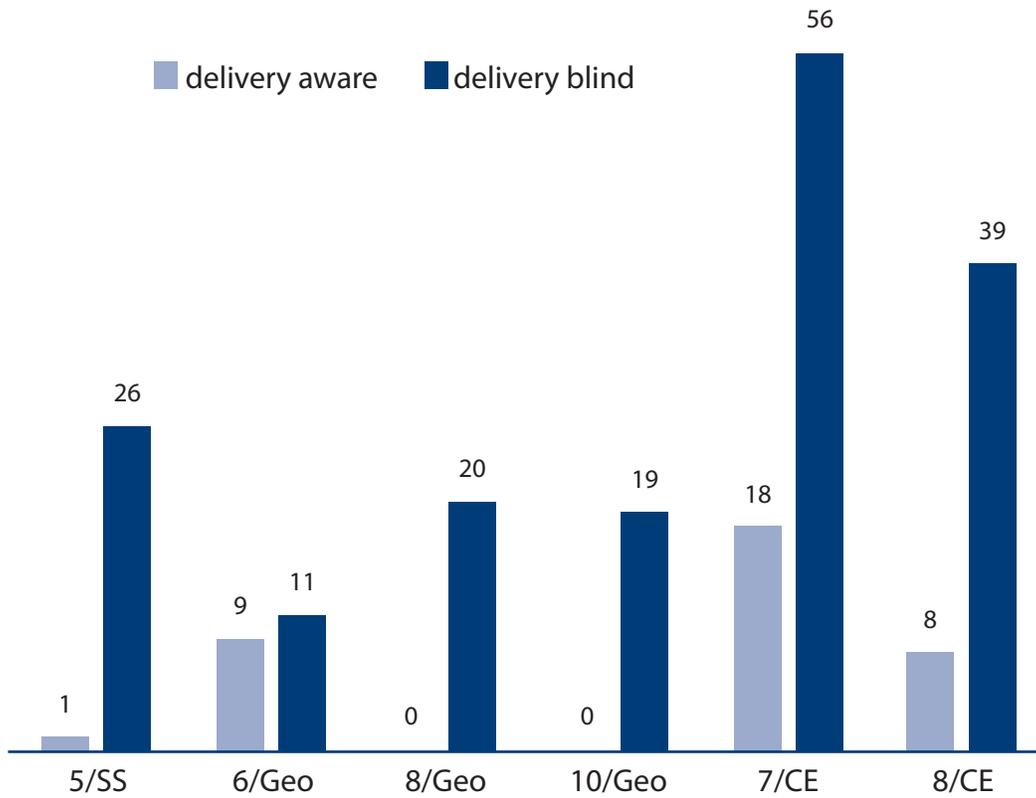
249 images of adult males assuming a leadership position, while there were only 42 images of adult females assuming leadership positions.

### **Content**

Across all the subjects mapped, the father or the male member of the family was depicted as being responsible for the family finances, ranging from controlling the family’s budget to making decisions related to expenditures on food items, school trips and other financial activities. Similarly, in the grade 9 vocational education textbooks, all jobs related to financial management—including financial trading, financial control and setting up companies—were carried out by males. Overall, authors have been consistent in giving limited control of finances to women.

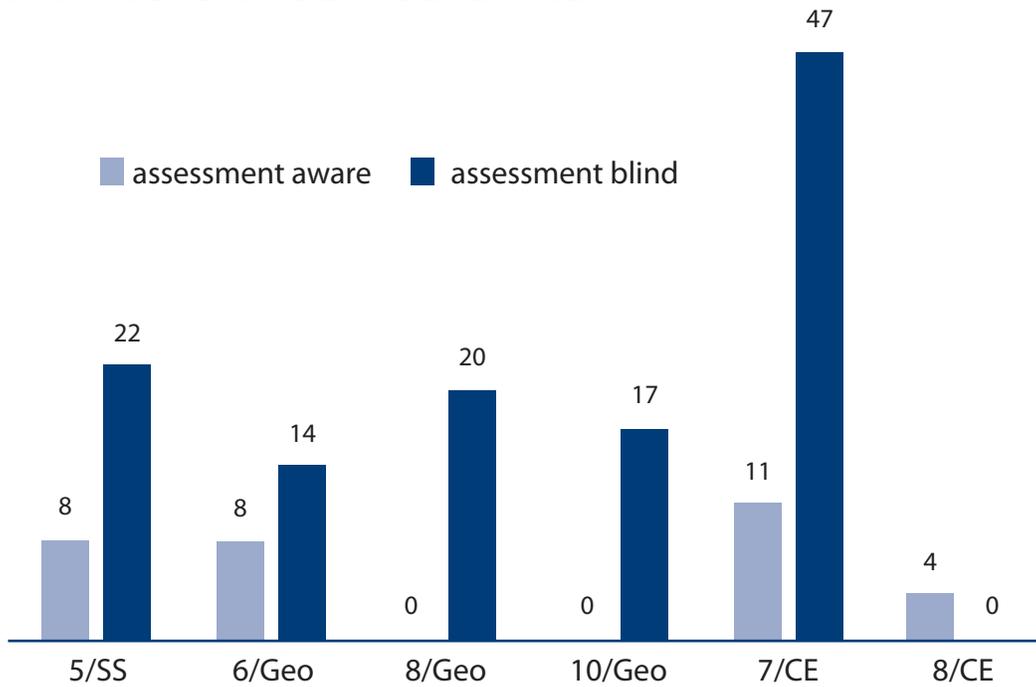
## What Does the Teacher's Guide Tell Us?

FIGURE 13. RATINGS OF TEACHING STRATEGIES IN THE TEACHER'S GUIDES



Source: Author calculations

FIGURE 14. RATINGS OF ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES IN THE TEACHER'S GUIDES



Source: Author calculations

Figures 13 and 14 show the numbers and the ratings of the teaching and assessment strategies addressed in the teacher's guides. The grade 5 social studies textbooks and the grades 8 and 10 geography textbooks had negligible (0–4 percent) gender aware concepts, while the grade 7 civic education and grade 6 geography textbooks had a higher gender aware evaluation (ranging from 32 to 82 percent). The differentiating factor was that both the latter two textbooks had substantially higher positive gender concepts than the remaining textbooks, specifically in the demographic and reproductive health profile. In the geography textbook, there were very few concepts but they were mainly positive, addressing demographics and family planning. The civic education grade 7 textbook was also rated positive with regard to demographic and productive health discussions. There was a strong correlation between the positive gender rating of the textbook and the number of teaching and assessment strategies.

The teacher's guide in general presents detailed teaching strategies, assessments and assessment techniques, answers to unit questions, enriched materials and a supporting worksheet. The pedagogy recommended specifically for gender lessons was simple and informational. When teaching strategies were included, they often promoted the recitation of facts and information. To encourage application and understanding of concepts, teachers were recommended to use simple worksheets, group work or at times Debono's "Six Thinking Hat" strategy to promote critical thinking and creativity.<sup>4</sup> Enrichment materials were listed as facts and meant to assist the teacher to help students further comprehend the topics.

The textbooks had very little emphasis on the right of women to work. The concepts related

to women and economics that were originally mapped as neutral in the textbooks were, upon review of the teacher's guide, no longer held to be neutral. For example, in the grade 7 civic education textbook on page 34, a complete unit is presented that covers women's rights. In the teacher's guide, a group work strategy poses three critical thinking questions: Do you think women should work? Do you think women should be in Parliament? And, should women have the same rights to education as men? The class discussion in this case is not supported by worksheets or enriching materials and is left to the discretion of the teacher.

The textbooks consistently promoted human rights, but these rights were not supported in the teacher's guide with a strong pedagogical framework. Instead, the teaching strategies in the guides were often superficial and would fail to engage the learner in a critical thinking dialogue to enable him or her to clearly grasp the human rights concept. For example, in the grade 7 civic education textbook (on pages 18 to 22), the teacher's guide recommends that the critical thinking strategy be used. To implement the exercise, the teacher's guide recommends that the class be divided into four groups and that a set of questions be given to each. The questions listed in the teacher's guide are in the form of definitions and do not necessarily lead to critical thinking. The guides leave it to the discretion of the teacher to carry out an in-depth and critical analysis of the rights given to women both internationally and in the Jordanian Constitution. In this case, without clear guidelines for how to promote critical thinking, teachers can deliver content in ways that completely undermine the textbook's attempt to highlight the rights given to women.

## WHAT ARE THE KEY MESSAGES?

The Scope and Sequence Chart and the textbook mapping findings illustrate a comprehensive picture of the general messages that a 15-year-old female receives by the time she reaches grade 10 and begins to think about her career choices. The direct and indirect messages she receives from her textbooks include the following.

### ***Message 1: Vocational Work Is Not Desirable for Women***

In grades 4 through 8, in both civic education and social studies, the female student would have been subjected to conflicting messages about employment. For example, although it is suggested that employment is a human right, females would receive the implicit message that the family's foundation would be weakened if she works outside the home. This kind of messaging could lead the female student to question the desirability of working outside home. Also, because she would not have "seen" herself in any of the vocational jobs in the textbooks, she may not see herself as an economic provider.

The combination of direct and indirect messages about the undesirability of vocational jobs for women would lead female students into the academic stream, mainly in sciences and arts, in order to pursue a "safe" profession like teaching. Choosing a safe profession is more desirable, because it would increase her chances in the marriage market. But those females who are not achieving high grades in school will find themselves trapped with only one choice: preparing for the marriage market, a message the vocational education textbooks strongly enforce.

### ***Message 2: Work Life Will Conflict with Family Life***

Caring for children and marriage are among the main reasons why women in Jordan leave the workforce. A study conducted by the World Bank (2005) showed that women leave the workforce between the ages of 25 to 35 and return following the childbearing years between 35 to 39. The underlying family planning message in the textbooks is that females do not really have a choice in their number of pregnancies. Spacing would result in having a large family over an extended period of time, leading to multiple departures and reentries into the workforce. With the low number of women in the workforce to begin with, returning to the labor market after childbearing becomes even more challenging. Moreover, if a woman leaves her home to work, she is told by the implicit messages in the textbooks that this will lead to the destruction of the family's cohesion, associating guilt with her right to work. The textbook continuously mentions a woman's rights in the reproductive sphere, enforcing the idea of her staying home. These messages make it difficult for women to envision themselves working outside the home while meeting the demands of their families, especially if they are expected to have large families. This further decreases the cultural and social desirability of their entering the job market, especially in vocations that do not pay a high salary. In the textbook, the only instance when females' employment was socially and culturally accepted was when their employment would provide extra income in difficult financial times.

### ***Message 3: Mobility and Financial Control Are Not for Women; Work at Home Is Acceptable***

The financial control categories throughout the textbooks have consistently been attributed to males. Whether it is budgeting for the family or going to the market, the complete control of finances is with the male members of the family. Furthermore, mobility has been attributed mainly to the male figure. While males are depicted traveling to Saudi Arabia and Morocco for business or merely as going shopping with the children, females are more often depicted as confined at home. If the female is portrayed going out of the house, there is a general element of vulnerability associated with her mobility. When women entrepreneurs are mentioned in the vocational sector, the authors refer to home-based businesses such as sewing and food production. These solutions limit the movement of women and send a message that work should be conducted from the household, further confining women to the home.

By grade 10, the female student has been subjected to three main messages. The first message is that there are no suitable vocational jobs for her and that there are a limited number of acceptable professional jobs; the second is that her leaving the household to work would have a negative impact on the family's cohesion; and the third is that she is unable to manage finances or make decisions. Through the ideological work performed by these hidden messages, the desirability and legitimacy of women leaving home to work comes into question.

The textbooks give very few choices for women to work in either vocational or the professional jobs. The textbooks have also focused on the skills needed for domestic care. With very little control of finances and limited mobility, women are directed by the textbooks toward the marriage market, whereas men are directed into the job market. Thus, once students reach grade 10, both males and females have been socialized so that they are segregated into the occupational fields that the curriculum and society writ large have assigned to them. Consequently, neither female nor male students would find it desirable to enroll in specialties that are unconventional for their gender.

The MoE's gender-sensitization efforts focused mainly on the social aspects of gender issues in the textbooks, meaning that the female's economic rights were overlooked. As evident in the Scope and Sequence Chart (figure 2), the gender-sensitization efforts created a negative feedback loop for issues related to women's participation in the workforce. Previous gender-sensitization efforts may have actually done more harm to women's economic empowerment than if the textbooks had remained in the status quo (i.e., gender blind).

## WHAT ARE THE ULTIMATE CHOICES THAT GIRLS MAKE IN GRADE TEN?

In grade 10, students select classes from six main streams, five academic and one vocational. The academic streams are sciences, arts, theology, management information system and health sciences. The latter of these two specialties were originally categorized under the vocational stream, but were later introduced into the academic stream in order to increase enrollment rates and make them more desirable for students. The vocational stream is divided into the following subspecialties: agriculture, home economics, hospitality and industrial studies. The agricultural and hospitality subspecialties

are offered to both males and females, although grade 10's career guidance section of the textbook does not include hospitality as a career option for girls. The home economics specialty is divided into garment production and food manufacturing, both of which are offered to males and females. However, cosmetology, beauty school, child care and developmental studies are only offered to girls. Similarly, industrial vocational studies are offered to males and include topics such as industrial sciences, industrial drawing and graphics, health and safety, industrial management, and practical field training. Females are only offered the course of computer technician or radio and TV repair.

TABLE 4. MoE DATA SHOWING THE NUMBER OF GIRLS PER 100 BOYS IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION STREAM

2009–10 Academic Year Enrollment by Vocational Education Specialties	
Specialty	Enrollment (girls/100 boys)
Agriculture	19
Industrial	2
Hospitality	2
Vocational center (Ministry of Labor)	28
Home economics	8,702

Source: MoE 2011

Table 4 shows data for the number of females enrolled for every 100 males in the different vocation education specialties for the academic year 2009–10. The data were published in the 2011 evaluation study conducted by the Gender Unit of the MoE.

The data show that the highest enrollment for females is in the home economics specialty, with 8,702 females enrolled for every 100 males. Other specialties show the opposite trend, with agriculture having only 19 females enrolled for

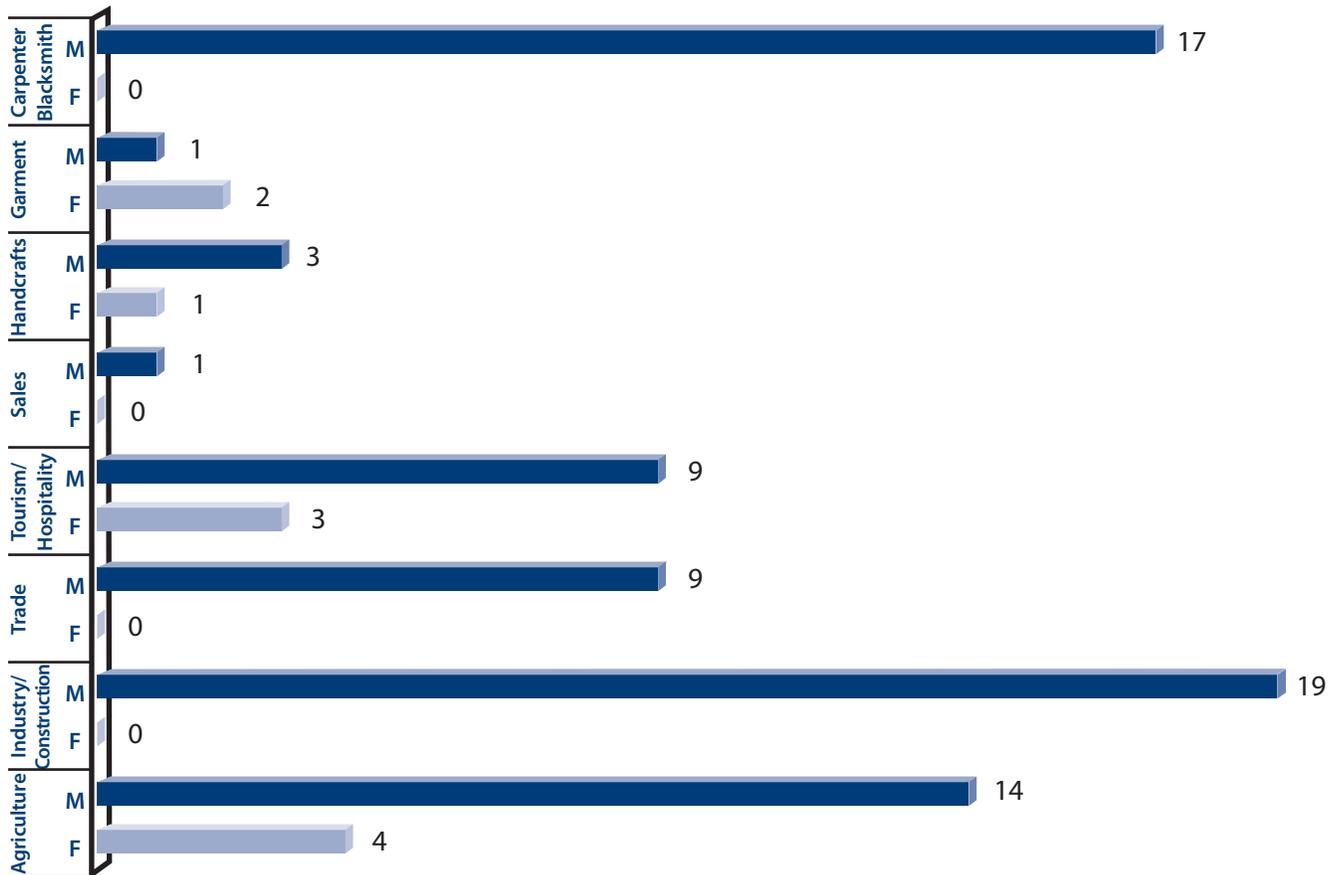
every 100 males. The hospitality specialty and industrial technician specialties both enrolled only 2 females for every 100 males.

Figure 15 shows mapping results for the gendered division of labor among the images, illustrations and text-based references to vocational occupations in the textbooks. In general, there were only 10 females represented in vocational occupations: 2 in the garment industry, 3 in tourism (hospitality), and 4 in the agriculture industry. These low numbers of females en-

rolled in the garment, tourism and agricultural streams—as well as other vocational jobs like construction, blacksmithing and carpentry—and the high number of females enrolled in the home economics stream mirrors the messages

that the content of the textbooks has deeply embedded in them throughout their elementary schooling: that vocational jobs are not for females.

FIGURE 15. STUDENTS IN GRADE 10 SELECT TO ENROLL IN VOCATIONAL STREAMS THAT MIRROR THE MESSAGES DELIVERED TO THEM THROUGHOUT THEIR SCHOOLING



Source: Author calculations

## WHO PROVIDES CONTENT?

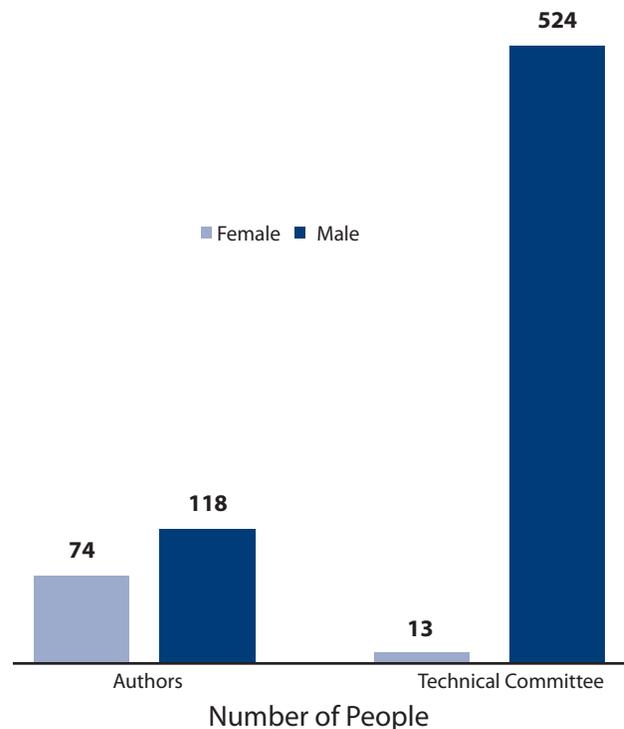
The MoE's Curriculum Division has set a policy for the writing and content development of textbooks. A subject specific team leader assigns an authoring team of a maximum of seven to eight members to develop a subject-specific textbook. A technical committee consisting of 15 to 20 teachers, university professors and field practitioners is assigned to supervise the authoring team. When appropriate, NGOs and specialized organizations such as the Higher Population Council may be requested to assist in the authoring process by providing information and awareness training to the technical committee. A subcommittee is also formulated for quality control and is mandated to carry out technical and educational reviews. None of these committees has a gender specialist.

The Higher Education Council approves all major changes to existing textbooks and the development of new textbooks. This council consists of educationalists and ministers from relevant ministries whose role is to either approve or reject textbooks, given whether they fulfill the political, social and educational objectives of the country. The council receives a preliminary proposal from the Curriculum Division to develop or amend textbooks. Upon approval and the assignment of teams, the authors begin writing the content, which is revised by both the technical committee and subcommittees. In its final stages, the textbook is presented again to the Higher Education Council for final approval (personal communication).

According to the Gender Equality Technical Team's subcommittee that analyzed Jordanian textbooks in 2008, the gender composition of

textbook authors influences the gendered content of textbooks (Hindawi 2010b). Figure 16 shows that in the mapped textbooks, there were 74 (38.54 percent) female authors, compared with 118 (61.46 percent) male authors. The total number of authors per textbook ranged between 3 and 7, and the number of female authors per book ranged between 0 and 5. A count of the number of females in the technical committees supervising the authoring teams of each textbook showed a great gender gap, with 524 (97.6 percent) males and only 13 (2.4 percent) females (personal communication). This gender gap illustrates how recommendations by the GETT subcommittee have been poorly implemented.

FIGURE 16. AUTHORS AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS



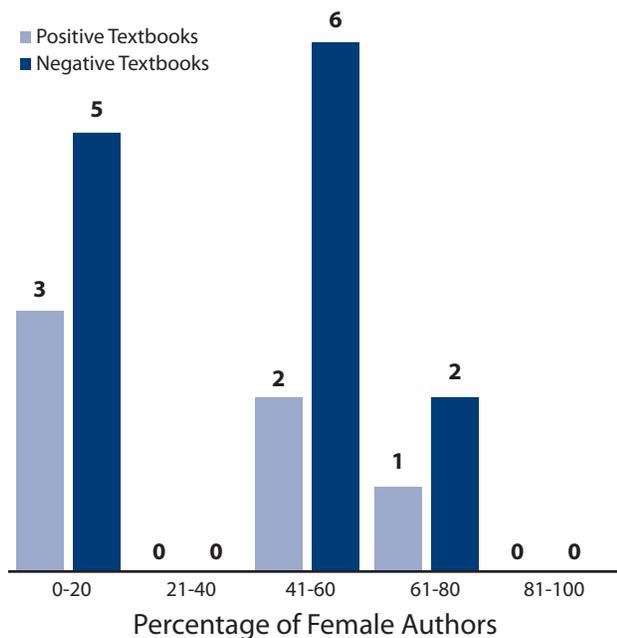
Source: Author calculations

To better explain the role of the authors and technical committee members in producing gender-sensitive textbooks, a general rating of

gender positive, neutral or negative was given to the textbook, based on its direct and indirect messaging in the five main profiles identified in the “Methodology” section above. However, the activity profile was further subdivided into productive and reproductive subprofiles.

Of the 38 reviewed textbooks, there were only 3 positive textbooks pertaining to the activity profile (specifically, dealing with the reproductive family planning and health subprofiles) and 3 positive books pertaining to the sociopolitical profile (especially the women’s rights subprofile). There were no books rated positive with regard to the productive subprofile of the activity profile, the access and benefits from resources profile, or the control profile.

FIGURE 17. PERCENTAGE OF FEMALE AUTHORS TO BOOK RATING



Source: Author calculations

Figure 17 shows that there was no relationship between the neutrality of the textbook and either the number of female authors or the number of females on the technical committee. For

example, the grade 6 sections of two textbooks had more male authors but were among the positive textbooks mapped; therefore, including female authors did not necessarily yield gender-sensitive material.

One possible explanation for the gender of authors having little influence on the gender sensitivity of textbook materials is the four additional layers of review and the additional rounds of comments by committee members and other MoE staff that the book must pass through after initial content has been developed. Throughout this time, content can be modified by any member of the technical committee or the Higher Education Council if they do not agree with the content provided. In this way, with the absence of a gender specialist who can shed light on the appropriateness of the content and language used, the content in textbooks may not appear coherent or consistent because there is no systematic process for approving the written content.

The factor that had a positive influence on the rating of the textbook appears to have been when the authors worked collaboratively with NGOs and specialized organizations to produce the textbook. These textbooks tended to have gender messages that were more precise, well defined and contextualized to local experiences. For example, the family planning section in the grade 6 textbook was written in collaboration with the HPC, which hosts a strong Gender Department, following a national family planning campaign spearheaded by the HPC. Consequently, messages about family planning were consistent throughout the grades, and the educational framework followed a problem-solving and critical-thinking approach. For ex-

ample, the health centers section in the grade 6 civic education textbook mentions the need to set up mother-and-child health care centers and explains the services they provide. The unit mentions the importance of family planning for the health of both the child and the mother and recommends using birth control methods. At the end of the lesson, verses from the Quran are given to encourage pregnancy spacing. This is followed by a critical-thinking question to ask the student to evaluate the Quran verse in light of the information presented in the lesson. The content is contextualized by asking students to visit the Ministry of Health's website and to look for the nearest health care center in the area.

However, not all collaboration resulted in gender-sensitive material. Other textbooks influenced by public sector organizations such as the Vocational Training Corporation were rated negatively. For example, in the grade 10 civic education textbook, the subject units were delivered in the form of outdated statistics—from 2004—and the content was presented in the form of facts leading to rote learning, as opposed to learning through critical thinking and problem solving.

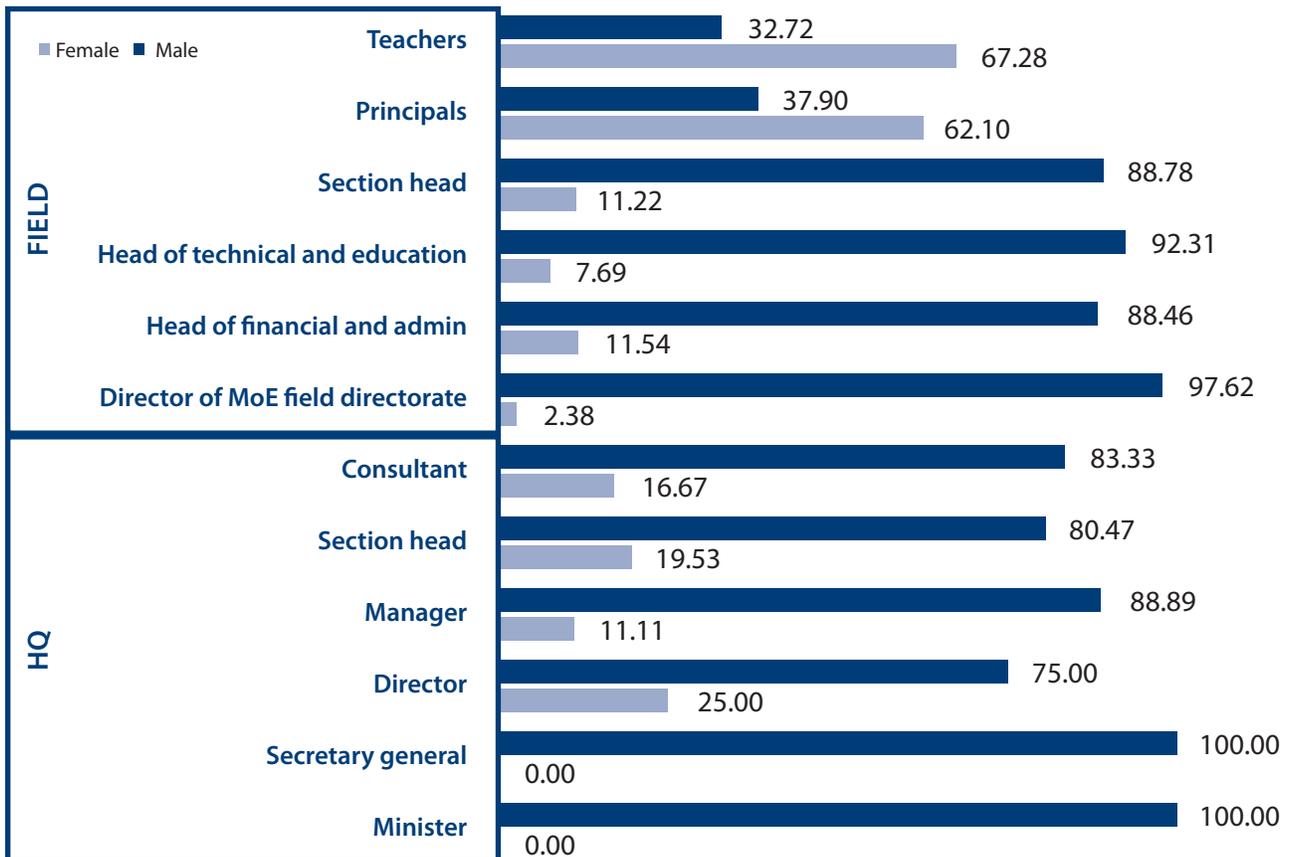
## WHERE ARE ALL THE ROLE MODELS?

Like its attempt to gender-sensitize the curriculum, the MoE's attempt to gender-mainstream all levels of its organizational hierarchy begs further analysis. Because it is the ministry responsible for developing the curriculum that prepares and produces Jordan's future workforce, whether the MoE's own organization has equitable representation by females is a sign of whether the idea of women in the workforce is truly legitimate. Recall that the first effort to increase the number of females in leadership positions at the MoE started in 1998 as part of the institutional capacity-building program. The program focused on training females in leadership skills and change management. The

program evaluated the work/family balance of females at the MoE, which resulted in several strategic recommendations, including the general recommendation to gender-mainstream the MoE (2008).

The data show that since 1921, the office of the minister of education has not ever been held by a female. Furthermore, in the last 91 years, the MoE has not assigned a single female to the position of secretary-general, who acts as a deputy to the minister in both technical and administrative affairs. Most recently, the MoE divided the position into two posts—one to lead technical affairs, and the second to lead administrative affairs. To date, no woman has assumed either of these posts (MoE 2014a).

FIGURE 18. PERCENTAGE OF FEMALE VERSUS MALE ROLES AT THE MoE



Source: MoE, 2014b

Figure 18 shows the number of employees at the MoE, including both field employees and those based at headquarters, disaggregated by gender (MoE 2014b). Starting with the teachers, who are considered the lowest in the hierarchy, 67.28 percent (74,018) are females, compared with 32.72 percent males (35,995), a gender distribution not uncommon in other countries (Coleman 2013). One explanation for the greater number of female teachers is that although public schools are gender segregated, elementary schools are often mixed. MoE regulations require that female teachers teach in mixed schools. These regulations also forbid female teachers in boys' schools and male teachers in girls' schools. Similar regulations apply to school principals.

Among the MoE's middle management positions, the number of females drops drastically. In the field directorates, the proportion of females occupying middle management positions does not exceed 12 percent. This drops to 2.34 percent for females who occupy the leadership role of field director.

At the MoE's headquarters, the proportion of female middle managers is slightly higher but still low, ranging, respectively, between 16.67 percent and 19.53 percent for consultants and section heads. While the director-level position at headquarters has the highest proportion of females, at about 25 percent, the complete absence of females in ministerial or secretary-general positions confirms the gender gap in leadership roles.

In conclusion, to date, all efforts to gender-mainstream the MoE have not removed the gender gap between females and males as-

suming top and middle management positions. Research suggests that the persistence of this gender gap stems in part from cultural beliefs and stereotypes about gender and leadership. For example, a study conducted by Olimat, Al-Louzi, and Hamdan (2010) suggests that the obstacles to females assuming leadership roles at the MoE stems from the lack of confidence by males in the ability of women to lead and in the overall lack of desirability among men for females to assume leadership positions. On the contrary, Olimat, Al-Louzi, and Hamdan found that females feel they are capable of excelling in executive and leadership positions.

Similarly, Smadi (no date) found that males believe that females are socialized to receive instruction in the home rather than socialized to be decisionmakers. According to these males, because of their domestic work environment, females do not have the ability to lead. In some cases, women themselves also hold these perceptions. In her study, Al Hussein (2011) found that females do not assume leadership positions because they feel they will not be able to balance work and family responsibilities. Unlike Olimat and colleagues, Al Hussein found that females feel they are unable to assume leadership positions. But like Olimat and colleagues, Al Hussein suggests that males hold negative perceptions of female leaders, believing that they will not be able to perform fully because they will be unable to travel on business or will not be able to stay late at work due to family responsibilities. These perceptions combined, with the low absorption rate of females into leadership positions, may create an unofficial quota for women in leadership roles. This invisible quota could also help explain why females themselves may not support other females in leadership roles.

This gender imbalance in leadership is also a common trend in many other countries, including developed countries. For instance, comparing the results of findings from this study on Jordan with the findings of a survey conducted in secondary schools in England (Coleman 2003)

(table 5) reveals a similar trend of a higher proportion of female teachers (45.7 percent male, 54.3 percent female) compared with female heads of schools (68.8 percent male, 31.3 percent female).

TABLE 5. GENDER AND ROLES IN ENGLISH SECONDARY SCHOOLS, 1997–2001

Function	Year 2001
Heads men	68.8
Deputies men	61.8
Teachers men	45.7
Heads women	31.2
Deputies women	38.2
Teachers women	54.3

Source: Coleman 2003

Coleman refers to these gendered leadership roles as being rooted in distinctions created by society, which views women as softer, more passive and unable to manage the work/life bal-

ance. These distinctions pose an invisible barrier for females seeking leadership roles.

## WHAT DID WE LEARN?

**D**rawing from Alexander and Welzel's (2010) theory of belief-mediated social change, the gender bias content in Jordanian textbooks directs both males and females toward employment futures that are socially desirable by and culturally acceptable for society, and not to employment futures that make economic sense for individuals, families, communities and the nation. The policy context and leadership landscape in Jordan then legitimize this desirability by modeling the division of labor: Males move into leadership positions, while females are kept in socially acceptable jobs and behind glass doors. Meanwhile, a woman is prevented from taking any leadership post, which keeps her under glass ceilings. In these ways, a hidden curriculum integrated both in the formal curriculum at school and in the culture of the workplace makes female economic empowerment socially undesirable. The gender leadership role modeling at the MoE not only makes political empowerment an illegitimate goal; it also illustrates that the very ministry responsible for implementing curricula that seeks to promote gender equity in the workforce does not genuinely view the idea as legitimate.

Jordanian textbooks and educational policies place a strong emphasis on female education. As illustrated in both images and content, girls and boys sit side by side at school, play together in the field and conduct their daily activities together. The message here is that it is desirable for women to have an education and to ensure gender equity. This is legitimized by the evidence of Jordan's enrollment figures, as well as by the small gender gap in access to both primary and secondary schools.

However, the context in which the textbooks present a gendered division of labor begins to steer the conversation toward two questions: "What are girls good at?" and, ultimately, "What are girls able to achieve?" Without proactive content that illustrates new possibilities for both Jordanian women and men, answers to these questions are drawn from socialized gender norms and stereotypes that get perpetuated by gender-biased images, content and messages in school textbooks. For example, to answer the question "what are females good at?" students and teachers are likely to draw their responses from textbook images illustrating females performing domestic work—like cleaning, cooking, planting and sewing—or in stereotypically female occupations like teaching. To answer the question "What are females able to achieve?" students and teachers are likely to draw from role models around them and conclude that females are at best teachers and followers. The questions "What are males good at?" and "What are males able to achieve?" are likely to draw responses from textbook photos illustrating males performing manual labor and in positions of leadership and decisionmaking. The general leadership environment modeled by the MoE, for example, further legitimizes the male as the bearer of power and control.

Gender bias in textbooks directs girls and boys toward gendered employment futures. But whether girls and boys actually pursue these occupations is complicated by an additional layer of gender bias and discrimination. For women, the social undesirability of female employment means that the vocational jobs to which she would have been directed (cooking, farming, health care and other domestic reproductive work) are taken by males, something that is

legitimized in textbooks by the photos of men in vocational jobs that require skills that have been gendered female. The ultimate outcome is that instead of being prepared for the labor market, even if it is gendered, women are being prepared with domestic reproductive skills for the marriage market.

Moreover, for men, the culture of shame referenced by the textbooks makes vocational jobs like construction work undesirable, something that is legitimized by photos of unhappy laborers in these occupations. Meanwhile, textbooks highlight foreign workers performing these occupations, ignoring the vast economically inactive and unemployed female population in Jordan. The general message here is that *female employment in any vocational job is not desired*. Instead, the female job market has been narrowed down by textbook authors to a limited, socially acceptable, gender-stereotyped job: teaching. This is further legitimized by the vast number of female teachers in the MoE's organizational hierarchy.

On the basis of the domestic skills associated with females (e.g., cooking and cleaning) and the absence of females in corresponding occupations (e.g., chefs and waiters), *textbooks appear to be directing females to the marriage market rather than the labor market*. This is further legitimized by the narrow options given to females in the vocational education stream once they enter grade 11 and the emphasis on reproductive health and family planning in the textbooks.

Throughout the textbooks, there are strong messages about human rights derived from the Jordanian Constitution and many of the inter-

national human rights conventions. But where human rights messages begin to blur is in reference to the right of women to work. Women's right to work is stated as a fact, yet this is followed by statements that question the value and morality of working women. This suggests that *females remaining at home is more desirable*.

What further delegitimizes the idea of female employment and female economic empowerment is the way textbooks attribute the control of finances only to men. Along with the fact that female employment is justified only in times of economic hardship, this kind of financial control vested in males has the general implication that females' entry into the workforce is based on financial feasibility and thus depends on a decision to be made by the male members of the family.

What is of great worry is the finding that the presence of female authors does not correlate with less gender-biased content in the textbooks. This has the effect of *females contributing to the negative gender socialization of other females into gendered economic roles*. This is a crucial issue that needs to be addressed. If young girls wanted to challenge their prescribed role in society, their desire is made illegitimate by the content put forward by female authors, the messages delivered by female teachers and the lack of real female leaders.

The gender-mainstreaming efforts at the MoE appear to be limited to policy-level change. On the implementation level, gender messaging seems to be variable and is left to the discretion of the MoE staff members coordinating these efforts. Also, with the ad hoc nature of content ap-

proval and revision, messages can be amended and statements can be added by any member of the larger curriculum review team without real accountability.

*Gender-sensitive policies placed into effect have not been fully realized in the textbooks and curriculum.* While the MoE staff has undergone gender-sensitization training, and policies may have been set to mainstream gender, these efforts have not been translated into gender-sensitizing textbook content. The MoE has fallen short in efforts to increase the number of female leaders and to increase the number of females opting to enter the vocation education stream. This suggests that the desirability of females to take up vocational employment is still lacking among MoE educators.

Jordanian textbooks portray females as confined in glass houses, where they can see economic futures that they cannot pursue. For those who manage to shatter their glass doors, they are soon faced with a glass ceiling in institutions where they are not given the opportunity to lead. Failing to address gender bias in schools and in the economy means that the 50 percent of Jordan's population that could fill existing jobs and excel in them is left behind. These working females are not only fuel for economic development but are also a powerful voice in a family. These voices can shape generations to come into more compassionate beings with a more tolerant approach toward life.

## WHAT CAN WE DO? BREAKING GLASS DOORS AND GLASS CEILINGS

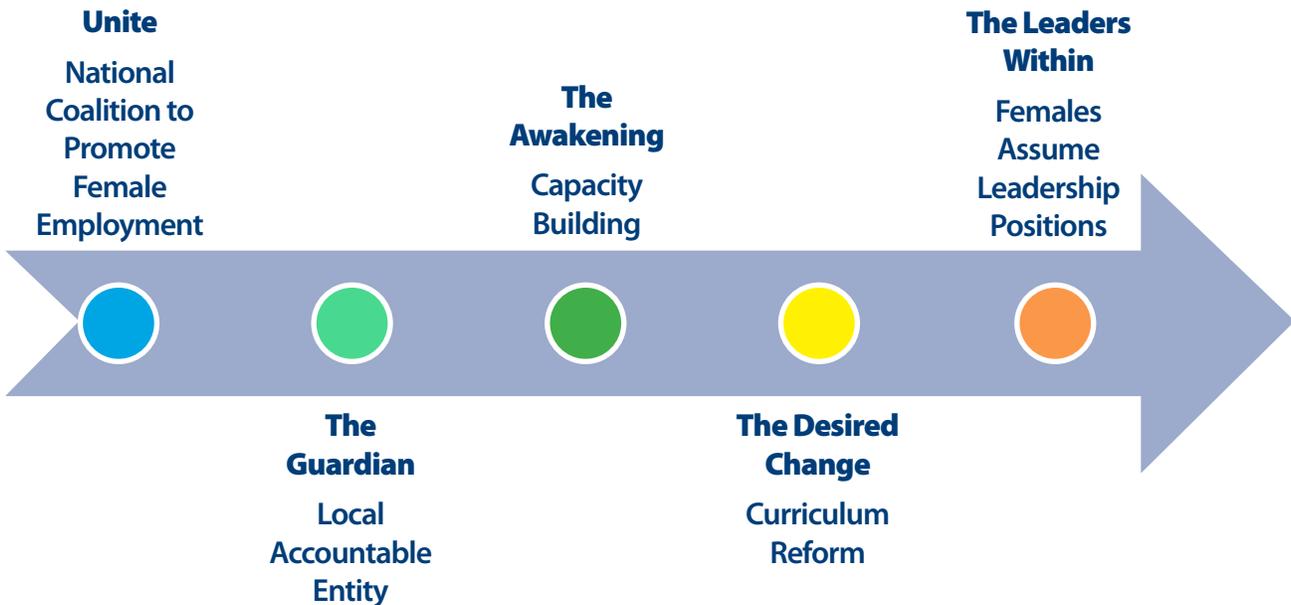
Currently, His Majesty King Abdullah II has requested the government of Jordan to develop a 10-year economic blueprint that “aims at strengthening and stabilizing the foundations of Jordan’s economy making it self-reliant” (*Jordan Times* 2014). The Jordanian government recognizes that 170,000 people suffered unemployment in 2012, that foreign labor employed in Jordan exceeds 300,000, and that the country’s vocational education enrollment rate is only 3 percent (El Emam 2014).<sup>5</sup> Consequently, the MoE is formulating a strategy, Vision 2025, that will address the vocational and university education systems to help build qualified hu-

man resources to assist in the economic development of Jordan.

The recommendations from this study are two-fold. First, at the national level, the ideas behind “womenomics” should be seen as a patriotic duty toward achieving Vision 2025’s goals and the economic and social progress of Jordan. Second, at the MoE level, cultural attitudes and subjective beliefs need to be redirected toward a greater acceptance of females in the workforce and in leadership positions.

The MoE and other important stakeholders should consider the theory of change toward achieving the goal of female economic empowerment portrayed in figure 19.

FIGURE 19. A THEORY OF CHANGE TOWARD ACHIEVING ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN JORDAN



## **1. The United Voice: National Coalition to Promote Female Employment**

As the number of employed women remains staggering low, the country continues to lose out on its growth premium of economically empowered women. The establishment of a National Coalition to Promote Female Employment could address the issue of women and economic life at a societal level. The aim of this coalition could be to come up with a shared vision for female employment in which women's participation becomes a patriotic duty and part of the Vision 2025 strategy. It would be important for this coalition to engage organizations and institutions that are active in women's economic empowerment in order to address subjective beliefs that complement strong national efforts to change the objective conditions of female employment.

Already, the introduction of child care centers in the private sector and wage equity efforts are being aggressively pursued to empower women economically. But a more diverse coalition of stakeholders—including NGOs, government ministries and advocates—should be formally involved in a united effort to develop a mission and strategy that promotes positive messages toward the economic emancipation and empowerment of women. This coalition should be led by a champion organization that aims to transform society's subjective beliefs and to influence a "womenomics" agenda in the Vision 2025 strategy.

To achieve this, the coalition should develop a communications campaign that carries a unified message for women's economic empowerment that is linked to a strong patriotic argument of

pride for Jordan. This campaign should respond to the rising threat of female disempowerment without alienating key players and decision-makers. The campaign can learn from and complement the success of the HPC.

Specifically, the HPC's effort to break down the social barriers linked to reproductive health is a good example of how to achieve positive change toward women's social empowerment. The HPC was created in 2002 by the National Population Council as a special agency of the government of Jordan to act as an authority for all reproductive health initiatives and programs in the country. The HPC started a communications campaign that was linked to the national priority of population control in Jordan. The HPC championed the initiative, and its success is reflected in the national Jordanian textbooks, where females are represented with their full reproductive health rights at a time when many of these rights were taboo and not discussed.

Thus, a similar communications strategy would need to be developed by the National Coalition to Promote Female Employment to ensure targeted messaging for effective change. The communications campaign should use new media, such as Facebook and Twitter, to mobilize a movement. Using technology as a basis for this campaign—for example, an interactive website with a womenomics portal (discussed below)—would allow for an open dialogue about women's economic empowerment.

## **2. The Accountable Guardian: Creating a Local Accountable Entity**

Once the coalition is formed, local ministry-level efforts would need to be highlighted, begin-

ning with the MoE. Yet translating the strategy to the local level would require an accountable and influential guardian.

The MoE's Gender-Mainstreaming Strategy (2007), which culminated in the formation of the Gender Unit, is a ray of hope from which this recommendation begins. This study has shown that the constraints on gender mainstreaming in the Curriculum Division stem from a general lack of desirability to fully integrate concepts of female economic empowerment into the national curriculum. Furthermore, the legitimacy of female leadership is called into question as female representation diminishes across positions with greater decisionmaking power, as illustrated in the MoE's organizational hierarchy.

Currently, the MoE's Gender Unit is embedded under the Research and Planning Department, lumping its gender priorities among other strategies set at the departmental level. It is thus recommended that the MoE look closely into restructuring the Gender Unit to give it greater responsibility and autonomy in moving forward with the "womenomics" initiative. A distinct Gender Department could report directly to the minister's office and could be the accountable guardian responsible for moving the coalition forward toward fulfilling Vision 2025.

### **3. The Awakening: The Change Within**

Next would come the awakening stage, at which the communications campaign would have raised attention about the desirability and importance of women's economic empowerment. The Gender Department at the MoE would be the implementing champion, and the GETT would be activated to oversee the process. A

capacity-building program should be at the core of this stage. This program should be comprehensive and should require continuous field visits to ensure the dissemination of positive messages about women's participation in the workforce to all levels of the MoE. New media and technology could play a strong role in this program. Also, the capacity-building program should use a blended learning approach in which face-to-face and technology-based training is employed. The capacity building should run throughout the year, with intermittent e-training programs using the MoE's intranet. Most important, there should be an accreditation and qualification system to certify teachers as gender champions.

Communications campaigns to promote female employment should also be designed based on the earlier communication strategy set by the coalition. The campaign should target the MoE from the headquarters level to the field directorate levels and schools. The capacity-building program should aim to change the attitudes of the education community from denial to awakening. It is envisioned that "communities of educationalists" would be developed, from which gender-aware female leaders could emerge.

### **4. The Desired Change: A New Curriculum to Promote Female Employment**

In addition to mobilizing a coalition that helps shift the mindsets of the larger society, actions should be taken in the classroom as well. Specifically, the curriculum should be revised to integrate messages that make women's economic empowerment a desirable and necessary goal for students. This would entail a modernized curriculum, motivated teachers and student-centered learning. The curriculum would also

need to adapt the new skills and technologies required in today's workplace. The following are recommended.

### Textbooks

To fulfill the goals of Vision 2025, the MoE should review and align textbook content to the vision's road map. The authoring and technical committees should be carefully selected, and should include gender specialists, gender department staff, GETT representatives, concerned organizations and members of the coalition. These committees should address findings from this study to ensure that positive messaging about women and economic life are delivered to youth, specifically to females. The committees should also ensure that vocational jobs are treated as desirable in order to increase enrollment in vocational education streams.

### Pedagogy Kits

Gender-sensitive pedagogical kits should be designed and developed to include meaningful instructional methodologies, authentic assessment and enriched support materials. These kits should promote an interdisciplinary teaching approach and an integrated curriculum that is designed based on central gender themes like "womenomics." The Scope and Sequence Chart developed in this research can be used for integration purposes. Teachers from different subjects should collaborate in planning lessons to produce integrated learning based on a common unit theme of gender.

The development of the pedagogical kits should be contracted to the private sector or to a specialized education institution. The process of

fund-raising and bidding should be managed by the coalition.

### E-Learning

E-learning material should be developed using a similar methodology to that of the pedagogical kit. The e-learning materials would serve as a basis for the blended learning program and would encourage both students and educators to become lifelong learners beyond the classroom. The importance of the e-content is that it would allow both the students and educators to engage in gender-related activities beyond the school setting.

### Gender Portal

An interactive "womenomics" portal should be designed and developed to store the content produced in the training, as well as the textbook, pedagogy and learning content. The portal could also serve as a learning and sharing gender platform for students, educators and leaders by opening forums and discussions for the education community and beyond. The portal should have a strong social media component in order to engage youth on a national scale. The portal should also have space for mentoring relationships, where accomplished female mentors would be assigned to help emerging female leaders reach their potential and assume leadership roles.

## **5. The Leaders Within: Females Assume Leadership Positions**

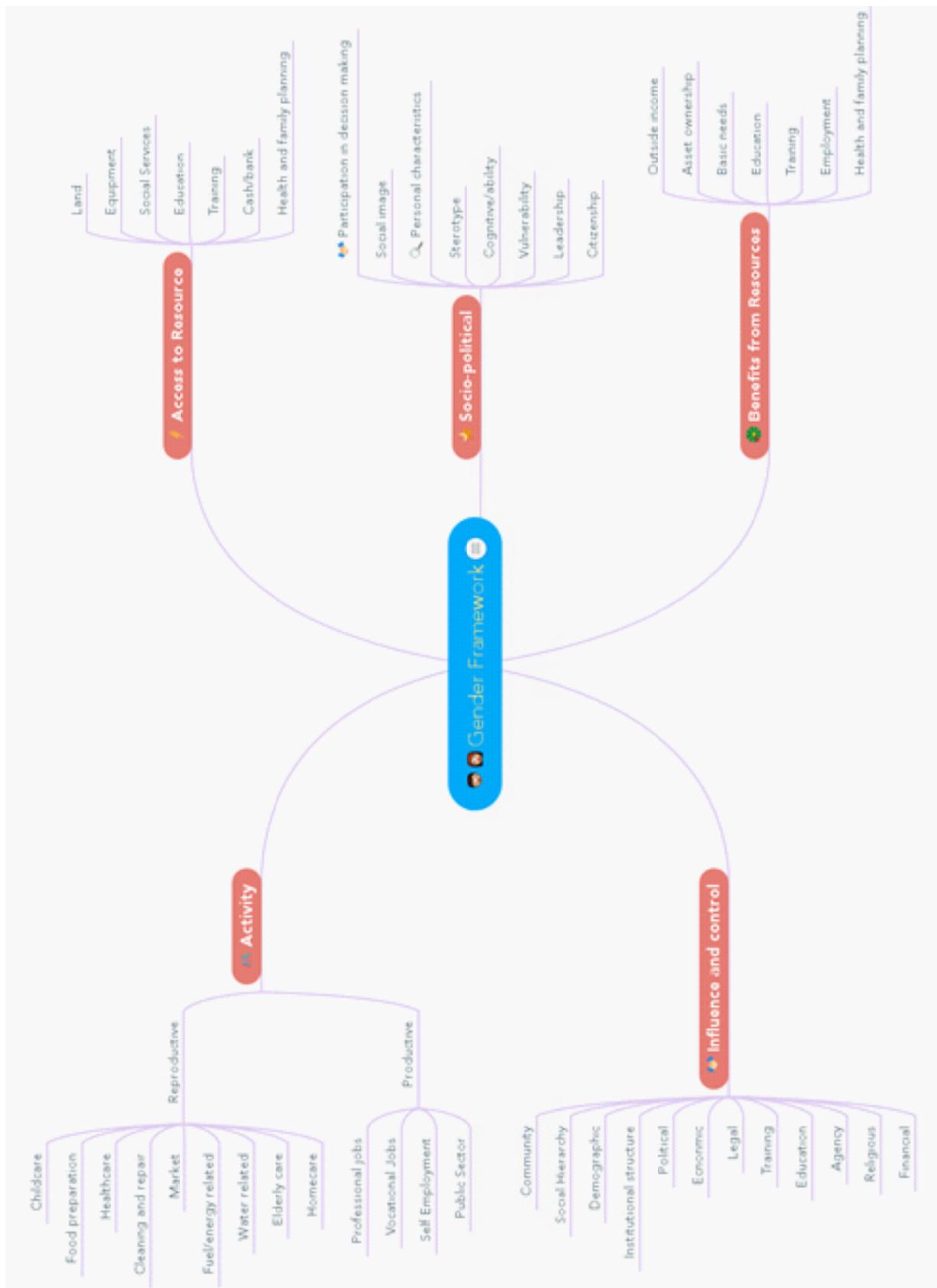
The theory of change also targets leadership. Specifically, it envisions a leadership campaign that follows the initial campaigns that target changing mindsets and beliefs.

Emerging leaders who champion “womenomics” should be identified through the communities of educationalists, which will be the hub from which female leaders can be recruited. These leaders should participate in intensive blended leadership programs coupled with counseling and mentoring in order to help emerging leaders at ministries overcome the barriers that deter them from assuming leadership. Leadership meetings and sessions should be conducted to ensure that the entire education community at the MoE is engaged in the dialogue. To ensure that these leaders are absorbed into offi-

cial leadership positions, organizations like the MoE should set a quota of leaders championing womenomics.

This theory of change—based on the findings of this study at the textbook, leadership and policy levels—can help the MoE and other relevant stakeholders lead the way toward breaking glass doors and glass ceiling that prevent women from entering the workforce. This theory of change is directed toward realizing a more economically productive Jordan by 2025.

# APPENDIX A



## APPENDIX B

### **Gender Conceptual Framework**

#### **1- Activity Profile**

- 1-a Productive:
  - 1-a-1 Professional jobs
  - 1-a-2 Self-employment-entrepreneurship
  - 1-a-3 Vocational jobs
    - 1-a-3-a Agriculture
    - 1-a-3-b Industrial/construction
    - 1-a-3-c Trade
    - 1-a-3-d tourism
    - 1-a-3-e Sales
    - 1-a-3-f Handicraft
    - 1-a-3-g Garment
    - 1-a-3-h Carpentry/blacksmithing
  - 1-a-4 Public sector
- 1-b Reproductive
  - 1-b-1 Child care
  - 1-b-2 Food preparation
  - 1-b-3 Health care
  - 1-b-4 Cleaning and repair
  - 1-b-5 Market
  - 1-b-6 Fuel-related
  - 1-b-7 Water-related
  - 1-b-8 Elderly care
  - 1-b-9 Home care

#### **2- Access to Resources Profile**

- 2-a Land
- 2-b Equipment
- 2-c Social services
- 2-d Cash
- 2-e Education
- 2-f Training
- 2-g Bank
- 2-h Health / family planning

#### **3- Benefits from Resources Profile**

- 3-a Outside income
- 3-b Asset ownership
- 3-c Basic needs (food, clothing and shelter)
- 3-d Education
- 3-e Training
- 3-f Employment
- 3-g Health and family planning

#### **4- Sociopolitical Profile**

- 4-a Participation in decisionmaking
- 4-b Social image
- 4-c Stereotype
- 4-d Personal characteristics
- 4-e Cognitive (ability and achievements)
- 4-f Vulnerability  
(physical, social, motivational)
- 4-g Leadership
- 4-h Citizenship

#### **5- Influence/control profile**

- 5-a Community norms
- 5-b Social hierarchy
- 5-c Demographic factors
- 5-d Institutional structure
- 5-e Political factors
- 5-f Economic factors
- 5-g Legal parameters
- 5-h Training
- 5-i Education
- 5-j agency
- 5-k Religion
- 5-l Financials

## ENDNOTES

- 1 The World Economic Forum's latest Gender Gap Report ranks Jordan 140 out of 142 countries on women's economic participation, just above Pakistan and Syria (World Economic Forum 2014).
- 2 Teacher's guides are not provided for vocational education.
- 3 To view this as an interactive chart, visit <http://chart.worldofletters.info/Results-Details.html>.
- 4 In this strategy, each "hat" has a different thinking function (e.g., the white hat indicates information, while the black hat indicates judgment). The teacher assigns hats to different groups of students, and collectively they begin to critically evaluate statements based on the function of their assigned hat.
- 5 Vocational enrollment in the Arab world is generally low (below 20 percent), with the exception of Egypt and Libya, where enrollment in postsecondary vocational education is about 50 percent (Education and Training Foundation 2014).

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