

## Way Forward: Priorities for Promoting Gender Equality in Education

- Ensuring the availability of sex and age-disaggregated data and evidence necessary for planning and developing education policies from a gender perspective
- Adopting a comprehensive approach to ensure that gender equality issues are attended to throughout the planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation cycles
- Guaranteeing the rights of women and girls to access quality education services through legal frameworks
- Increasing female rates of admission to scientific specializations as well as vocational and technical education
- Investing in early childhood education, with a special focus in teacher education and dealing with gender equality awareness
- Reviewing school curricula with the aim of developing new curricula aimed at altering gender stereotypes that discriminate against girls and women



*This information was compiled by UN Women on the basis of the Situation Analysis Report on Palestinian Women and Girls, commissioned by UN Women, the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Ministry of Planning and Administrative Development and conducted by the Women's Studies Institute of Birzeit University (publication pending) and the Review of the 2011-2013 Palestinian Cross Sectoral National Gender Strategy, conducted by the Ministry of Women's Affairs and facilitated by UN Women (publication pending). The data presented is extracted from these documents on the basis of the following sources:*

- Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2012. *Women and Men in Palestine: Issues and Statistics*
- Ministry of Education, 2013. *Education Statistical Year Book, 2012/2013*,
- Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2012. *MDG indicators in Palestine 1994-2011*.
- Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2011. *Palestinian Higher Education Statistics (2010/2011)*.



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## GENDER IN EDUCATION: FROM ACCESS TO EQUALITY



Education plays a vital role in building and developing the human capital of any community, and serves as the basis for sustainable development. With limited natural resources, Palestinian society's most valuable asset is human resources. Thus, investment in education is indispensable to building the economy and general prosperity, as well as key to ensuring an enabling socio-cultural environment that supports women and their rights.

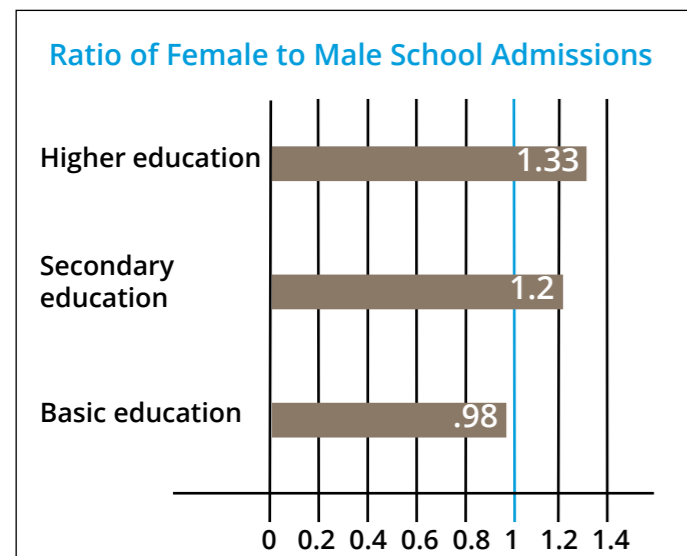
### Trends

- The Palestinian government has complied with all international conventions that recognize the right to education. Education accounts for 18% of the annual budget, on average, and about 20% of donor funding goes to furthering education.
- Achievements in high literacy rates among girls and boys in the 14-24 age group are almost identical: 99.3% and 99.4% respectively, with no significant differences among different geographic areas.
- Girls and boys are admitted to basic education at nearly equal rates, and more female students



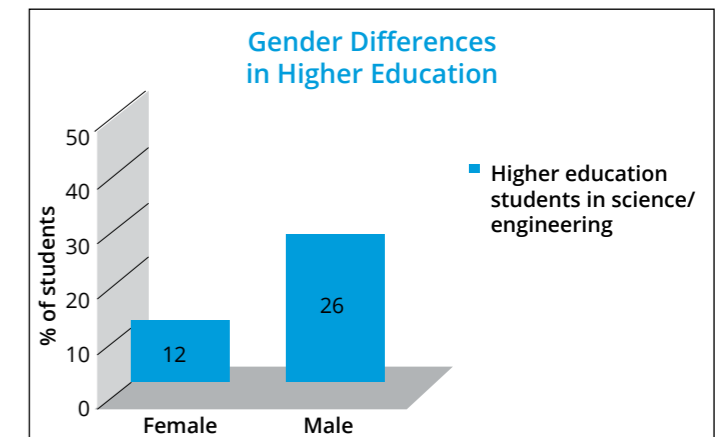
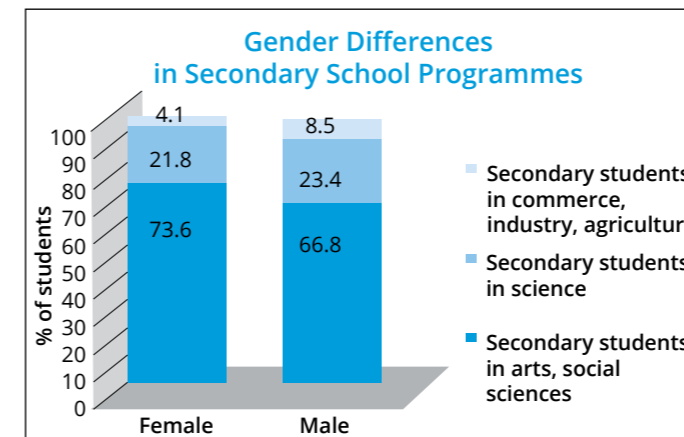
Women at an economics class at Birzeit University in the West Bank. Source: Mouhssine Ennaimi/UN Women

than males are admitted to secondary and higher education institutions, with no significant differences among geographic areas.



- Despite the increase in children’s enrolment in recent years to 15.3%, most children are not enrolled and only 14.9% of girls are enrolled.
- No more female students than males drop out of secondary school, approximately 2.5 % and 2.6% respectively, with most drop-outs occurring in the West Bank (3.6%) as compared with the Gaza Strip (1%). The highest dropout rates are recorded in the areas of Hebron and Qabaty.
- More female students than males drop out of school in the districts of East Gaza, Jericho and Nablus, which have the highest overall dropout rates and higher rates recorded among female students.
- Fields of study remain influenced by traditional gender roles, with female students in secondary school and higher education concentrated in the arts and social science.

Cover image: A Palestinian student writes on the chalkboard at her school in the West Bank. Source: Mouhssine Ennaimi/UN Women



### Review of the National Cross-Sectoral Strategy for Promoting Gender Equality 2011-2013

The strategy focused on improving Palestinian educational services, qualitatively and quantitatively, through 12 policy interventions, only four of which were partially implemented.

| Partially implemented interventions  | Non-implemented interventions  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Raising awareness among girls and families on the disadvantages of early marriage and the importance of female education</li> <li>■ Encouraging girls to have Technical and Vocational Education Training</li> <li>■ Increasing awareness among girls and families on the importance of agriculture education</li> <li>■ Enhancing school facilities to adapt to the needs of boys and girls with disabilities</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Amending and endorsing the Basic Education Law</li> <li>■ Establishing a fund for poor secondary school students, and targeting schools in remote and marginalized areas</li> <li>■ Modifying school textbooks from a gender perspective, and focusing on textbook subjects tackling contemporary issues</li> <li>■ Introducing a compulsory course on gender in all universities and colleges</li> <li>■ Enacting the Vocational and Technical Education Law</li> <li>■ Raising awareness to encourage families to enrol children with special needs, especially girls, in formal education</li> <li>■ Opening new vocational fields of study for girls/women that correspond to the demands of the labour market</li> </ul> |

The review showed that the limited implementation of policy interventions was directly related to difficulties streamlining the Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy within the plans and programs of the Ministry of Education, the absence of follow-up capacity at the Ministry of Women’s Affairs, and lack of funding for targeted interventions. The review process found that the above policy interventions remain valid for the coming development plan, but should focus on key areas.