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Youth and Education

Summary of findings based on the Jordanian national youth survey

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How do young Jordanians view education? Does Jordan have high enrolment rates? What about differences between young males and females and co-education? At what level do students tend to leave the education system, and what are the reasons for leaving? Do young Jordanians have high educational aspirations, and if so, what are the reasons for not pursuing a higher education? Does education have any effect on young Jordanians' self-evaluation of participation skills?

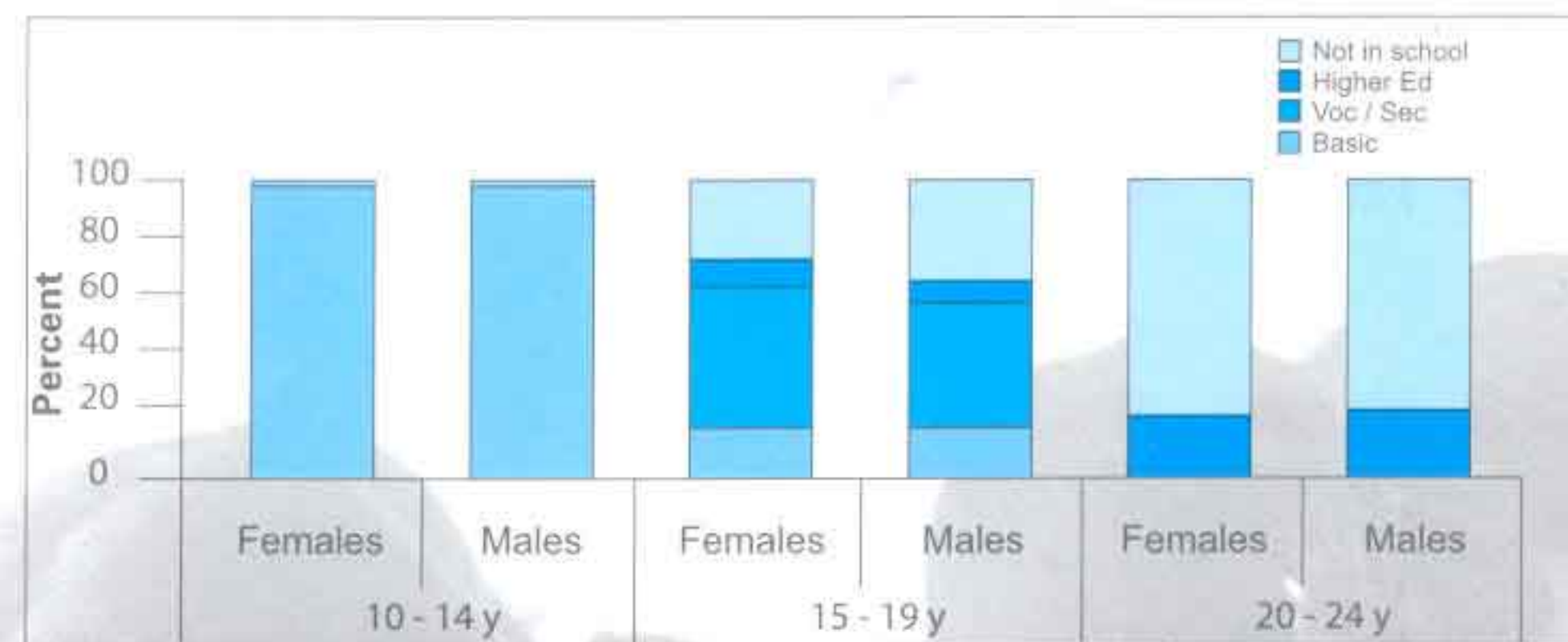
- The commitment to invest in people as Jordan's most precious resource has paid off with a highly educated population.

- Young Jordanians see education as a way to better work opportunities and acquiring both important personal and life skills, yet see little hope of a good income. Young Jordanians aged 10-14 years share a strong sense that their current education is highly beneficial for their future (90 per cent). This percentage drops, however, for the age group 15-19 years: only 74 per cent of females and 81 per cent of males (78 per cent total) see that their current education is beneficial for their future.

Students' perception of the benefit of studies	Males (%)	Females (%)	Age groups (%)			Total sample (%)
			10-14 y	15-19 y	20-25 y	
Great benefit	85.4%	82.0%	89.2	77.7	77.9	83.7
Some benefit	11.3%	15.3%	8.9	17.6	19.1	13.2
No benefit at all	2.5%	1.9%	1.1	3.6	2.6	2.2

- Across all age ranges, youth see the purpose of education in ways that differ by gender. Boys think the most important purpose of education is job opportunities, followed by an ability to understand problems, followed by the intrinsic value of education. Girls value the intrinsic value of education first, followed by understanding problems, job opportunities, and self-confidence.

- Jordan's enrolment rate is impressive when compared to other countries in the region. At the time of the survey, 65.8 per cent of the young people (10-24 years) interviewed were enrolled in some sort of education. The results demonstrate that nearly all boys and girls aged 10-14 years are currently enrolled in basic education (primary school). Notably, and unusual when compared to many countries, more females than males in the age group 15-19 years are enrolled in school. By the time they turn 20 years, the majority of both young men and women have left school. Nevertheless, 20.5 per cent of females and nearly 22 per cent of males continue with their education, pursuing a higher degree at university.

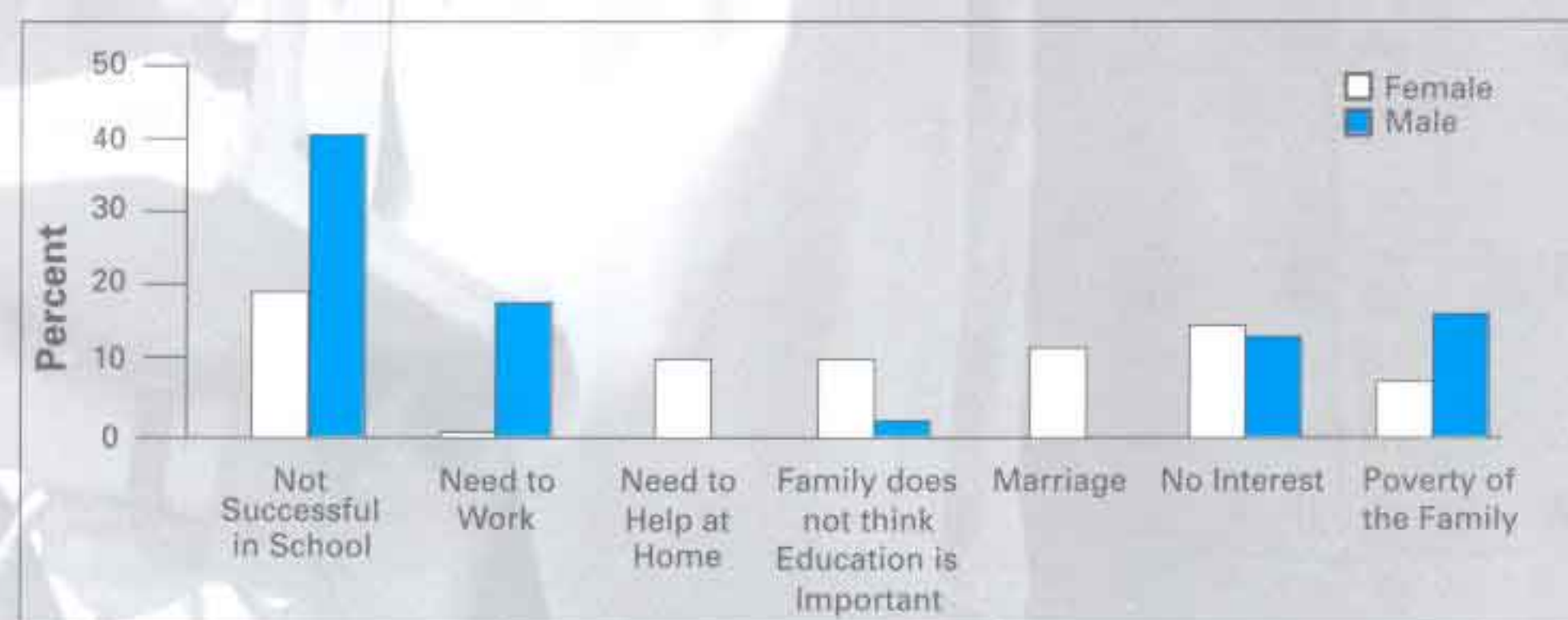


- Only one in every seven young Jordanians is enrolled in co-educational classes. Most co-education is provided by private schools.

- Basic education completion rates are significant markers in a country's development. Because the younger age group (10-to 14-year-olds and 15-to 19-year-olds) are still in the process of basic education, the oldest age group is examined to look retrospectively at completion rates. In this sample, only 13 per cent of females and 14.6 per cent of males had failed to complete basic education.

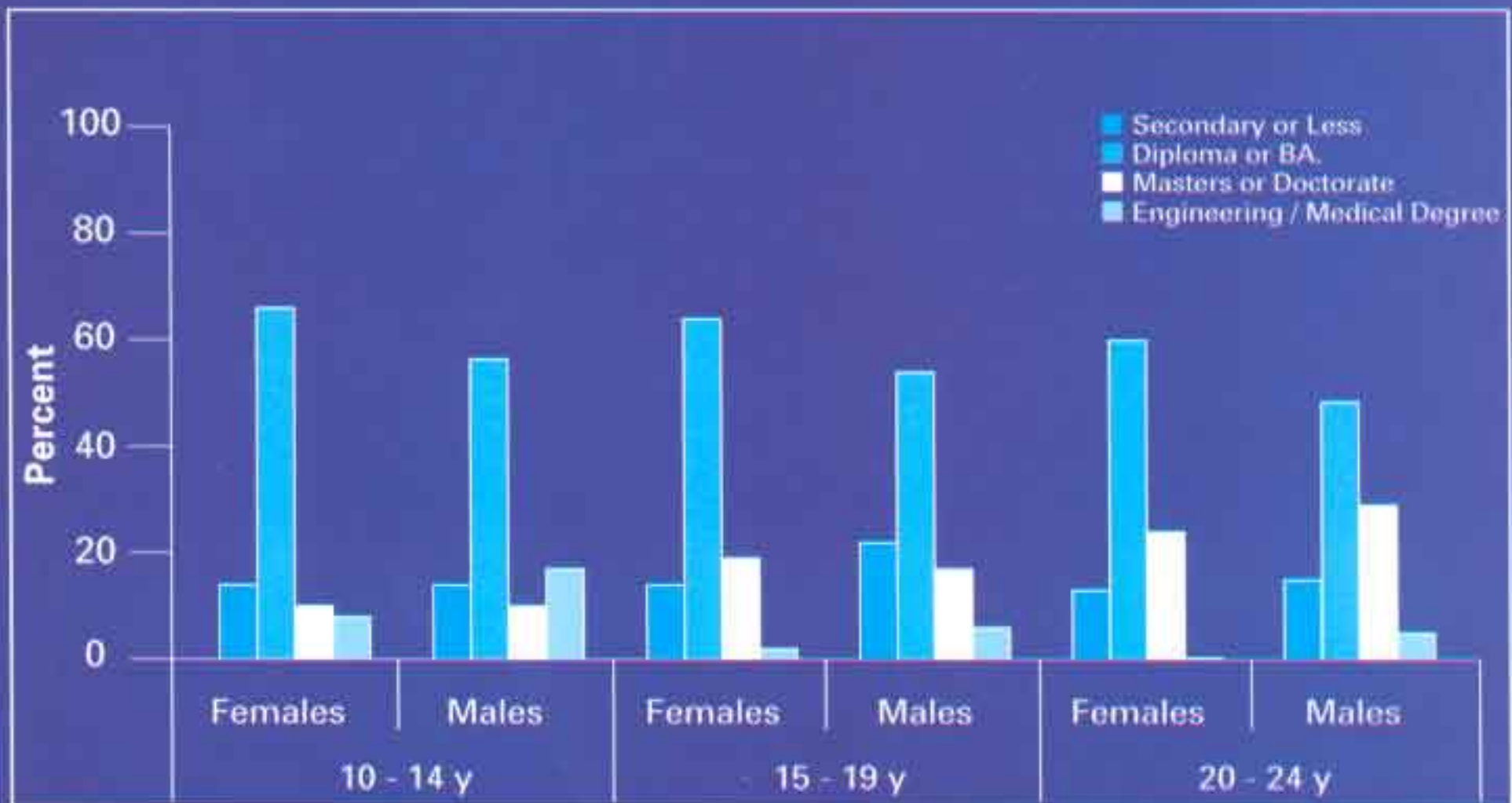
- Among young people 20-24 years 13 per cent of females and 14 per cent of boys completed less than basic education. The highest percentage of those who have not completed basic education is in the South of Jordan.

- Financial constraints and academic failure were among the reasons given for not pursuing further education. All 20- to 24-year-olds who did not complete basic education shared the reasons for this:



- To gain a sense of the aspirations of Jordanian youth, survey respondents were asked to specify the highest level of education they would like to reach before ending their schooling career. Understanding

young people's aspirations can help policy makers plan appropriately so that these aspirations can blossom into reality. At the same time, it can also point to areas where current policy and opportunities may fall short of helping youth achieve their dreams.



These data illustrate that more females than males, at all ages, aspire to a college diploma or a bachelor's degree. As young people get older, their wish to attend college diminishes for both females and males, and noticeably more for males. Notably, and perhaps not surprisingly given global gender norms, males are far more likely to aspire to an engineering or medical degree than females (17 per cent versus 8 per cent), although this number also decreases with age. In contrast to these trends, as females and males age, they are more likely to aspire to a masters or doctorate degree. Thus, it is possible that as adolescents age, and begin to gain a better sense of what the future could hold, they grow more ambitious. Young Jordanians from various regions of the Kingdom hold similar educational aspirations, with only narrow margins of variation. Despite the fact that half of the current student population wants a bachelor's degree, 40 per cent of holders of a bachelor's degree face unemployment.

•Young people were asked to rank their various participation skills between 0 (not good at all) to 3 (very good). The comparison of the subgroups of present and former students of different education levels indicates that those young Jordanians who have completed their education show in fact a slightly higher evaluation of their participation skills than current students of the same educational level.

Whether young people are working, unemployed or not seeking employment does not, however, reflect on the self-evaluation of their participation skills.

Recommendations

1. Nurture an educational system that offers young people opportunities for self-awareness, critical thinking, problem-solving and decision making, thus better enabling them to make contributions to individual, local, and national economies.
2. Use education as a tool for personal development, change, and enhanced citizenship, especially for girls.
3. Link investment in girls' education to increased national economic productivity and socio-political change.

"Jordanian Youth: Their Lives and Views" is a national youth survey published by the UNICEF Jordan Country Office in 2002. It is the outcome of a concerted effort between the Department of Statistics and UNICEF, who jointly carried out the Survey on a sample of 8,800 households between July and October 2001. The 230-page report draws for the first time a comprehensive picture of the situation of Jordanian youth between the ages of 10-24 years in nearly all aspects of life, ranging from education, employment, health, leisure, mobility and access to information, to social relationships, participation, self-perception, general attitudes and legal awareness. The Survey highlights the wide diversity of young people's experiences by age, gender, marital status, school and work status and region, suggesting that the effectiveness of policies and programmes, particularly for females, will depend on the ability to respond to this diversity. Parental attitudes are also captured in selected subjects. The Survey will provide decision-makers, researchers and other concerned partners with information, and will stimulate more research into specific issues that concern all those who care for the future of Jordan's young generation, including young people themselves.