The Role of Civil Society Organisations in Policy Reforms in the Education Sector in Jordan

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Executive Summary

This study is on the role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Policy Reforms in the Education Sector in Jordan. The most important of these are: Identifying the objective, priorities, strategies, role and participation of CSOs in policy reforms in the education sector. They also involve uncovering their approach towards changing the education sector, and consequently understanding the types of conditions and coalitions that lead to changing policies. The study adopted a qualitative data analysis methodology, with field work commencing in May 2023 and continuing till the end of July 2023. It followed a detailed survey that was conducted by prominent CSOs in the education sector, and comprehensive reviews of the literature and available sources. Our research methodology included individual interviews (45 minutes each) with active players participating in different forms of mobilizing the education sector.

CSOs in Jordan operate according to the provisions of the Jordanian Law on Associations (No. 51) of 2008 and its amendments, the most recent of which was issued in 2003, as well as regulations and instructions arising therefrom. This amendment has faced objection from the majority of CSOs, who requested from the government to revise it, as it seemed like an attempt from the government to marginalize the sector, constraining the work of CSOs in Jordan.

Constraints: Some CSOs have either explicitly refused to conduct the interview, or tacitly refused by their failure over the course of over three months to conduct the interviews. These interviews were subsequently not conducted either due to the interviewees stating that they were constantly busy, or the lack of response.

Introduction

The emergence of CSOs occurred in parallel with the establishment of democratic states which rested on the pillars of the rule of law and order. By contrast they emerged in third world and Arab countries in the second half of the last century. People saw hope in CSOs as advocates for social values and interests. This applies particularly against the backdrop of the lack of good governance, deterioration of human rights conditions, public freedoms constraints, absence of social justice and rule of law, and mismanagement of resources in most of these States. This has further expanded the gap between nations and political systems, disrupting the relations between society and these systems. As a result it became necessary to establish CSOs as an urgent matter within social and economic contexts seeking to address structural issues in the State's working systems and to close the gap between different categories of society and public policy makers in various State sectors.

There has been a growing interest in CSOs and their role in developing societies interest over the last three decades. This owes to the rapid political, economic, and social developments at the local and international level (the emergence of concepts like Democratic transformation, political reform, promotion of human rights, and public freedoms, economic crisis and technology revolution). It also owes to the pressures exerted by the major powers, particularly the United States and the European Union, on global south countries to implement political and economic reforms. This would allow CSOs to work freely and receive funds, in addition to international technical and financial support, in order to play a leading role in societies and be used as a foreign policy tool.

CSOs have played a complementary role in strengthening and supporting the governmental role to achieve the higher national interest and sustainable development in various fields. Jordan suffers from a scarcity of natural resources, and is located in a politically and militarily turbulent region that is depleting its resources as a result of the armed political conflicts in neighboring countries. It also plays a humanitarian role by receiving a high number refugees relative to its population. This puts pressure on its natural and economic resources and hinders its development plans. CSOs join the government in confronting the negative repercussions of the dire economic and political situation. As a supporter of the government's efforts in sustainable development, this is done through sharing of financial burdens, and contributing to the economic and social development of the country. It is also accomplished via launching initiatives aimed at securing minimum basic needs, like health, education, water and sanitation.
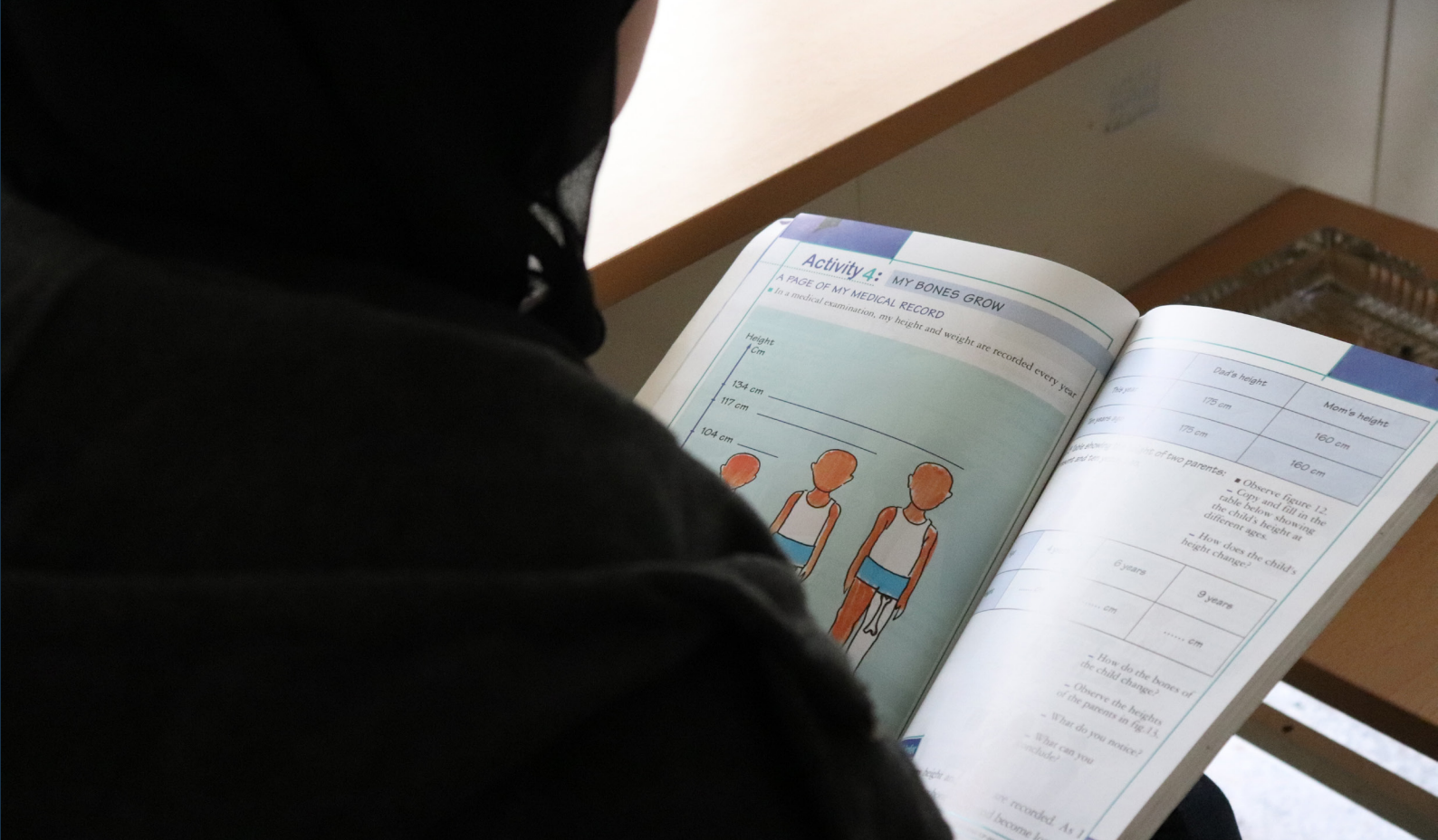
Education Reform Structure

Education attainments is one of the most prominent indicators of the success of human development in the country, and an effective tool for achieving different dimensions of cultural renaissance, given that the philosophy of modern countries depends on building a diverse educational system. Education is the basic pillar in the development and growth of society, and since the establishment of the concept of the modern state in the Middle East, emerging countries, including Jordan, have attempted to establish an educational system that fulfills the needs of these countries and their political systems. The emergence of education coincided with the establishment of the modern Jordanian state in 1921, following the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and Jordan's submission to the British Mandate. Education accompanied the modern State throughout its different phases of development. The different stages of education development have even become linked to the Jordanian State's phases of development and the political, economic, social and ideological changes that simultaneously took place.

Education development in Jordan is divided into several phases that occured in parallel with various political, social and economic conditions that dictated the pathway of education development in Jordan. They can be divided as follows:

I – Emergence and Establishment Phase (1921-1946)[1]

Modern education in Eastern Jordan was limited, during the Ottoman Empire, to a few elementary schools in Irbid, As-Salt, Kerak and Ma'an. Lower secondary education and secondary education was not available and Islamic private schools were divided into 2

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1   *Ali Mohafaza, Modern History of Jordan: The Emirate Era 1921-1946, Jordan University, 1973, p. 147-163*

groups, one of which is sectarian schools, also known as Katateeb.

In 1923, the General Directorate of knowledge decided to standardize teaching programs and establish the first Council of Education, the members of which were appointed by the Council of Ministers. Its objective was to select teachers and Council of Education employees, as well as to supervise teaching curriculums.

The first school system came out in June 1925, which set out the obligations and powers of school principals, as well as the obligations of teachers, conditions for accepting and transferring students, sanctions in case of violations, the tasks and jobs assigned to surveillants and inspectors, and examination system.

In 1928, the primary education law was issued in April 1926, replacing all previous laws and regulations that govern primary schools. It required the inhabitants of villages and neighborhoods in cities to pay the salaries of teachers and the fees of the schools located around them. The teaching subjects in primary schools were specified as follows: the Holy Qur'an, reading, calligraphy, arithmetic, engineering, geography, History of the Arab world, natural sciences, civics, moral and economic sciences, drawing, chanting, physical sports, handicrafts, school games, and military training for boys and girls.

The law on the Council of Education was replaced in 1928 by another one that stipulated the constitution of the Consultative Council of Education. Its tasks were limited to educational and technical issues related to schools, establishing teaching programs, selecting textbooks, drafting bylaws and general instructions for schools, reflecting on laws and regulations related to teaching, selecting a method for examining male and female teachers, suggesting regulations that are relevant in this regard and presenting them to the executive council. However, the Consultative Council of Education did not last long: it was replaced in 1929 by a committee that was chaired by the Director of Education and the membership of the Education Inspector and the Director of Secondary Schools in the emirate, and a number of specialist professors appointed by the Director of Education. The committee was tasked with reflecting on school programs, selecting textbooks and boarding school systems, and relevant educational and technical matters.

The education system continued operating since the establishment of the State according to the Ottoman public education system, before it was replaced by the education system of 1939. On September 24, 1940, a decree was issued, which established the first Ministry of Education in Jordan. By virtue of the Education Law, the State offered education for its people as a right without discrimination, as per its capabilities and pursuant to the provisions of the Jordanian Constitution, which stipulates that basic education is compulsory for Jordanians and shall be offered free of charge in public schools.

The first system for private schools in east Jordan was issued on January 20, 1945. It required obtaining a license from the Ministry of Education for the establishment of any private school, and for the Ministry to supervise the curricula and approve the certificates of male and female teachers. This system imposed the teaching of the Arabic language, Arab history, and geography in the country, with Arabic being a compulsory subject in every private school.

The system also prohibits the establishment of mixed private schools for both boys and girls, except for the first three grades. The appointment of male teachers in private girls' schools is also prohibited, even for a temporary period.

In 1943, the first batch of girls who completed high school graduated in the private Islamic school in Amman. As for public schools, the first batch of high school girls did not make it to graduation until 1952 at Queen Zein School in Amman.

The number of private schools exceeded twice the number of public schools, and these schools include Islamic schools located in villages and cities, in addition to Christian schools in the country.

Below are two tables illustrating some of the indicators that affect the State's educational policies.

Table (1) illustrate the number of schools and students:

Academic year	Number of boys school	Number of girls school	Number of male teachers	Number of female teachers	Number of female students	Number of female students
1922-1923	38	6	69	2	2998	318
1947-1946	67	10	176	40	8673	2056

Table (2) illustrates the size of expenditure on education as a percentage of the public expenditure

Fiscal year	Total of expenditure on education in Sterling Pound	Percentage from public expenditure
1925-1924	11820	4,4
1929-1928	22274	7,3
1947-1946	37719	2,4

This era was characterized by many features that can be summarized as follows:

- Decrease in government expenditure on education in Jordan, which was under development during this era, despite the increasing demands and number of students enrolled in schools.

- Governments absolute control over education policies despite parents bearing part of the financial burden

- The private sector, represented by private schools established by people in villages and cities, played an important role in the educational renaissance that the country has seen.

- The curriculum focuses on the development of the student's mental capacity, theoretical aspects, indoctrination, and direct teaching of knowledge.

- The emergence of the teacher's role as a guide and advisor at the educational and social levels.

II- Phases of Educational Renaissance (1987-1946)

This phase was accompanied by successive political events that affected various sectors in Jordan. These included its independence in 1946, the occupation of Palestine in 1948, the unity of the two banks in 1950, and the defeat in 1967. This has led to a huge population growth due to Palestinian immigration after the occupation, and an increase in the number of students and qualified educational personnel. It also brought about a qualitative shift in the educational process, accompanied by higher community awareness of the importance of education.

Political and social conditions, along with educational needs have paved the way for the issuance of the Law of Education No. 16, in 1964, which was more comprehensive and under which the State adopted the principal of education planning in order to achieve education development. It set out the first clear education philosophy in Jordan, and increased the compulsory education period to 9 years, 6 years for primary school and 3 years for middle school[2].

The Israeli-Arab conflict marked a turning point in the history of Jordan. As a result, the State received financial support from Arab countries that contributed to achieving a remarkable educational renaissance, characterized by:

- The growth and expansion of public schools throughout the country, as well as an increase in the number of schools and students.

- The establishment of teachers' training institutes, which improved the qualification of teachers, principals and educational supervisors, and enhanced school environment.

- The spread of private schools

- Jordan became a source for exporting educational competencies to Arab countries, especially Gulf countries.

- The emergence of the teacher's role and their importance as a mentor and advisor at the educational and social levels.

III- Reform and Development Phase (1987-2023)

In the early 80s, school curriculums were criticized as there was a stressing on the importance of keeping pace with the new era, in light of the political, social and cultural changes and developments in Jordan, the Middle East and the wider world. Criticism focused on various issues, namely: Absence of extra-curricular activities and critical thinking, focusing on the student's mental aspects and neglecting their personal aspects, absence of modern values, democratic principles, human rights and market needs from existing curriculums, and focusing on theoretical aspects when teaching to the detriment of practical education aspects.

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*2   Bashri Nayroukh, Jordan News Agency, "Jordan on Education Day: From **Katateeb** System to Modern Schools, and Zero Illiteracy," January 2023, available on: https://petra.gov.jo/Include/InnerPage.jsp?ID=235386&lang=ar&name=news*

Against this backdrop comprehensive reforms were launched in 1987 through the educational reform conference which was held under royal patronage. This conference – with financial contribution from the World Bank – articulated a comprehensive and systemic vision to improve the education system. The conference, which included a large community participation, underscored the importance of improving education at all levels: the student, the teacher, the curriculum, teaching methods, school management, education supervision, school environment, and school legislations. Recommendations raised during the conference were adopted, namely the establishment of the National Center for Research and Development (Later called the National Center for Human Resources Development), in order to monitor educational development through assessments, studies, all the way to the optimization of education outcomes and aligning them with the needs of the Jordanian society.

The Jordanian government was aware of external developments that forced policy makers to focus on providing education systems that are capable of fulfilling needs and requirements accompanied by globalization (opening of markets, skilled work force). Globalization came as a power of change that aimed to open borders and make room for free exchange of political, economic, social and education ideas among countries. It also highlighted the necessity for reforms in order to meet the new standards of globalization. A forum was held in Amman in September 2002 with the participation of experts from all over the world, to discuss the future of education. Their deliberations helped put together a national vision and identify approaches for educational reform initiatives, from kindergarten all the way to life-long education[3].

Ongoing conferences and initiatives were held and launched to bridge the gap between educational outcomes, society and labor market needs. This as the decline in education levels prompted the formation of royal commissions and successive governmental and civil initiatives to reform and develop education in a way that meets the requirements of the era, market needs and technological progress. The most important initiatives include:

- E-learning: From 1999 to 2005, all government schools were computerized and linked electronically.

- Improving educational environment (kindergarten) in 1999: The Ministry of Education built about 400 new kindergartens across the country, 100 existing kindergartens were refurbished through ERFKE support, and a new kindergarten curriculum was launched.

- National Education Mission in 2002

- Education Reform Program for a Knowledge-Based Economy 2003, supported by multiple donors, most notably the World Bank.

- The Jordanian Education Initiative: A non-profit organization established to link the power of technology with modern teaching strategies. It is one of Queen Rania Abdullah's non-profit educational institutions, and considered the first model that embodies a true partnership between the public and private sectors. It was launched by the World Economic Forum and the Jordanian government during the extraordinary meeting of the forum which was held under the patronage of his majesty King Abdullah I1 at the Dead

3   Mohammad Sakarneh, Jordanian Education Reform between the Ideal and the Actua, The International Institute for Science, Technology and Education (IISTE), SSN 2224-607X (Paper) ISSN 2225-0565 (Online), Vol.4, No.20, 2014 p. 65

Sea in June 2003. The initiative was launched with the aim of supporting Jordan's efforts to improve the quality of education, encourage creativity, develop capabilities, and build a knowledge economy using modern technological means in one hundred government schools, which were later called "exploration schools." Technological infrastructure was developed in these schools, which consisted of providing a wireless network and providing teachers with a mobile device and a projector, in addition to developing electronic content that is consistent with and supports the Jordanian curricula. Also included was the training of teachers to employ these curricula to serve the educational-learning process. 108,000 male and female students and 6,000 male and female teachers were involved in this initiative.

- A royal committee for establishing a national strategy for human resources development (2016-2025): the strategy focused on the following issues in the education sector: Early child education, development of school curriculums, general secondary education diploma (Orientation), teachers training and teaching methods, integration of technology in education, follow-up on and assessment of public education development projects. The royal committee recommended establishing "a semi-independent supreme body for developing curriculums," comprising experts from the Ministry of Education. It also includes other competent experts in the academia and education familiar with the experiences of countries with more advanced education systems. The body carries out its tasks on the short and long terms and enjoys both a legal status and independence, allowing it to set out specific policies for curriculums, making sure they are drafted and taught, and that they are compatible with the existing policies. The body also ensures that these curriculums do not include any extremist ideas that could threaten society, all while ensuring the adoption of the principles of tolerance, coexistence, cooperation, respect for others, and establishment of nationalism and human values. The body focuses on linguistics and constructive criticism and criticism thinking skills and underscores the importance of inferring and exploring information rather than memorizing and dictating, in addition to keeping pace with the latest modern education discoveries and employing information technology in the education process.

- The seventh discussion paper of King Abdullah II in April 2017, entitled: "Developing Human Resources and Education Imperative for Jordan's Progress". The royal vision confirmed that reaching a modern education system is "pivotal to building a prosperous future," yet he highlighted the importance of recognizing challenges and making efforts to address them, "In this reality, we cannot ignore the huge challenges facing the education sector." He also urged education institutions to use the most advanced teaching methods and adopt curriculums that allow our children to: follow deep and critical thinking; courage them to ask questions and balance opinions; teach them the idea of differences and the culture of diversity and dialogue; bring them closer to methods of expression and develop in them the logic of thinking, reflecting and analyzing. The King also urged education institutions to hire teachers that possess the necessary competency and skills to build future generations, stating: "Development has become a necessity imposed by circumstances. When was it not so? History and nations' experiences have proved that change is inevitable and there is no other way but to face it. It imposes and proves itself, without caring about those who fear it."

The infrastructure has seen relative improvement and some indicators were developed, as public expenditure on public education has reached 12.20% of the State's budget in 2020, whereas it reached around 3.8% of the GDP. Overall school enrollment before KG2 increased by 84%, while the overall enrollment in basic education increased by 98.5%, the

overall enrollment in secondary education by 80%, the overall enrollment in vocational education by 12.3%. The Ministry's strategic plan aims to increase these rates further, and according to a report issued by the World Bank and implemented in 14 states, Jordan ranked first in public education in 2008 among MENA countries. The report also indicated that Jordan still suffers from a large gap in the quality of education and in linking its outcomes to the labor market.[4] The report reveals that classrooms in public schools lack modern technology teaching methods, whereby around 21% of all schools do not have internet access, and the majority of the 79% of schools that are connected suffer from low connection speeds1[5].

The results of the study on the Program for International Student Assessment reveals poor levels of students in both public and private schools. In fact, the focus of private schools has diverted from the education system, as some private schools care about their facilities more than they do about their education level. For example, they provide swimming pools, while they do not have laboratories. Despite the growth and expansion of the private school sector, these schools are still subject to the Education Law No. 3 of 1994 and its amendments. Accordingly, they divide private educational institutions into categories, set out for each school the maximum tuition fees and wages it should charge from parents, and the minimum wage for teachers. However, the law does not include any other details related to monitoring the quality of the education provided. In these schools, oversight of the educational system was not sufficient, and the Ministry of Education in some governorates does not conduct any supervisory monitoring, while oversight of these schools is limited to the administrative level, such as obtaining construction permits and licenses.

It is also worth noting that the quality of education was not the only criterion leading at times to preferring private schools over public schools. Other factors include lack of security and dropouts from public schools.[6]

Since 2020, the COVID-19 repercussions have imposed precautionary measures to limit the spread of the virus in Jordan. These included shifting towards online (distance) learning, to which Jordan responded well without being affected. This was due to the hybrid education system that the country had already adopted in the early millennium years, which acknowledges that technology has lifted the restrictions of location and contributed to the diversification of traditional learning centers, to consist of multiple learning spaces and "interconnected" networks which can be accessed freely and flexibly and in which the student himself partly navigates the process of acquiring knowledge[7]. However, this system failed in other areas, as the Ministry of Education announced that 100,000 students did not take part in it because they did not have the necessary

4   *Moussa Khoulaifat, El Noaimy:* **Public expenditure on education reaches 12.20% from the government's budget**, *Jordan News Agency, 01/02/2020, available on: https://petra.gov.jo/Include/InnerPage.jsp?ID=126022&lang=ar&name=news*

5   **The National Strategy for Human Resource Development 2016-2025**, *p. 118*

6   *Ammar Choukeiry, How Private Schools Dominated the Education "Market", 31 October 2020. Available on: https://www.7iber.com/society/%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%B3%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D8%A7%D8%B5%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B1%D8%AF%D9%86/*

7   *Sheikha Jabr Al-Thani et al.,* **Towards Renewal and Creativity: Looking for Creative Pathways for Arab Education Reform**, *Malcom H. Kerr Carnegie Middle East Center, 29 November 2022. Available on: https://carnegie-mec.org/2022/11/29/ar-pub-88504*

equipment and tools for distance learning, and that 16% of the students were unable to benefit from the platform. What proved the existence of a major defect in the educational process and the need for treatment, was the steady increase in the number of cultural centers, private lessons, and educational platforms.

Developing various initiatives and the flow of aid and grants related to the educational sector have often not achieved the desired results in improving the quality of education and its outcomes. Development is still slow and less than hoped for, and there is a vast difference between plans and what is actually implemented on the ground. The same challenges are still in place, and other new challenges have emerged in a changing contemporary world that is racing against time to achieve the desired goals.

The report on education in the Arab world issued in 2018 and drafted by many Arab figures, including the Deputy-chairman of research at Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the former Jordanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Marwan Muasher, revealed that "Arab education systems do not encourage (rather they were not designed to encourage) the spirit of democratic and cooperative nationalism in all its aspects. Rather, it focused on education in general and emphasized more particularly the acquisition of a specific and agreed upon subject of knowledge, with school systems designed to use academic subject matter." As a result, teachers are encouraged to teach low-level cognitive skills based on memorization and comprehension at the expense of more advanced skills (in the areas of application, analysis, description, evaluation, and critical thinking). These systems contribute to the graduation of qualified students who do not possess the necessary skills to address the political, economic and social challenges facing Arab societies, or even to meet the needs of the labor market, which is the goal of many recent reforms[8].

Dr. Muasher sees that "the battle of developing education systems in the region is not political as some people try to depict it, but rather an existential one in which we seek to stop the huge regression in the growth of our societies, and which would affect our whole nation and spread ignorance among its people. The main problem lies in a unilateral way of thinking that prevails in the Arab world, and which sees any reform process as either a threat to religious principles and social traditions, or a foreign attempt to change the Arab culture. Moreover, Arab governments insist on leading economic activities instead of leaving this task to the private sector and are always in control of the political decision-making process, repelling capable Arab powers that would make substantive changes in education, technology and digital economy areas in the Arab world if they had the chance."

Despite many development plans and education reform initiatives, as well as international aids granted, this phase was marked by a regression in the education system in Jordan, characterized as follows:

- Focus on quantity and decrease in education quality.

- Lack of coherence between education outcomes and labor market needs.

- Decline in the level of the teaching staff (Teachers, Principals, Supervisors).

8   Marwan Muasher, Education Reform: The Arab World We Aspire to, Malcom H. Kerr Carnegie Middle East Center, 2 March 2020. Available on: https://carnegie-mec.org/2020/03/02/ar-pub-81292

- Decline in teachers' professional growth, skills and qualifications, and social status, in addition to their poor financial situation.

- Most government spending on education goes to salaries and wages. A study conducted by UNICEF in 2019 in cooperation with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) revealed that 93% of the Ministry of Education's expenditures are allocated to "wages", 5% to goods and services, and 2% to other expenses. This is what UNICEF globally considers "an ineffective use of resources, which leaves no room for necessary spendings to improve the quality of education." In fact, a rise in the rate of spending on wages by more than 80% in any education budget is considered an ineffective use of resources[9].

- Overcrowding of students in schools due to the large increase in population, and successive waves of refugees after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, the American war on Iraq in 2003, and the Syrian crisis in 2011. In this situation, it is believed that the Ministry of Education is responsible for hosting new students and teaching them, even if at a minimum, instead of providing them with quality educational opportunities.

- The majority of the effective initiatives related to education are royal initiatives.

- Absence of social responsibility, and a lack of community participation in education policies.

- The emergence of CSOs concerned with education, and a flow of foreign financial aid and grants to the education sector.

- Intense polarization between society groups, the basis of the educational process, and CSOs over the purpose, methods, motives, and tools of educational reform, and the extent to which they are connected to and influenced by external factors and international political and cultural conditions, which some see as an urgent necessity and the others see as a foreign conspiracy.

The Role of CSOs in Developing the Education Process in Jordan

The concept of civil society was not common in Jordan up until the 80s, following an unprecedented economic crisis in 1989 that was characterized by rising prices, unemployment, increased poverty, and a decline in the exchange rate of the Jordanian Dinar. This had major repercussions on the lives of citizens, which led to a popular uprising known as the "1989 Jordanian Protests" that started in the city of Ma'an in southern Jordan and spread to various regions in the country. As a result, King Hussein decided to take a number of measures aimed at achieving political reform and repairing economic conditions. He decided to hold parliamentary elections in the same year, in which all political forces participated. A royal committee was formed to draft the National Charter, which was issued in 1990, and laid the foundations for building a positive relationship between the State and its various institutions on one hand, and the people on the other hand. Following the elections, a new law for political parties was issued in 1992. The number of associations increased, and organizations concerned with human rights and

9   *Samah Bibars, 93% of Public Expenditure Allocated to Education, Al-Ghad Newspaper, 22 February 2020.*

democratic development emerged[10].

There is a direct relationship between: The absence of political and economic governance, the growing influence of CSOs in society and their ability to influence public life in Jordan, and the ability of CSOs to influence and mobilize Jordanian public opinion towards supporting and endorsing their demands before government policies.

In light of the ongoing political and economic events and developments inside Jordan and in the region, a document entitled "Jordan First" was issued in 2002, calling upon all CSOs, political parties, and syndicates to restructure their priorities and focus on Jordan's internal affairs first. It also called upon them to focus on achieving economic, political and social development, as well as to support productivity, combat poverty, improve citizens' living standards and move toward all the country's issues.

The number of CSOs reached 6612 in 2023, of which less than 9% were active[11], 1400 were non-profit, 1500 were cooperative associations and 250 were affiliated with a foreign association[12].

The need has emerged for the CSOs to support the education sector as a means to bridge the gap resulting from the continuous increase in demand for education, the meager government resources allocated to its development, and the shortcomings in the effectiveness of government policies in managing the education sector. However, the government's leniency in accessing international civil society organizations and the local education sector, which receives external funding, has raised concerns and suspicions among public opinion and other active forces and legal elites in society.

A review of the history of the relationship between the political system and civil society in Jordan indicates that tension, suspicion, and ambiguity were the most prominent features that governed the relationship between CSOs and governments in Jordan. This may be due to the weakness of the rule of law and the lack of adherence to the provisions of the Constitution at times, and its misinterpretation, and non-application at other times, which has resulted in ambiguous laws regulating the relationship between CSOs and Jordanian governments. This has led to the misinterpretation of legal texts, the overlap of responsibilities, and the attempts of different governments to violate the independence of those CSOs, confining them to a specific framework as subordinate to the government and its general policies.

Among the most prominent challenges facing the work of CSOs is that 84% of them see the need to unify the authorities supervising their work, and that 50% struggle with difficulties in dealing with banks during the period of registration and opening bank

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10   Hani Hourani and Hussein Abou Rimman, **Civil Society Development in Jordan and the Status Quo**, Part I, Amman, Sindbad Publishers Limited and Al Urdun Al Jadid Research Center, 2004, p. 65.

11   Omar Kallab, **The Importance of Civil Society and the Danger imposed by Some of its Organizations**, Al Ra'i Newspaper, 05/07/2023

12   **A position paper issued by Jordanian civil society organizations regarding the recent developments represented in restricting civil society spaces and changes in funding approval mechanisms.** Jordan National NGO Forum (JONAF), 17/04/2023. Available on: https://ardd-jo.org/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1/%d9%88%d8%b1%d9%82%d8%a9-%d9%85%d9%88%d9%82%d9%81-%d8%b5%d8%a7%d8%af%d8%b1%d8%a9-%d8%b9%d9%86-%d9%85%d9%86%d8%b8%d9%85%d8%a7%d8%aa-%d8%a7%d9%84%d9%85%d8%ac%d8%aa%d9%85%d8%b9-%d8%a7%d9%84%d9%85%d8%af/

accounts, while 92% believe that their financing must be controlled. They considered that there is no institutional partnership between civil society and the government, especially in light of COVID-19. Meanwhile 27% of CSOs believe that the Ministry of Interior is one of the most obstructing parties to the implementation of their activities[13].

Therefore, the harmonious relationship between the executive authority and CSOs supported by foreign powers has shaped a public opinion that is careful and cautious towards its policies and its role in educational reform. This public opinion sees the role of CSOs as a threat to Jordanian culture and identity and strives to limit it to supporting the development of infrastructure and providing technical support, all while excluding them from technical matters, the process of updating the curricula and restricting them to Jordanian staff. Fears about the role of CSOs have exacerbated further when the Ministry of Education contracted with foreign companies to prepare school curriculums, including the British company HarperCollins, owned by Rupert Murdoch, who is known for his political ideology that contradicts with the Jordanian Arab authority and identity.

The issue of curricula is considered the most important issue of change. Curriculum change imposes itself. The issue of development and improvement is an imperative imposed by progress and technological development. It is also one of the most controversial issues. While some organizations focus on curriculum change, public opinion asks, what are the nature and limits of change? Is it compatible with the values, principles and culture of Jordan's identity?

Discussions were raised about the feasibility of establishing the National Center for Curriculum Development (NCCD), which was established by a royal decree, in response to the recommendations of the National Strategy for Human Resources Development 2016 – 2025 with the aim of educational reform and the development of curricula and schoolbooks, despite the presence of the Department of Curricula and schoolbooks in the Ministry.

The criticism of the Center was not limited to CSOs and community elites. Former Minister of Education Dr. Tayseer Al Noaimi objected in 2019 – while still performing his duties as minister, -- stating: "Why is the National Center for Curriculum Development reference the Prime Minister and not the Ministry of Education?". This shows that the Center disputes the Ministry's competence and authority, and its authority surpasses the Ministry's authority. Despite being the executive authority responsible for implementing and developing education policies, particularly after the 2022 amendments allowed the National Center to accept donations and grants from foreign donor subject to the approval of the Prime Minister, the Center and the Ministry's relationship is structurally imbalanced.

Some curriculum amendments that were implemented without studying or planning were characterized by superficiality and haste. This manifested itself during the crisis of the curriculum in October 2019, and its lack of the most important principles of scientific theories (social constructionism, cognitive constructionism) in the preparation of curricula, the growth and development of the child, its non-adaptation to the Jordanian environment and the approval, adoption and implementation of its general framework in only three months without training or testing teachers before the introduction of

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13   Hoda Ghaboun, T**he Majority of CSO's Call Upon Chaning the Process of Receiving External Funds for Associations**, *Al-Ghad Newspaper, 28 April 2021.*

teaching. This led the Ministry to admit the error, retract it and amend it under public pressure.[14]

The cancellation of the mufti's membership, the Head of The Jordanian Teachers' Syndicate and the representative of the Supreme Council for Curriculum Development of Arabic Language also raised a lot of confusion about the role and objectives of this council, while the Chairman of the Supreme Council Dr. Mohieddin Tawq explained that the amendment was not intended to remove anyone and the philosophy of the amendment that the Supreme Council for Curriculum Development is a highly qualified body and must include as many specialists as possible. The amendments stipulated the membership of the Minister of Education and seven experienced persons appointed by a decision of the Prime Minister based on the recommendation of the Chairman of the Supreme Council for Curriculum Development. In addition, the dismissal of the Kingdom's mufti in his legal capacity from the Supreme Council of the National Center for Curriculum Development will not cause a threat to the community guarantees for curriculum monitor; He is a member of the Board of Education and is in charge of supervising the development of the curricula and their amendments and taking final decisions in this regard.

Drivers of Education Reform

The questionable and distrustful relationship between the Government and civil society has contributed to creating a negative preconceived stereotype that distorts the work of CSOs in the entire education sector. It even went beyond the Government's drivers to launch new education policies, in response to external pressures in the first place and not a carefully thought-out and planned process adapted to the needs and aspirations of Jordanian society. The public interest requires the authorities to organize and facilitate educational policies as required by the Jordanian environment, culture and identity in order to improve the educational environment and create informed knowledge generations capable of advancing society and the State, far from political agendas, ideological conflict and external dictates, and not harnessing the restructuring of education as a tool for achieving political goals, purposes and agendas, placing it under external guardianship.

The external factors that are the most prominent are as follows:

- **American Pressure**: The events of September 11, 2001 in the United States of America put Arab curricula under the microscope. Several centers were established to follow the curricula taught by Muslims. The most important of these centers are: Impact and Memory, and one of the most famous writers affiliated with these centers was Steven Emerson, as some American centers attributed the cause of the bombings to extremism in the Quranic educational system and the Islamic religion.

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14   *Anwar Al-Zayadat, Controversial Curricula in Jordan, Al-Arabi Al-Jadeed, 11/5/2019, available at: file:///C:/Users/user/OneDrive/Desktop/%D9%85%D9%84%D9%81%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%85/%D9%85%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%87%D8%AC%20%D9%85%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A9%20%-D9%85%D8%AB%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A9%20%D9%84%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%AF%D9%84%20%D9%81%D9%8A%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B1%D8%AF%D9%86.html*

Curricula in many Arab States in general have witnessed a comprehensive modernization process under the influence of internal and external factors, the most important of which was the pressure of the United States of America, which proposed in its "Greater Middle East" strategic project in the period from 2004 – 2007 the need for Arab countries to modernize and develop their school curricula. The necessary technical and financial assistance was provided for development in a manner consistent with its political concepts and values (renouncing the values of violence, extremism, terrorism, and hatred, and instilling the values of tolerance, respect for others, democracy, and human rights).[15]

This increased the confusion that the process of curriculum development did not stem from the requirements of Jordan's needs and keep pace with technological development, but rather was a response to some international reports, especially the United States reports, that criticize the Arab curriculum, describe it with emphasis and urge the need to change it.

The National Strategy for Human Resources Development specified that one of the center's goals is to purify the curricula of extremist ideas that pose a threat to society. This is considered an implicit accusation of extremism against the Jordanian religious and national values, along with the principles and the authors of the previous curricula.

- **Globalization**: Globalization does not recognize states' geographical boundaries. Its impact and dominance have extended and encompassed all economic, social and cultural spheres. External pressures and economic, political and cultural factors have driven the Arab world into an era of globalization without creating a clear vision for dealing with the challenges, risks and opportunities of the new phase. The state's role in globalization has undergone radical transformations that have redefined its role and social, economic, cultural and security functions, the limits and scope of its work, which led to the erosion of its authority. This made it impossible for governments to carry out their functions and roles efficiently and effectively, and the role of civil society emerged as a partner of the government in development.

Arab civil society is the gift of the era of globalization. Modern communications technology has provided it with a minimum level of independence from Arab authoritarian regimes and has provided it with external material and political support. It remained indebted to the major powers and the communities that supported it. It was unable to become independent from them and build solid internal bases. Its strength stems from its ability to connect internally and externally and to transfer the tragedies of the local community to the international arena. From this same arena, it derives its work standards, formulas, resources, goals, and strength together. It is "the fruit of Arab globalization and a tool for its extensive reproduction as a dependency globalization at the same time."[16]

15   *Dalia Anwar Hamada Iraqi;* **American aid as a tool for spreading democracy abroad in the period from 2000 to 2012**: **a case study of Egypt**, *doctoral thesis - Cairo University, Faculty of Economics and Political Science, 2017.*

16   *Burhan Ghalioun,* **Globalization and its Impact on Arab Societies, paper presented** *to the meeting of experts of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia on "The Impact of Globalization on the Social Situation in the Arab Region," (Beirut: 19-21 December 2005), p. 17.*

Global interactions have led to the growth of international trade and the freedom to exchange ideas, information and technology. This has made education one of the sectors most affected by globalization and its tools. Education has become an initial means of globalization and an incubator for its clients. National education systems have changed significantly due to globalization processes, and most of the recent changes in education can be attributed to the effects and responses to globalization, thanks to the enhanced influence of international organizations such as the United Nations, the World Bank and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development on the public policy of countries. Education used to be viewed as a national matter, but now it is viewed as an international commodity.[17]

- **The Liberal Perspective of Education Reform:**
Liberal ideology and its economic philosophy have dominated all countries of the world and in all fields. The countries of the world, despite their political, economic and social differences, harmonized with the values and principles of liberalism, and education began to be viewed as a productive commodity that contributes to economic growth. The reformist discourse of education policies has turned into a competitive discourse revolving around quality and productivity. The educational policy curricula centered around the economy, instead of being centered around the student (the learner).

Kenneth Saltman has emphasized that the neoliberal restructuring of education based on privatization, standardization of examinations, curricula, and knowledge, does not address the problems of education through the public interest, common human values, and the democratic discourse of civil society, but rather from the perspective of market culture and the constraints of the prevailing ideology related to corporations and market efficiency.[18] This is a biased view that is not based on the essence of the educational process and its basic rules.

Neoliberalism sought to reconsider the goals of education according to the concept of neoliberalism from an economic perspective, completely marginalizing the moral and cultural issues of education or making them secondary and directing education towards meeting the requirements of the global economy. Education must be permanently linked to the practical goals of human capital development, and emphasis must be placed on the idea of a knowledge economy based on the changing nature between the production of knowledge and its commercial application, which has damaged the role of education aimed at improving moral and social conditions, as a tool for economic productivity and growth. National systems are also no longer able to determine their educational priorities and policies in accordance with their cultural and historical traditions. It is now subject to the analysis and recommendations of international organizations and agencies.[19]

17   Khalaf Al'Abri, The Impact of Globalization on Education Policy of Developing Countries: Oman as an Example, Literacy Information and Computer Education Journal (LICEJ), Volume 2, Issue 4, December 2011. pp 491-493.

18   Mustafa Ahmed Shehata Ahmed, Some Contemporary Trends. **The policy of reforming pre-university education in Egypt in the era of neoliberalism: a critical study**, Journal of Research in Education and Psychology. Faculty of Education, Minia University. Volume 33, Issue 4, October 2018, pp. 358-360.

19   Fazal Rizvi, **Globalization and the neoliberal imaginary of educational reform**, Education Research and Foresight Working Papers, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, February 2017, pp. 3-10.

The central tendency in top-down reform efforts, which are willing to reform education to meet the needs of a globalized economy, has led educators and learners to feel that their only option is either blind imitation of the West or categorical rejection of Western ideas. The continuity of the educational system by producing rebellious and angry citizens willing to accept subversive ideas and potential immigrants instead of contributing to the development of their societies, builds an ideal version of the other system that is morally and technologically superior.[20]

The Educational expert Nasri Tarazi believes that the simultaneous occurrence of the Gulf crisis, privatization, and the economic crisis created the opportunity for the rise of private schools and the decline of government schools. He said: "The state is unable to cover new students. In the privatization market, everything became a commodity, including education. Its logical reason was that the state was unable to cover new students, so the private sector entered into profit-oriented schools, which often do not differ qualitatively from the methodology of public schools."[21] The size of private education has grown and has become comparable to the size of public education. According to The Department of Statistics, the number of schools across the Kingdom has reached 7,315 schools, including 4,005 public schools and 3,093 private schools.

- **Keeping Pace With the 2030 Sustainable Development Plan:**
  This plan, issued in 2015, aims to set the direction of global and national development policies. It constitutes a general framework that guides global and national development action. One of its most important objectives is quality education, and one of its most important goals of achieving it is to ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to support sustainable development, and to increase the number of scholarships available to global south countries (vocational training scholarships, ICTs and technical, engineering and scientific programs) for studies in global north countries.

  The United Nations is the framework for sustainable development and the primary instrument for ensuring the implementation of United Nations development activities in Jordan. Since 2018, an annual budget has been allocated to support Jordan's national goals and implement the Sustainable Development Plan for 2030, which is approximately $1 billion for the years between 2018 and 2022. Education's share accounted for approximately $55 million.[22]

- **Previous Studies:**
  Study by Dino and Touqan (2016) entitled "Study Report on the Reality of Civil

20   Nathan Brown and Marwan Muasher, **Community Engagement in Arab Education Reform: From Teaching to Learning,** *The Malcolm H. Kerr Carnegie Middle East Center, 1/21/2019, available   at:* https://carnegie-mec.org/2019/01/21/ar-pub-78166

21   Ammar Alshuqairi, **How private schools dominated the education "market",** *October 31, 2020, available at:* https://www.7iber.com/society/%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%B3%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D8%A7%D8%B5%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B1%D8%AF%D9%86

22   *How the UN is supporting The Sustainable Development Goals in Jordan, available at:* https://jordan.un.org/ar/sdgs

Society" (Jordan):[23]

The study aimed to provide an up-to-date analysis based on the realistic experience and challenges faced by Jordan's civil society sector, assure information for the half-phased evaluation of the USAID-funded Civil Society Initiatives Support Program and Action Plan, and monitor USAID programs in support of civil society in general with knowledge and information. The study was based on a qualitative research methodology, and the study's findings relied on discussions in the context of twelve focus groups, as well as semi-structured interviews conducted with 73 key participants in Mafraq, Irbid, Amman, Ma'an, Zarqa, and Tafilah.

The participants were selected from different sectors. The sample included Jordanian government officials at the state, governorate and community levels, current and former members of the Jordanian Parliament, chairpersons and members of municipal councils, chairpersons and officials of CSOs, experts in civil society affairs (journalists, academics, lawyers, public figures), representatives of the donor community, and staff from USAID's partner institutions.

National community organizations contribute to achieving six national goals: social sector development, economic growth, improving service delivery and political reform, countering violent extremism, and dealing with the humanitarian and socioeconomic impact of the Syrian refugee crisis. In general, civil society contributions aim to provide more services than the other six goals. Contributions were evaluated as limited in the case of providing services, and very weak in the case of confronting violent extremism.

The study concluded that civil society activities in Jordan are affected by six variable, contextual and consistent factors. First, the regional crisis that placed the issue of maintaining stability and security at the top of the list of priorities, which led to a decline in demands for political reforms and a decline in the authorities' willingness to implement these reforms, in addition to causing legitimate security concerns that led to giving the authorities justifications to restrict and clamp down on independent activities. This crisis has also strengthened the willingness of many officials to suspect any form of independent civil activism as a direct or implicit challenge to the state.

Second, the Syrian refugee crisis changed the course of civil society activities. CSOs were forced to adopt the donors' approach and redirect their activities towards dealing with this new challenge. This was for the most part unrelated to the role of the organizations and inconsistent with their strengths and weaknesses.

Third, the widespread lack of trust and suspicion prevailing among many government agencies regarding civil society. NGOs operating in sensitive or at-risk geographical areas may face interference from security authorities. Multiple forms of harassment and intimidation are used, including conducting a detailed audit of CSOs accounts and constraints, or launching campaigns involving spreading tendentious rumors against the leaders of certain organizations.

Fourth, the crucial role played by strong discretionary powers, personal relations

23   Gailan Dino and Dima Touqan, Civil Society Status Study Report in Jordan, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Monitoring and Evaluation Support Project (MESP), May 2016.

and political influence. The laws that generally govern the nature of civil society activities contain ambiguous provisions and texts, and are subject to contradictory interpretations, which gives officials great discretion in implementing these provisions.

The fifth point concerns the level of support that can provide a focus or allocation area for a CSO and its capabilities to support or complement government efforts. The authorities will allocate more space to this organization if the scale of support increases.

Sixth, the geographical location of the organization plays a major role. Organizations based in Amman enjoy greater freedom to conduct special status activities and hold meetings and public gatherings in a way that greatly exceeds what is allowed for organizations based in the governorates.

- **Yassine's (2010) study entitled "The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations in Supporting Education in Jordan":**[24]
  The study aimed to identify the role of NGOs in supporting education in Jordan. The researcher used the analytical descriptive curriculum by conducting field visits and personal interviews with the organizations' management. The study includes all local and international NGOs working in the field of education, and a deliberative sample is then taken from four local and international NGOs specializing in education, especially kindergartens and basic education. The study showed that there was a problem with society's perception and culture of the concept of NGOs. Thus, a change in society's culture and perception of their existence must be sought through the holding of seminars and conferences organized by NGOs in cooperation with public sector institutions.

One of the most important findings of the study is that NGOs influence the process of positive change. Empowerment and community development are considered among its strategic objectives, through the implementation of educational programs for different age groups. The most important of these are kindergarten and basic education. This has positively changed the idea and led to accepting the presence of NGOs in the Arab region and believing in their role and purpose. The enrolment rate has increased, illiteracy rates have decreased, in addition to the improvement and development of school systems, curricula and buildings, and the development of teaching, learning and training methods.

- **Salem's study (2004) entitled "Civil Society and its Role in Reform":**[25]
  The study aimed to analyze the development and activation of CSOs in light of the transformations that have occurred in the role of the state in the context of globalization, and specifically its withdrawal from many of its social functions and the transfer of its burden to CSOs. The study concluded that civil society institutions

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24   Lily Yassine, **The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations in Supporting Education in Jordan**, *Master's Thesis, Faculty of Educational Sciences, The Hashemite University, 2010.*

25   Mamdouh Salem, **Civil Society in Arab Countries and its Role in Reform**, *Proceedings of the Regional seminar on Civil Society in Arab Countries and its Role in Reform, Arab Organization for Human Rights, Alexandria, June 21-22, 2004.*

are an essential partner in reform, and that reform has become an urgent requirement, but must be implemented by the people of the region. It further concluded that all Arab States, at all levels of their development, are demanding reform. It warned that civil society's failure to fill the vacuum created by a state's withdrawal from some of its functions could lead to extremism and terrorism.

The study differed from previous ones in that it looked at the type of organizations active in the education sector in Jordan, along with its goals and strategic vision for change. It also looked at how capable they are in achieving change and their understanding of it, the nature of their relationships with influential actors in the educational process, and in exploring their approach to changing the education sector. Therefore, it differed in its understanding of the types of circumstances and alliances that lead to policy change and studying the reality of the situation and the important role that these organizations can play in formulating the state's educational policy.

The study is one of the few studies that focused on examining the role of CSOs in the education sector in Jordan, as most studies focus on the role of civil society in political development, political reform, democracy, women's and children's issues, human rights, and relief efforts.

Study Methodology

The study adopted a qualitative approach, relying on a set of tools (survey, interviews) to collect scientific material of data and information, the goals of the groups, their priorities, their strategies, and their participation in policy reform in the field of education, and to explore their approach to changing the education sector and thus understand the types of conditions and alliances for mobilization that lead to change in policies.

This was done by analyzing personal interviews with officials of local CSOs in the education sector, which will take up the largest part of the study's pillars. The results of the study were strengthened by referring to studies and research on education policy reform in Jordan.

Study Community

The study community brought together all local NGOs active in the education sector in Jordan that agreed to participate in the study and were subsequently interviewed. They consist of: Royal initiative organizations, professional syndicates, community-based organizations and political parties.

Study Procedures:

First: Survey: The study community included all local CSOs active in the education sector. This was done through the reviewing of websites, press releases and local newspapers.

Second: Interviews: The study relied on in-depth personal interviews as a second tool for the study and as a means of collecting information. The personal interviews included meeting with officials from CSOs active in the educational sector, with the aim of highlighting the organizations' role in developing education policies. The focus was on the organizations, their objectives, strategy, status, relationship with the ministry and their role in the formulation of education policies.

Obstacles: The explicit refusal of some CSOs to conduct the interview, and the tacit refusal by procrastination in setting a date for conducting the interviews for a period of more than three months. Furthermore, providing excuses of being constantly preoccupied or lack of response which subsequently prevented the interviews from being conducted.

Finding of the Study

Mapping of CSOs

The study mapped local CSOs active in the education sector, by reviewing websites, press releases and local newspapers. CSOs in Jordan active in the field of education affairs are diverse and cannot be limited to one specific category. They will be classified based on the party that established them:

- **Royal Initiatives Organizations:**
  These organizations were established by royal decree or emerged from institutions operating under royal auspices or headed by a member of the governing royal family.

- **Queen Rania Teacher Academy (QRTA):** Established in 2009 as a non-profit organization adopting the vision of Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah. This entails raising the level of education through empowering educators with the essential skills, and the empowerment of educators and leaders in the sector in Jordan and the Arab world by acquiring the necessary knowledge, skills and competence to positively influence the emerging generation of educators. The Academy works in partnership with the Ministry of Education and provides innovative and qualitative professional development programs in Jordan and the Arab world, relying on international and scientific educational practices and research.

- **Queen Rania Foundation (QRF):** Established in 2013, QRF aims to provide quality education for all starting from the pre-school level. It provides education that relies on dynamic and teachers trained in motivating students and instilling in them a passion for life-long learning. It also aims to create a generation of Jordanians able to harness technological tools and compete with their peers wherever they are in the world.

- **Edraak:** Founded by an initiative of the Queen Rania Foundation (QRF) in 2014,

Edraak is an Arab electronic platform for open-source group courses. (MOOCs). It aims to provide high-quality educational courses whose contents are developed by elite experts and academics from the Arab and wider world. It also provides international courses translated into Arabic free of charge. It is important to note that Edraak also strives to highlight and motivate Arab experts from all fields to enrich Arabic educational content online and share their experiences and knowledge with Arab learners by developing courses and offering them through the platform.

- **Madrasati Initiative:** The Madrasati initiative was launched by Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah, to improve the physical and educational environment of Jordan's most neglected public schools. Madrasati creates safe and dynamic learning environments that significantly contribute towards improving the quality of education. Social and emotional learning is embedded throughout their interventions, which promote social cohesion among students from different nationalities and backgrounds, as well as reinforce positive pro-social behaviors, reduce violence among students, making a positive impact on students' interpersonal acceptance.

Civil society activists and experts refuse to consider NGOs established by Royal Decree as part of civil society. This owes to their lacking the necessary political independence, being seen as an extension of the State, receiving disproportionate rates of total donor funding dedicated for each sector, and all financial support from local resources, otherwise known as (unfair competition). They also enjoy many privileges that other organizations do not such as accessing government officials and foreign embassies, receiving direct support from donors, facilitating government bureaucracy for its work and obtaining the substantial government funding allocated to it.[26]

- **Professional Syndicates:**
  They protect the interests of their members working in the education sector and operate independently of the state, parties, and religious authorities:

- **Jordanian Teachers' Syndicate:** It is an elected legal body with financial and administrative independence established by Law No. 14 of 2011 representing the teachers in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. It seeks to enhance the performance of teachers and promote the message of education and defend the individual and collective rights of members belonging to the teaching profession. It also aims protect their gains by all legitimate means, and develop fields related to their profession.

- **General Trade Union of Worker in Private Education:** It was established in 1969 and has 7,000 members. It aims to protect the interests of those employed in private education and defend their rights. Furthermore, it strives to provide health and social services to members of the union, in addition to medical clinics and social and consumer welfare institutions. It also seeks to improve the situation for those employed in private schools, nurseries and kindergartens education centers

26   *Gailan Dino and Dima Toukan, Civil Society Status Study Report in Jordan, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Monitoring and Evaluation Support Project (MESP), May 2016, p. 23.*

and community colleges, be it at the economic, professional or cultural level. This is accomplished through awareness-raising sessions, and follow-up of complaints received from employees in the private education sector, in addition to providing legal consultation.

- **Private School Owners Syndicate:** It was established in 1980 and aims to protect the interests of members and the education profession more broadly, in addition to organizing members' affairs, coordinating members' efforts, preserving members' rights, finding ways of cooperation among them, and representing members in all private and governmental agencies and institutions.

  - **Religious Educational Institutions:**
    These are educational institutions established according to religious considerations:

- **The Islamic Charity Center Society:** A charitable association founded in 1963 and registered in the Ministry of Social Development in 1965. It was formed by a group of Jordanians for charitable work. It strives to provide relief to the poor and needy, support the educational and pedagogical process, and establish institutes and schools. Furthermore, it aims to provide the nation with competencies that believe in God and are proficient in most specialties and provide the nation with distinguished medical and nursing personnel, as well as sponsor orphans and support all various charitable work programs.

- **General Secretariat for the Christian Educational Foundations (GSCEF):** Founded in 1990, GSCEF is a non-profit non-governmental, private ecclesiastical educational institute. It brings together and represents the Christian educational institutions and schools in Jordan. Christian faith and values lie at the center of its purpose and goals, whereby believers are raised to actively strive for the good of the earthly city, and to serve the kingdom of God. The mission of the GSCEF and its schools can be summed in the following points according to the General Pastoral Plan:
  Teaching: The School aims to equip students with the knowledge necessary to develop their intellectual abilities and prepare them to fulfill their role in society and its progress.

- **Education:** Teaching is not separate from education, which strives to develop the personality of students so that they may analyze, understand, evaluate, critique, choose, decide and act. Religious Education, being one of the constituent factors of human life, falls within this educational goal.

- **Culture:** The school is a place of culture in all senses of the word of 'culture'. It puts the students in touch with the general human cultural heritage as well as the heritage of the society in which they live. It develops a vision of the relationship between faith and culture. It acts in order to discover the cultural gifts of the pupils as well as working to develop modes of thought and behavior, which help to define refined human culture in local society in all areas of life.

- **Overall human formation:** The school strives to develop all aspects of human life, intellectual, emotional, psychological, creative, moral and religious.

  - **Community-based Organizations:** They are based on the voluntary efforts

of a group of individuals interested in public service in the educational sector:

- **Community for the Development of Education:** It was formed by a group of educational experts and activists in 2017 to highlight the necessity of developing the philosophy of education, in general, and translating that into modern curricula and a teaching method that is radically different from what is currently practiced.

  The association aims to develop a path concerned with reviewing the philosophy of education. It adopts a contemporary approach through investigation, questioning, teamwork, problem solving and debates. It also integrates the principles of citizenship that develop a culture of pluralism, diversity, equality in gender and human rights and educating the Jordanian family and society about the requirements of education for the twenty-first century. The association conducts studies and research concerned with developing education policy, based on indicators that rely on surveys and comprehensive high quality field studies. It mobilizes support and advocacy from CSOs to influence the development of the educational process, urge educational institutions to create safe and supportive environments for children and youth to learn, and hold training workshops, seminars, and lectures to address the most important developments in educational development, particularly those that serve the Jordanian context in light of the challenges, opportunities, and requirements of globalization.

- **"Nouhoud" Initiative:** A popular initiative established in 2021 to lead a national, community-based effort to raise the level of education. This aims to achieve quality education, at both the general and higher level. It further aims to invest available resources in partnership with national, Arab and international institutions and education-related bodies. The initiative aims to support community mobilization to adopt the initiative's ideas and proposals to find solutions to the problems that hinder the advancement of education. It contributes to raising the level of educational inputs, processes, and outcomes in accordance with international education standards, and in cooperation with institutions and authorities in the education sector. This includes contributing to amending legislation that hinders the advancement of education through communication with decision makers. It also entails contributing to the development of an educational discourse that promotes national identity, values of faith and independent critical thinking; Draws attention to the necessity to link education to the needs of the labor market and the industry of the future; Raises the quality and effectiveness of scientific research, especially applied research and innovation; and stimulate the private sector to adopt scientific research related to the needs of the labor market.

- **The Jordanian Association for Educational Sciences:** It was founded in 2009 and bases its philosophy on the belief that investing in people is a vital element for a civilized society. It also believes that empowering the educational-learning process with tools of scientific excellence is a social and national responsibility, contributing to providing decent livelihoods for people. The association's vision is to be a leading entity in the field of Educational Sciences and a distinguished reference for educational institutions and their employees. In addition, it aims to constitute a mean of support, contributing to the development of the Jordanian educational system, so that education in Jordan becomes a national competitive

value. Its outputs contribute to the development of the national economy on the basis of global competitiveness, and building a community culture that upholds the creative educated person. The association's mission is to contribute to the development of the educational institutions' performance in Jordan, through the dissemination of knowledge and modern educational techniques, and focusing on the principles of quality in order to distinguish the various components of the educational system. In addition, its mission intends to build bridges between education and relevant civil society institutions, on the basis of trust and mutual interests, to networking relationships that contribute to the needs of the individual and society in Jordan's economic, social and cultural development.

- **Political Parties:**

There exists a large number of political parties in Jordan, with over 54 in the country. After conducting a survey and follow-up, it was found that the Islamic Action Front – a Jordanian opposition party – is the largest party in Jordan in terms of number of members and influence. It was also revealed that it is the largest party in terms of its active efforts, in education affairs and its forming of a permanent "Education" committee in the party, concerned with education.

- **The Islamic Action Front:** It was founded in 1992 with the purpose of Islamizing legislations and setting boundaries for policies, practises and behaviour. This aimed to place these policies in line with the provisions of Islamic Sharia. The top priority of this party is to counter the attempts of westernization and intellectual and moral sabotage, in order to achieve the desired reform and build the model community. In addition, the Party seeks to counter the institutions, policies and voices that seek to control small poor nations. This includes globalization and the policies of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization, as they are considered a threat to the independence, sovereignty and interests of these nations. It also adopts Human Rights issues, condemning all forms of violation against inalienable rights whilst striving to preserve these rights irrespective of nationality and sect. The party also seeks to serve the masses and be involved in people's daily affairs, in addition to seeking to achieve large growth from an Islamic perspective.

Results from interviews

We conducted individual interviews (45 minutes) with 5 officials of active organizations involved in various forms of mobilization in the field of education. We encountered many difficulties in getting permission or consent to participate in interviews. Some organizations including Royal NGOs would request several information and the interview questions, but would in the end refuse to participate in the study. Thus in this study we were able to capture the views of a limited number of civil society organizations.

Approaches to change in education policies:

There are general visions and outlines of CSOs' perception of change which can be categorized as:

The Liberal Concept seeks to change education policies in line with the global changes and liberal ideology prevailing in the world, and stem from linking education outputs to the labor market and meeting the needs of the local, regional and international market of qualified manpower. It also relies on the knowledge economy, capital market mechanisms, technological advancement and digital education, and revolutionizing the structure of education and curricula using modern-day tools.

Jordan was no exception to the global context and its ramifications in the education sector. Indeed, some officials and CSOs active in the education sector formulate their agenda and policy after reviewing the most important research and studies issued by international economic forums. These studies address the most important skills demanded by the labor market and strive to develop and redesign training courses and teaching seminars in line with the need of the market and the outputs of international economic organizations.

The Traditional Concept considers the importance of preserving the conservative traditional structure of the educational process's pillars and making reforms that are commensurate with the situation in Jordan.

The Consensual Concept builds a national vision with clear and specific goals (Arab-Islamic philosophy). It involves Jordanian competent Jordanian nationals and is implemented in accordance with Jordanian development needs. It focuses on preserving the moral heritage, customs, traditions, and Arab culture, whilst taking into account global changes, technological and digital advancement, market needs, developing students' analytical skills, and "opening up to others, albeit without sacrificing religious and charitable principals in dealing with the other, and without making concessions to the other".

At the same time one organization believes that "the reason for the collapse of the educational system in Jordan is the linking between education and the market". It points out that "the market is the one that dictates to a person what to learn, in addition to skills and values that he or she must learn". Hence it stresses that "education should guide and not the other way around". It says that while "the market no doubt has needs, it has given the student the impression that he is learning for the sake of making a living and not for development and building of civilization and restoring the glory of a robust civilization". Therefore, we find that the person struggling to learn and work in order to make a living. We also now see major challenges in the engineering, construction, medical and education sectors".

Theory of change and the approach of CSOs to change in education policies

Civil society realizes that change is greater than the limits of its capabilities and cannot change educational policies, which reflect intertwined cultural, political and social forces and are linked to external factors. Most of their criticisms and reservations are modest towards the ministry and have no clear plans and programs to develop and reform policies, shape expected change and know how to achieve it. They do not possess operational or procedural tools or steps toward change and lack efficiency and effectiveness because of their limited functioning and activity.

The contribution of many CSOs to change is an improvisational process as a response to the ministry's uncertain decisions and not an organized and planned one. Success in influencing the ministry's decisions has been limited and temporary, characterized by slightly modifying or sometimes postponing these decisions until the influence of public opinion ends.

Regulatory and procedural change (change in work rules and methods, incentive systems, policies and procedures), career change based on improving the systems used to organize the workflow. These systems have impacted the latter and the performance of employees within the educational sector. They have also influenced the continuous development and improvement in the educational work environment and improvement of job performance. Furthermore, there has been an increase in productivity and improvement of the quality of work, not to mention fulfilling the rights and interests of those employed in the educational sector. Other factors include objectivity, justice and transparency achievement, promoting institutional success, following up on the problems and issues of workers with official authorities, engagement of teachers and private school owners in formulating educational and technical policies within the professional framework, classifying the teacher's job as one of the arduous professions, rank system inclusion, and establishing a center for measurement and evaluation.

Strategic change as in changing the society and ministry's vision towards educating by applying an Arab-Islamic educational philosophy and reshaping the community's awareness about the importance of education. This serves as a lever to rise and build civilization, not only as an instrument to achieve economic well-being and social status. It is a change that focuses primarily on the ministry's mission, objectives and vision by focusing on the value and ethical dimension of education, raising the level of community awareness about educational issues and the importance of public opinion's participation in influencing educational policy, keeping pace with technological and digital developments with the survival of your parameters (religion, Arab identity and morals). The objective is not limited to providing information, but rather to provide that which is compatible with the value of building the character of peoples.

Transformative change (changing the traditional pattern of education) by developing a comprehensive and integrated philosophy leading to a comprehensive regulation of the institutions under its auspices, meeting the challenges and designing plans for change in its behavioral, social, educational and psychological dimensions, identifying resources and tools for its implementation, providing the necessary equipment and devices, launching digital educational platforms, working on building trust and cooperation with teachers and students involving them in the process of change, and assess it to the students and parents' acceptance of change with the needs of Jordanian society.

Personal change changing the habits and behaviors of the educational process elements by formulating a strategy that depends on learner-based learning, enhancing the quality of education by improving the educational environment as an attractive one (developing infrastructure, programs and extracurricular activities targeting students and teachers), promoting their creative culture, motivating them to put forward their ideas, and regulatory development of modernizing the methods and techniques used in the educational process.

Changing the work system by improving and developing performance and adapting it to new challenges. Also included is improving work performance through sequential and comprehensive planning, providing education and making it accessible for as many people as possible in society. Adapting young people's skills with labor market needs, so that language does not hinder their learning of new skills and improving their access to opportunities that meet their ambitions is another factor.

Regulatory development based on analyzing the needs and ordering priorities and identifying areas for improvement and planning a vision to be achieved by lobbying the ministry to carry out reform and achieve continuous development. It also involves devising a plan for change to be gradually implemented, updating the methods and techniques used, and realizing that the school is now a social institution and community representative. It is necessary to form a social leadership body for the school that includes the principal, legal guardians and local communities. This community leadership participates and takes responsibility for the school's educational needs. The basis for improving the education output process is to provide an effective educational environment for the students in the classroom to build for them an integrated personality.

Understanding of Policy Change

We identified the following understandings and strategies for creating policy change.

Raising awareness: raising citizen's awareness about educational issues, what role parents should play towards their children, and the nature of the relationship with teachers. This is done through seminars, courses and lectures for parents.

Providing services to decision makers: through studies, conference recommendations, seminars and designing educational programs as a means to influence the formulation of policies practiced. This is developed through dialogue, persuasion, recommendation and cultivating good relations with decision makers. It also involves communication and outreach to educational policy makers in Jordan, in addition to parents and teachers; curriculum development centers and all actors in the educational process and teacher training and development, in order to keep pace with change.

Mobilizing public opinion to contest policies that are perceived to cause a decline in the education. The more aware people are and the better understanding they have of matters, and the more they are motivated to participate and able to express their views, the more integrated they come in educational issues.

Legislation proposal: reviewing legislation because it leads societies, consider the mechanisms by which legislation is applied and the compatibility of the government's actions with legislation regulating the sector of education.

Tracking and evaluating the results of existing educational policies and their impact on the quality of educational process's outputs, their conformity with national and religious values, and reviewing policies and decisions that do not comply with the functioning of the educational process through dialogue with decision makers.

Lobbying: by organizing strikes and sit ins in order bring about policies that meet teachers' demands in improving their economic conditions and social status.

Developing and implementing policies: in line with technological development, modern technologies and the needs of society. Introducing developmental policies in cooperation with decision makers in the Ministry of Education, based on feedback from the field and factors pertaining to the educational process (student, teacher, community). This aims to improve the educational environment and quality of education, so that public schools become receptive community schools and an attractive environment for serious learning. In addition to the development of students' and graduates' skills commensurate with the needs of the labor market.

Considering the CSOs' vision into change, it appears that they adapt to reality. Other organizations adopt dreamy theories. There is a significant gap between demands and what is applied in reality. They lack planning and tools to achieve change and means with which to put pressure on the ministry. Most organizations claim to spread awareness without translating it into broad support and practical steps to push towards policy change.

Their concept of successful change

The study revealed the following types of change.

Cumulative change: to build and improve the status quo, i.e to add new skills and reform this status quo in a manner that meets the requirements of the current phase. In addition to using technological techniques more effectively in the educational field, while giving

the teacher the role of the leader in this reform: "It must provide a public benefit, not a personal one."

Methodological and planned change: based on preparing studies and research in order to formulate educational policies that keep pace with development while adhering to national, moral and religious parameters. Launching an expanded community-based dialogue that addresses educational issues, delegating the task of preparing contemporary curricula to Jordanian educational field-based competencies, keeping pace with development and considering social, cultural and political changes in the country, as the most effective strategy to achieve goals and success is community participation. The individual planning, without the involvement of parents, is impossible. A successful educator involves the student and parents in the decision-making process and makes them feel that they are part of the educational institution and an essential member of the educational family. The least effective strategy consists in believing that total self-reliance will lead to success, while individual planning does not lead to success. The strategy of dictatorship and authoritarianism leads to failure. There needs to be periodical assessments with stakeholders whilst addressing the problems and setting priorities and striving to achieve them. Real change lies in achieving benefits. If you want to change the policies of the ministry and society, you have to perceive the benefit of this change. And if you don't, either change will not occur it will be temporary.

Radical change is based on transparency, objectivity, and justice, and setting laws in partnership participatory manner with teachers in the field. This should be done within professional frameworks and standards and free from control and authoritarianism, whilst taking into account real development standards and inputs, including managing development, which will lead to the development of all aspects of the educational profession.

Progressive and sustained qualitative change: is that in which programs targeting students and teachers derive their ideas from the field, and the direct contact with the base on which the elements of the educational environment are built. This is done through applicable, realistic and logical programs and ongoing assessments of how much tangible benefit is achieved through the courses and how to develop students' special skills to meet the needs of the labor market. In the long term, it means providing education for all and achieving easy access to it for a larger segment of the community. It must also be done in a manner which meets the needs of society so that programs remain beneficial to society and people in order to increasing the viability and capacity of people to learn new skills by providing technological infrastructure.

Defensive change: based on adaptation to the Ministry's technical decisions that do not affect the work of the institutional assembly based on the protection of its interests.

Who drives education change?

The change in education policies in Jordan takes place through political factions that lay down visions and general approaches (Throne Corporation, public opinion, the external factor) and technical executive institutions and branches (Ministry of Education, National Centre for Curriculum Development, Higher Education Council):

Throne corporation: is expressed in the discussion papers of King Abdullah II. It represents a

clear vision for comprehensive reform and the future of democracy in Jordan. He explained his vision of education in the seventh discussion paper: building our human capacities and developing the educational process as the core of the national rejuvenation, the Royal Court, the royal initiatives, and organizations and institutions emanating from it.

Public opinion: In the contemporary world, witnessing tremendous progress in information and communication technologies, social media has made the public closely informed about various issues and has become an important and influential factor in the decision-making process. Some CSOs have mobilized public opinion and lobbied against the Ministry of Education's curriculum amendments in 2019. The campaign has yielded results and the Ministry has rejected the amendments.

The External Factor: external funding from donor states and international financial institutions (grants, loans, technical support and capacity building). Many states and organizations have a major role in formulating educational policies through funding to implement their own goals and agenda, or through political pressures from major states.

The Ministry of Education

It is a Jordanian governmental body responsible for the education system at the elementary, basic, and secondary levels in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The philosophy of education in the Kingdom draws from the Jordanian constitution, the Arab-Islamic civilization, the principles of the Great Arab Revolution, and the Jordanian national experience.

According to CSOs, the ministry's roles in the educational process are:

- An executive role for the donors' vision in approving change policies, "the ministry's role has become figurehead and powerless," and "high walls are built between it and the other actors." Anyone who looks at the ministry's website will find that there are programs funded by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and some countries such as the United States, Canada, and Germany. Jordan must ask for support based on our priorities and not the priorities of others."

- The Ministry has the authority to issue and implement decisions.

- The Ministry is an executive government body authorizing and supervising the educational process, and civil society institutions (royal initiatives) lead the change.

It is worth noting the ministry's selectivity in bringing about reforms or the influence of local culture on their implementation: The main goal of the knowledge economy since 2003 has been to transfer control over public education from the Ministry of Education to public schools. This goal, however, has not been achieved yet, and there is still obstruction, slowness, and distortion in the implementation of reforms related to democratic values (student council, local councils, and central school councils).

National Centre for Curriculum Development:

The National Center for Curriculum Development is a financially and administratively independent national institution linked to the Prime Minister. The center was established

by Royal Decree in accordance with Regulation no. 33 of 2017 and its amendments, which was in accordance with Article 120 of the Jordanian Constitution. In the 2022 amendments, the center was allowed to receive external funding after the approval of the Council of Ministers.

The functions of the Center:

1. Proposing the basis for periodically reviewing curricula, textbooks, educational materials, teachers' guides, and assessment and evaluation procedures and referring them to the Ministry for approval, in accordance with the law and the regulations issued thereunder.

2. Monitoring and evaluating the implementation the general framework for curricula and evaluation in educational institutions.

3. Coordinating with the Ministry to achieve its goals, tasks and powers stipulated in this system and the regulations issued thereunder.

4. Looking into the feedback submitted to the Curricula Department by the Ministry's Education Directorates and educational institutions on school books, educational materials, and teachers' guides.

5. Preparing appropriate technical methods for testing the development of school books and other materials in a way that does not disrupt the progress of the educational process.

6. Providing the Ministry with lists of books, references, and periodicals that can be beneficial in enriching school libraries.

Higher Education Council:

The Council was established in 1982 and is responsible for planning and coordinating higher education, public policy making and following up on its implementation. Article 5 of the Higher Education Act stipulates the formation of the Higher Education Council headed by the Minister and the membership of the two Secretaries-General of both Ministries of Higher Education and Education, the President of the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission for Higher Education Institutions, three experienced academics holding professorship, and two with experience and opinion from the private sector, and the Director of the Directorate of Education and Military Culture of the Armed Forces.

The nexus of CSOs and Academic and Research Institutions

Integrative and cooperative nexus: It is based on close cooperation stemming from the vision of researchers as an elite that carries out its duties based on objective logical and systematic thinking. This is done in a way that benefits the development of education policies and the cooperation with them to identify problems and shortcomings. It further allows for conducting studies before forming a position on education issues, and for publishing them in seminars and conferences to mobilize support and endorsement. Furthermore, this allows for developing some programs and policies that contribute to

developing and evaluating the educational process and achieving the organization's goals, including "working with a research center in the United Kingdom in order to develop a monitoring and evaluation model, as the initiative is the only body in Jordan that has created a tool to measure school climate."

Disruptive nexus: it is noticed that academic work is disconnected from reality, and the outputs of scientific research theses (master's and doctoral) are not transformed into actual programs and are often repeated. There is also skepticism about the feasibility of this research: Is it useful in developing education, industry or trade?

Exchange nexus: sharing documents and information with everyone, especially researchers and academics.

Resisting change attempts

Psychological and personal factors: due to the nature of the nexus between some officials and the surrounding environment and the personnels of civil society organizations and the competition and conflict among them.

Lack of resistance: There is no form of resistance, whether in the circumstances and the surrounding environment or from official parties.

Governmental resistance: Through its security branches, it tries to influence people not to agree with the organization's orientations in public affairs. Security services pressure union members through threats, investigations, arrests, and trials.

The recidivism in the social, economic and cultural sectors is due to the concept of narrow security taking the lead in the public space and its penetration into the Jordanian space. Government agencies have intended to securitize all urgent issues in Jordan. Securitization of education: transforming educational issues into a security dilemma leading to the security services using their coarse tools to suppress societal movements in favor of executive authorities' vision.

Formal resistance (Ministry of Education): Ministry officials refused to deal or cooperate with the organization's personnel and their suggestions, in addition to the technical and bureaucratic problems and the legislation and regulations issued by the Ministry.

Traditional resistance: Conservative intellectual groups that adapt to the current style and situation and try to preserve it for fear of compromising their independence and interests.

Popular discontent and the negative stereotype towards some CSOs.

Beneficial resistance: interest groups and parties who benefit from the current situation, for example, "if you work on making a change in policy guidance, beneficiary educational platforms stand against you".

The relationship with the government (the ministry)

Personal nexus: It depends on the relationship of the members of the organizations with

the minister himself and prominent officials of the ministry, and the connection and feasibility of cooperation with others based on personal relationships.

Disunited relationships: As in arrogance and neglect. At the official level, all lawsuits directed to the Minister of Education, the Secretary-General of the Ministry, and the Director of the National Center in their official capacities to participate in seminars and lectures held by some civil society organizations were ignored.

Exclusionary and oppressive relationships: Some organizations are excluded and suppressed by the security services through intimidation policies and excluded from discussions about bringing about change.

Equitable and integrative relationships: Based on cooperation and joint work. The organizations are support bodies to help the Ministry, whether by developing content, training teachers, or orienting them if there are models or programs that can be actually applied.

Executive and formal relationships: The union is linked to the ministry through its instructions and regulations, and by implementing the ministry's plans and instructions without participating in the decision-making process.

Funding and attraction factors

This section builds on what preceded it and summarizes the fundamental funding factors that civil society faces in Jordan, along with the main attraction factors that the civil society can invest in as it seeks to maximize its contributions to achieving the public interest.

Funding factors

Inadequate and enduring funding: Most CSOs rely on donors for their visions, outlines, and project financing. They have no financial source other than support, which disrupts and halts their programs and threatens their existence in the event of the cessation of support.

There is no CSO concerned with the education sector receiving external funding except the Royal Initiatives Organizations. The monopolization of these organizations may be due to external and local support and funding, as civil society organizations are required to have strategic plans for registration and obtaining foreign funding, organizational capacity and qualified personnel, and the authority to access the Ministry of Education and participate in presenting visions, changing policies, and implementing programs.

Laws and regulations of the Ministry of Education: administrative bureaucracy, "inequitable" government procedures that lack justice, transparency, evaluation, and accountability, and weak technological infrastructure available to everyone.

The Ministry controls the educational system and disqualifies local partners (CSOs, parents, educational elites), in order to limit the relationship between the two parties within a

competitive framework. In addition, the Ministry is not convinced of the importance of the organizations' complementary and participatory role with it in the education sector. The Ministry neglects to involve local community organizations during the strategic planning process in education, to maximize the impact resulting from developing the educational process.

Teacher discouragement and lack of job satisfaction: The regression in the teacher's social status in society and the weak financial return has overshadowed his role in the educational process.

Excluding parents from participating in the educational process: Education is view with less importance by a large percentage of parents. Community interest in education affairs has declined under the weight of difficult economic and political conditions. It also is no longer the priority it used to be for individuals who are desperately seeking to earn a living. Quality of education may become a luxury that is not accessible to all.

Institutional absence: relying on individual and temperamental intelligence in official work

Attraction factors

Be aware of the importance of educational issues, volunteerism, and community service: belief in the supremacy of education and the human right to education.

Ambition and passion among Arab youth, the importance of solidarity, joint work, gaining experience, and competence.

To achieve the workers' rights in the education sector and protect their gains.

Conclusion

Jordan lacks a political, legal, and social environment which supports educational sector reform. There is a deep gap between reality and expectations, and a huge difference between capacities and capabilities.

The government is still adopting a top-down approach to reform and change, influenced by selective external motives, plans and models in the strategy of reform and change in education policies, under the influence of major active forces (Throne Corporation, external donors, public opinion). General perceptions and orientations are drawn up and implemented by technical and artistic institutions and branches (Ministry of Education, National Center for Curriculum Development, Royal Initiatives) while excluding social forces (CSOs, educational elites, auxiliary institutions concerned with the educational sector) and elements of the educational process (teachers, schools, families) from the process of change and formulation of educational policies.

Launching a societal dialogue on reforming education policies in Jordan requires an official and societal agreement stating that education is a public value and a societal responsibility. Concerted efforts to advance education and achieve a comprehensive cultural renaissance requires the achievement of sustainable development, which is what Jordan lacks in light of the ministry's monopoly and it being the sole decision maker on issues pertaining to education. This in addition to the Ministry of Education's vision of organizations as a peer and a competitor with its powers and authorities. Hence it sought to limit and regulate the role of CSOs, framing and restricting it through regulatory and legal controls, instead of absorbing them within the structure of the educational sector system in a way that would allow them to exercise their community-based role and function.

The issue of modernizing curricula is considered the most important and controversial issue of change and reform. The content of policy reform has been reduced to curricula only and its suitability to Jordanian culture and identity, neglecting the method of education and the nature of the role of the teacher, the school, and society in the

educational process.

It is worth noting the Ministry's selectivity in policy reform and the influence of local culture on their implementation in some aspects, the expansion of liberal economic and social reforms, and its slowness in introducing the values of political liberalism into the educational process. The main goal of the knowledge economy since 2003 has been to transfer control over public education from the Ministry of Education to public schools. This goal, however, has not been achieved yet, and there is still obstruction, slowness, and distortion in the implementation of reforms related to democratic values (student council, local councils, and central school councils).

However, the effective and positive contribution of funded CSOs in supporting and developing educational policies cannot be denied in terms of developing infrastructure, providing a safe environment for the learning process, qualifying and training educational personnel, and providing technical, technological and cognitive support. However, the community aspires to limit the role of CSOs and external grants to support in developing infrastructure and technical support and exclude them from technical matters and restrict curricula updating to Jordanian personnel and competencies in a way that is consistent with Jordanian values and identity.

In addition, the legal and legislative contexts and financial capabilities do not support the growth of CSOs in the Jordanian educational sector. This created multiple obstacles and challenges for local organizations, with the exception of royal initiatives, and made them unable to effectively influence education reform policies in Jordan. That is especially the case given that there exists a range of internal structural problems of CSOs. This includes the absence of planning, procedural steps, limited future visibility, organizational capacity to meet challenges, limited resources and limited ability to mobilize support and influence public opinion. There is also negative societal stereotyping of CSOs in the educational sector.

 The nexus characterized by skepticism and lack of trust between the government and civil society cast a shadow on society's view of CSOs, which contributed to creating a negative stereotype that distorted the work of CSOs in the entire education sector. It even went beyond exploring the government's motives by launching new educational policies in response to pressures. It is primarily external and not a carefully planned and thought-out process that is compatible with the needs and aspirations of Jordanian community. The public interest requires that the authorities organize and facilitate educational policies in accordance with what is required by the Jordanian environment, culture, and identity, in order to improve the educational environment and raise conscious, knowledgeable generations capable of advancing society and the state, free from political agendas, ideological conflict, and external dictates. There must be no harnessing of the restructuring of education as a tool to achieve political goals, desires, and agendas. It also must not be used as a means to exercise external influence.

Recommendations:

• The low level of participation, cooperation, and coordination between CSOs requires them to re-explore their relationships, maximize common factors, and move away from competition in order to achieve common visions. This as CSOs were unable to

form inter-alliances and formulate a coherent vision and policies that express changes in education policies, with the exception of Royal Initiatives that are somewhat complementary in vision, work, and roles distribution.

- The sustainability of CSOs has interconnected dimensions: the legal environment, organizational capacity, financial capacity, lobbying, service provision, infrastructure, and public image, all of which are factors that Jordanian organizations working in the education sector lack to varying degrees. The government and organizations must work to improve them. This allows the integration of the nexus between the two parties and the use of their capabilities to achieve the public interest.

- The Ministry of Education should abandon centralization and exclusivity in educational decisions (providing educational services, schoolbooks, research and evaluation processes), and prepare to participate in making public policies and managing a community dialogue to build a new and integrated educational system (via a bottom to top approach) about the nature of the required outputs and the educational needs of society.

- Reconsidering the Ministry of Education's laws, as the work of CSOs is affected by the laws and regulations issued by the Ministry of Education, as the ministry's laws do not allow organizations in the education sector to participate in educational policies, most of which have an executive role without taking their opinions and advice in decision-making.

- In order to achieve the public interest (reforming and developing education policies), compatibility must be found between reforming education with the support of CSOs and preserving the religious and value-based reference to the Jordanian cultural identity. There are many experiences (Japan) that have succeeded in achieving a qualitative shift by bringing together national identity and benefiting from the elements of progress and development in achieving a civilizational renaissance in all political, economic and developmental aspects.