

The Palestinian Strategic Report 2005



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Chapter Eight

Education in the West Bank and Gaza Strip

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Education in the West Bank and Gaza Strip¹

Introduction: People all over the world struggle to preserve their identity, co-exist with it, and work towards its development. Culture and education represent essential components in this process. Therefore, the educational and cultural programs imposed by the imperialist states played a key role in subjecting the colonized states, and in changing the mentality of their people in order to comply with the projects of the colonizers.

In the Palestinian case, the Palestinian people have been subjected to colonialism quite early, since 1917. Under the British and Zionist colonization, the adopted policies towards education in Palestine were similar, their most prominent features were:

1. Scarcity of the budgetary allocations assigned for education.
2. Lack of genuine interest to eliminate illiteracy.
3. Insufficient number of teachers.
4. Inadequate budget for building schools.
5. Focusing on the first five years of the primary education only and neglecting secondary education, thus disrupting students' education.
6. Orienting the secondary education towards producing teachers, especially for the primary stage, thus separating it from other walks of life.
7. Devising a new educational system to achieve the goals of the occupation, i.e., imposing political, social and economic realities that facilitate the establishment of the Jewish National Home, and preventing the rise of a complementary or integrative cultural movement with other Arab countries.
8. Weakness of the vocational and industrial education, which led to failure in meeting the necessities of developed life.
9. Ignoring cultural and Arab orientations, and Islamic values.

The British, for example, rejected 50% of students' applications to join the primary stage in government schools. Statistical studies show that 66% remained illiterate, either because they did not join schools altogether, or they left them at an early stage. The great majority of the Arab students in the government schools belonged to the primary stage. The total number of students in the government schools in 1945/1946 was 82,775 of whom 80,915 were in the primary school, i.e., they formed 97.8%.²

Notwithstanding the transplantation of Israel on the ruins of the Palestinian people, with its alien civil, cultural, economic and societal dimensions, the destruction of the Palestinian cities, and the compulsory Diaspora, the

Palestinians exhibited great interest in education, and achieved advanced levels compared to others.

In the wake of the 1948 catastrophe, the Palestinians largely depended on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) to provide them with relief and employment. Up to 1950/1951, the budget for education formed 1% of the general budget of UNRWA, but it gradually rose to 23% in 1960, 47% in 1970/1971, and 62% in 1984/1985. However, the enrolment of the Palestinians in the schools of UNRWA recorded a continuous decline. For example, the proportion of applicants in the 1960s was 5.3%, but it fell to 5% in the mid-seventies, 2.1% in the second half of the mid-seventies, and to 1.5% in the mid-eighties.

The Israeli occupation authorities had basically maintained in the West Bank (WB) and Gaza Strip (GS), the Egyptian and Jordanian laws and the educational curricula, with minor modification in the latter. But, it left no stone unturned to Judaize education in Jerusalem. The Military Governor in the WB issued the Military Order 91, which delegated the Military Governor to undertake the duties of the Minister of Education, with the full powers stipulated in the Jordanian law that gave him free hand to make whatever amendments that he saw appropriate. This procedure, i.e., working under the guise of the Jordanian and Egyptian laws, created an educational duality which caused imbalance. It kept the old infrastructure, while the schools, the budgets and the administration were placed under the authority of the occupation. Thus, the teachers, who were appointed prior to the occupation, continued to receive their salaries from the Ministry of Education in Amman; while those appointed afterwards had their salaries from the Israeli Ministry of Defense (the Civil Administration). The Israeli military occupation made basic alterations in to the contents of the textbooks and the educational system. After two months of the occupation, i.e., in July 1967, Israel prevented the circulation of 78, out of 121, books designed along the curricula of the Jordanian Ministry of Education, on the pretext that they incite hatred against Israel. The military authorities adopted oppression and deterrence as means of subjecting the people, especially in universities, apart from closures, curfews, and the occupation of schools, that were often turned into checkpoints, investigation centers and headquarters for the military personnel. All of this has, no doubt, strongly affected educational stability in Palestine. The days of Menachem Milson, the Military Governor in the WB, which coincided with the outbreak of the first *Intifadah* on 8 December 1987, represented the beginning of shameful daily violations by the military institution, that aimed at destroying the education in the WB and GS.

The Israeli occupation was an obstacle in the way of the educational process.

Its destructive policies targeted education to achieve the following:

1. Diverting the Palestinian educational system from its goal of building a developing, struggling and creative Palestinian character.
2. Obstructing the educational progress which was glaringly revealed during the first *Intifadah*. By then schools were closed or turned into barracks, students were assassinated and poverty prevailed. All this was designed to force some desperate Palestinian young men and women into the labor market, and paving the way for moral and social corruption.
3. Control of the government schools, which were under the Jordanian and Egyptian authorities, and subjecting them to the supervision and orders of the Military Governor.

This was accompanied by shortage of teachers and classrooms, which, in turn, negatively affected the quality of education and the process of modernizing its tools.

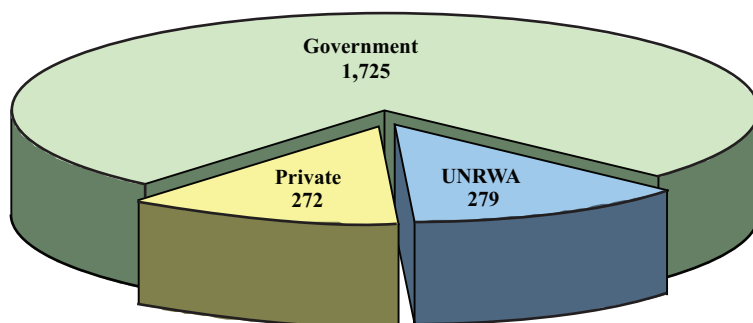
On the formation of the Palestinian National Authority, the education sector was transferred in 1994 from the domain of the military governor and the civil administration to its authority. In 2002, the Ministries of Education and Higher Education were merged in one Ministry under the name of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

The School Sector: At the beginning of the school year 2004/2005, more than a million Palestinian students went to schools, the number of schools in 2004/2005 reached 2,190; and the kindergartens totaled 947 with 75,324 pupils. In the next school year, the number of schools rose to 2,276, according to the following classification (see table 1/8).³

Table 1/8: Schools in the West Bank and Gaza Strip

School year	Government	UNRWA	Private	Total
2004/05	1,659	273	258	2,190
2005/06	1,725	279	272	2,276

Schools in the WB and GS 2005/2006



The number of the students increased from 1 million & 50,327 in the academic year 2004/2005 to 1 million & 78,488 in the next academic year. It is noted that male schools converge female schools, as follows in tables 2/8 and 3/8.

Table 2/8: Total Statistics of the Palestinian Education by Gender for 2004/2005 and 2005/2006⁴

Gender	Number of schools		Number of students		Number of teachers		Number of sections	
	2004/05	2005/06	2004/05	2005/06	2004/05	2005/06	2004/05	2005/06
Males	752	802	528,221	536,752	24,383	22,700	12,053	12,610
Females	749	786	522,106	541,736	22,034	25,974	12,171	12,736
Co-ed	689	688	-	-	-	-	5,620	5,655
Total	2,190	2,276	1,050,327	1,078,488	46,417	48,674	29,844	31,001

Table 3/8: Distribution of Students by Grades, Supervising Authority and Gender in 2005/2006⁵

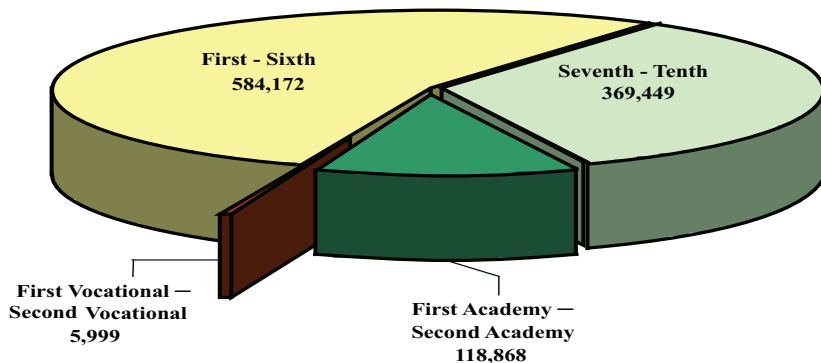
Grade	Government		UNRWA		Private		Total	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
One	29,071	29,093	13,034	13,157	6,840	4,907	48,945	47,157
Two	29,582	29,298	13,071	13,366	5,629	3,901	48,282	46,565
Three	29,207	28,992	13,726	13,753	4,689	3,119	47,622	45,864
Four	32,253	31,004	14,464	14,848	4,052	2,692	50,769	48,544
Five	33,221	32,247	15,787	15,719	3,631	2,403	52,639	50,369
Six	32,845	31,391	13,740	14,078	3,174	2,188	49,759	47,657
Seven	35,638	35,054	16,091	15,939	2,595	1,847	54,324	52,840
Eight	31,500	31,173	13,590	14,257	2,345	1,626	47,435	47,056
Nine	29,828	30,143	12,619	13,162	2,059	1,364	44,506	44,669
Ten	35,858	39,774	50	101	1,676	1,160	37,584	41,035
First Academy	27,681	32,382	0	0	1,208	808	28,889	33,190
Second Academy	25,655	29,072	0	0	1,200	862	26,855	29,934
First Vocational	2,032	991	0	0	152	34	2,184	1,025
Second Vocational	1,809	821	0	0	134	26	1,943	847
Total	376,180	381,435	126,172	128,380	39,384	26,937	541,736	536,752

It is noted that the students of the primary stage in the WB and GS formed more than 54% of the total number of students, and that the numbers of the students decreased to 11% in the secondary stage and to less than 1% in the vocational stage.

Table 4/8: Numbers of the Students in the West Bank and Gaza Strip by Stages

Grades	Numbers	Percentage
First - Sixth	584,172	54.17%
Seventh - Tenth	369,449	34.26%
First Academy – Second Academy	118,868	11.02%
First Vocational – Second Vocational	5,999	0.56%
Total	1,078,488	100.00%

Numbers of the Students in the WB and GS by Stages 2005/2006



It is clear that the greater burden of secondary education falls on government schools, about 96.5% of the total number of the students; while UNRWA schools are not concerned with the secondary education (see table 5/8).

Table 5/8: Total Statistics on the Palestinian Education by Supervising Authority for 2004/2005 and 2005/2006⁶

Supervising authority	Basic				Secondary			
	Students		Sections		Students		Sections	
	2004/05	2005/06	2004/05	2005/06	2004/05	2005/06	2004/05	2005/06
Government	623,688	637,172	17,835	18,348	110,047	120,443	3,547	3,734
UNRWA	254,582	254,552	5,960	6,124	0	0	0	0
Private	57,872	61,897	2,355	2,551	4,138	4,424	237	244
Total	936,142	953,621	26,150	27,023	114,185	124,867	3,784	3,978

On the other hand, by comparing the tables of the years 1998 and 2005, we can note a significant rise in the number of students, from 769,018 to 1 million & 50,327; i.e., an increase of 281,309 students which approximately constitutes a rise of 36.6%. Also, the number of schools rose from 1,621 to 2,190; i.e., by 569 schools, and that the number of students in the private schools significantly rose from about 45,000 to about 62,000, with an increase of 17,000 students over a period of seven years. The same applies to the UNRWA schools whose numbers rose from 200,000 to 254,000, with an increase of about 54,000 students. The number of the students in government schools increased by 210,000.

The above statistics give the following indications:

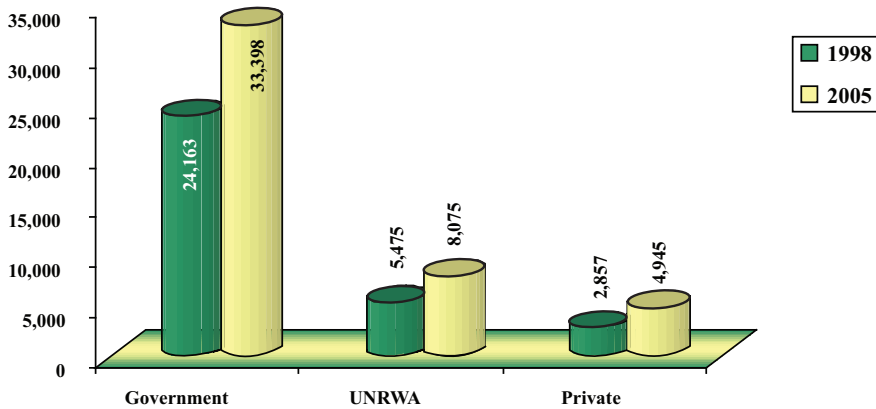
1. The natural increase of population in the areas under the Palestinian National Authority.
2. Most of the Palestinian people are youth; this means that Palestine is a youthful society that needs more effort to meet its needs and stabilize its living and social elements.
3. The parents are significantly aware of the importance of education for their children, which in itself is a strong indication and a basic element to overcome the vicious circle of illiteracy and backwardness.
4. A noticeable decrease in the rate of school drop-out, although the *Intifadah* had negative impact on the stability of education.

By comparing the number of students, schools, teachers and sections between the years 1997/1998 and 2004/2005, we notice that an appreciative educational progresses took place, and that huge efforts was exerted to meet the educational needs in spite of the difficult circumstances (see table 6/8).⁷

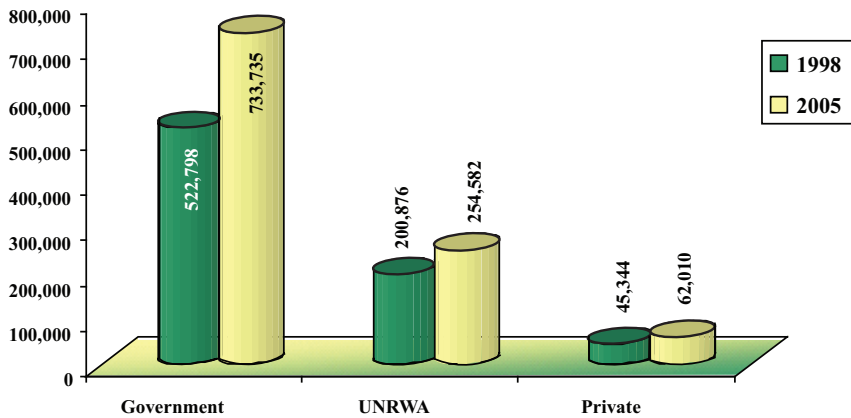
Table 6/8: Comparing the Numbers of Students, Schools, Teachers and Sections between 1997/1998 and 2004/2005

Supervisory authority	Government		UNRWA		Private		Total	
	1998	2005	1998	2005	1998	2005	1998	2005
Students	522,798	733,735	200,876	254,582	45,344	62,010	769,018	1,050,327
Schools	1,176	1,659	268	273	177	258	1,621	2,190
Sections	14,726	21,292	4,353	5,960	1,767	2,592	20,846	29,844
Teachers	24,163	33,398	5,475	8,075	2,857	4,945	32,495	46,417

Comparison of the Numbers of Teachers in the Schools of the WB & GS between 1998 & 2005



Comparison of the Numbers of Students in the Schools of the WB & GS between 1998 & 2005



It is clear that the government bears the major responsibility in educating the Palestinian students (70.25%), followed by UNRWA schools (23.6%), and then the private schools (6.15%). Also, about 71.9% of the teachers belong to the government schools (see table 7/8).

Table 7/8: Total Statistics of the Palestinian Education by Supervising Authority in 2005/2006

Supervising authority	Schools	Students	Teachers	Sections
Government	1,725	757,615	35,013	22,082
UNRWA	279	254,552	8,477	6,124
Private	272	66,321	5,184	2,795
Total	2,276	1,078,488	48,674	31,001

There is an indication that the Palestinian Authority (PA) has been seriously engaged in correcting the disorder of the educational process caused by the Israeli occupation. During the period from 1994 to 2006, the number of government schools in the areas under the PA rose from 1,084 to 1,725 (increasing by 59.1%). The number of students rose from 418,807 to 757,615 (increasing by 80.9%), and the number of their teachers rose from 14,938 to 35,013 (increasing by 134.39%). In addition, the number of sections rose from 11,817 to 22,082 (increasing by 86.87%) (see table 8/8).

Table 8/8: The Development of Number of Schools, Students, Teachers and Sections in the Government Schools

Year	Schools	Students	Teachers	Sections
1994/1995	1,084	418,807	14,938	11,817
1995/1996	1,070	447,822	16,810	12,524
1996/1997	1,113	481,678	18,858	13,623
1997/1998	1,175	516,160	21,186	14,729
1998/1999	1,230	549,404	22,695	15,633
1999/2000	1,289	586,777	24,318	16,541
2000/2001	1,343	621,285	26,173	17,338
2001/2002	1,406	653,650	28,015	18,279
2002/2003	1,490	686,507	29,930	19,381
2003/2004	1,577	711,541	31,858	20,382
2004/2005	1,659	733,735	33,398	21,292
2005/2006	1,725	757,615	35,013	22,082

As regards the geographical distribution of students, the number of students in government schools of the WB rose from 506,921 in 2004/2005 to 522,464 in the following school year, while their counterpart in GS rose from 226,814 in 2004/2005 to 235,151 in the following school year (see tables 9/8 & 10/8).

Table 9/8: Distribution of the Students in the Government Schools by District and Grade in 2004/2005

District	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth	Seventh	Eighth	Ninth	Tenth	Academy		Vocational		Total
											First	Second	First	Second	
Jenin	3,274	3,199	3,340	3,397	3,475	3,631	3,288	3,322	3,049	2,819	3,262	1,972	232	153	37,513
Nablus	5,980	5,946	6,370	6,763	6,925	7,555	6,864	6,723	5,982	6,105	4,823	3,969	496	393	74,894
Salfet	1,499	1,465	1,646	1,648	1,637	1,780	1,605	1,611	1,494	1,315	1,005	835	152	89	17,781
Tulkarm	3,180	3,208	3,362	3,527	3,566	3,870	3,680	3,563	3,312	3,059	2,463	1,933	402	296	39,421
Qalqilya	2,150	2,096	2,158	2,353	2,249	2,482	2,258	2,128	1,947	1,858	1,542	1,182	178	95	24,676
Ramallah	4,535	4,478	4,918	5,069	5,207	5,765	5,273	5,211	4,831	5,084	4,249	3,365	140	100	58,225
Jerusalem Sub.	1,419	1,350	1,630	1,612	1,656	1,761	1,712	1,664	1,560	1,545	1,214	903	29	25	18,080
Jerusalem	1,049	964	1,021	1,127	1,126	1,155	1,140	1,001	914	911	800	618	13	5	11,844
Bethlehem	3,035	2,863	3,059	3,156	3,294	3,565	3,201	3,187	2,789	2,868	2,521	1,948	99	59	35,644
Jericho	401	394	489	466	441	561	477	453	456	599	499	395	0	0	5,631
Hebron	7,132	7,031	7,759	7,912	7,665	8,405	7,577	7,605	6,666	6,608	5,430	4,003	529	496	84,818
South Hebron	5,529	5,376	5,710	5,922	5,396	6,257	5,226	5,005	4,386	4,126	3,513	2,751	156	113	59,466
Qabatya	3,413	3,293	3,554	3,572	3,615	3,794	3,526	3,452	3,022	2,879	2,390	2,024	218	176	38,928
West Bank	42,596	41,663	45,016	46,524	46,252	50,581	45,827	44,925	40,408	39,776	32,811	25,898	2,644	2,000	506,921
Gaza	6,441	6,675	6,837	7,355	7,471	7,986	7,465	7,281	6,628	10,036	9,040	7,361	65	43	90,684
North Gaza	4,109	4,232	4,503	4,888	4,890	5,359	4,109	3,968	3,298	5,395	4,203	3,508	27	36	52,516
Khan Younis	3,825	4,030	4,107	4,538	4,231	4,809	4,230	4,153	3,832	9,927	8,806	7,522	85	105	64,200
Rafah	938	920	988	1,131	1,066	1,146	1,224	1,273	1,107	3,728	3,243	2,650	0	0	19,414
Gaza Strip	15,313	15,857	16,435	17,912	17,658	19,300	17,028	16,675	14,856	29,086	25,292	21,041	177	184	226,814
Total	57,909	57,520	61,451	64,436	63,910	69,881	62,855	61,600	55,264	68,862	58,103	46,939	2,821	2,184	733,735



Table 10/8: Distribution of Schools, Students, Teachers and Sections in the Government Schools by Region and Gender in 2005/2006

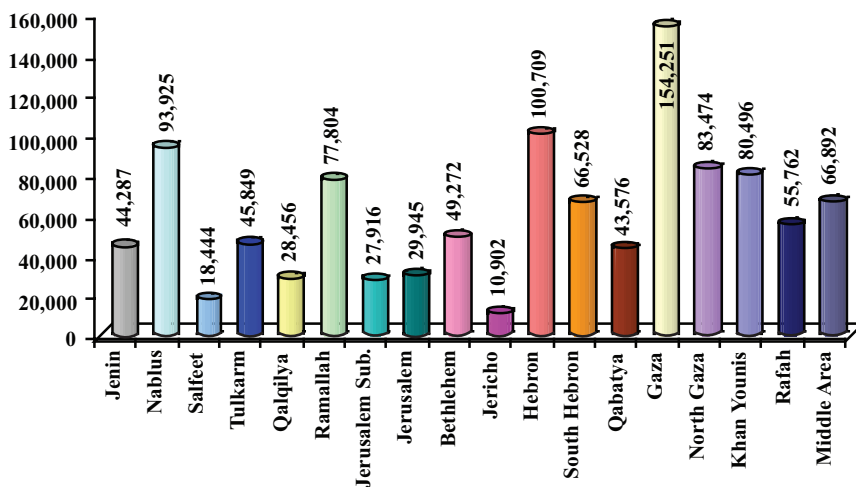
Region	Schools				Students			Teachers			Sections			
	M.	F.	Co-ed	Total	M.	F.	Total	M.	F.	Total	M.	F.	Co-ed	Total
WB	506	524	349	1,379	260,569	261,895	522,464	12,165	13,393	25,558	7,051	7,193	2,126	16,370
GS	155	153	38	346	115,611	119,540	235,151	4,878	4,580	9,458	2,570	2,757	387	5,714
Total	661	677	387	1,725	376,180	381,435	757,615	17,043	17,973	35,016	9,621	9,950	2,513	22,084

The total educational facilities, that include all government, private and UNRWA schools, shows that the areas of Gaza, Hebron and Nablus are more intensive in terms of the number of schools, students and teachers (see table 11/8).

Table 11/8: Total Statistics of the Palestinian Education by District in 2005/2006

District	Schools	Students	Teachers	Sections
Jenin	130	44,287	2,225	1,444
Nablus	234	93,925	4,346	2,776
Salfeet	58	18,444	1,041	659
Tulkarm	123	45,849	2,340	1,419
Qalqilya	76	28,456	1,441	929
Ramallah	206	77,804	4,348	2,644
Jerusalem Sub.	96	27,916	1,603	1,028
Jerusalem	87	29,945	1,853	1,091
Bethlehem	135	49,272	2,624	1,602
Jericho	26	10,902	533	347
Hebron	253	100,709	4,601	2,990
South Hebron	175	66,528	3,080	2,077
Qabatya	116	43,576	2,151	1,384
West Bank	1,715	637,613	32,186	20,390
Gaza	210	154,251	5,877	3,748
North Gaza	100	83,474	3,106	2,010
Khan Younis	102	80,496	2,996	1,906
Rafah	70	55,762	2,034	1,333
Middle Area (Al-Wusta)	79	66,892	2,475	1,614
Gaza Strip	561	440,875	16,488	10,611
Total	2,276	1,078,488	48,674	31,001

Distribution of Students in the Schools of the WB & GS by District in 2005/2006



A quick look at the vocational education reveals that it does not represent more than 0.6%. This is an unsatisfactory situation that requires the immediate attention of the authorities in order to meet the actual needs of the Palestinian society (see table 12/8).

Table 12/8: Total Statistics of the Palestinian Education in the Secondary Vocational Education in 2005/2006

Supervising authority	Students	Sections
Government	5,653	258
UNRWA	0	0
Private schools	346	21
Total	5,999	279

The future expectations of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) show that the number of the Palestinian students may reach about 1 million & 441,000 by 2009/2010; with an increase of 77.75%, compared to the school year 1998/1999. Of course, such an increase will be accompanied by an expected increase of 61.81% in teachers, and an increase in the number of sections to reach 38,682; with an increase of 72.5% (see table 13/8).

Table 13/8: The Expected Number of the Students in the Palestinian Lands by School Year, Stage and Gender⁸

School year	General total			Basic stage			Secondary stage		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2004/05	577,976	562,298	1,140,274	525,572	510,651	1,036,223	52,404	51,647	104,051
2005/06	608,708	591,599	1,200,307	551,924	535,645	1,087,569	56,784	55,954	112,738
2006/07	639,368	620,662	1,260,030	578,054	560,310	1,138,364	61,314	60,352	121,666
2007/08	670,246	649,699	1,319,945	604,273	584,912	1,189,185	65,973	64,787	130,760
2008/09	701,486	678,889	1,380,375	630,700	609,632	1,240,332	70,786	69,257	140,043
2009/10	733,108	708,347	1,441,455	657,371	634,578	1,291,949	75,737	73,769	149,506

The Palestinian Institutions of Higher Education:

There are 11 Palestinian universities in the WB and GS (8 in the WB and 3 in GS). In addition, there are 13 colleges which award bachelor's degree, and 19 colleges which award intermediate diploma.

In the academic year 2004/2005, the number of the registered bachelor students in the Palestinian universities reached 75,486; of whom 35,777 were males and 39,709 females, while those registered for postgraduate studies totaled 3,943. The intake in the traditional universities in 2004/2005 was 17,948 for bachelor degrees, and 1,503 students for postgraduate studies. The undergraduate 2004/2005 intake for Al-Quds Open University was 11,226, while 157 students joined department of educational training. Thus, the total number of the registered students at this university for the bachelor studies reached 46,453; including 22,398 males and 24,055 females.

The number of the new undergraduate students who joined the university colleges was 487, and 1,701 registered for the intermediate diploma courses. Thus, the number of the registered bachelor students at the university colleges was 2,068 (888 males, and 1,180 females), and 3,966 intermediate diploma students (1,793 males, and 2,173 females). The number of the registered intermediate diploma students in community colleges was 9,002 (5,070 males, and 3,932 females).

The number of the full-time academic staff in the Palestinian institutions of higher education (universities, university colleges, and intermediate colleges) reached 2,082, while that of supportive staff totaled 3,716.

The numbers of those who graduated from the Palestinian institutions of higher education in 2003/2004 were:

- 12,192 students (5,413 males and 6,779 females) obtained their bachelor degrees.
- 3,223 students (1,213 males and 2,010 females) received their intermediate diplomas.
- 3,040 students (1,469 males and 1,571 females) obtained certificates from Al-Quds Open University.
- 790 students (457 males and 333 females) completed their postgraduate studies.
- 1,727 students (781 males and 946 females) graduated from intermediate colleges.

Table 14/8: Classification of the Registered Students in the Traditional Universities in the Academic Year 2004/2005

Serial	University	Registered students		
		Males	Females	Total
1	Al-Azhar/ Gaza	7,362	4,497	11,860
2	The Islamic/ Gaza	6,953	9,725	16,678
3	Al-Aqsa/ Gaza	3,314	5,931	9,245
4	Hebron (Al-Khalil)	1,561	3,167	4,728
5	Palestine Polytechnic	1,418	798	2,216
6	Bethlehem	678	1,532	2,210
7	Al-Quds (Jerusalem)	3,915	3,589	7,504
8	Birzeit	3,507	3,658	7,165
9	Al-Najah	5,447	6,207	11,654
10	Arab-American/ Jenin	2,245	1,145	3,390
Total		36,400	40,249	76,650

Classification of the Registered Students in the Traditional Universities in the Academic Year 2004 / 2005

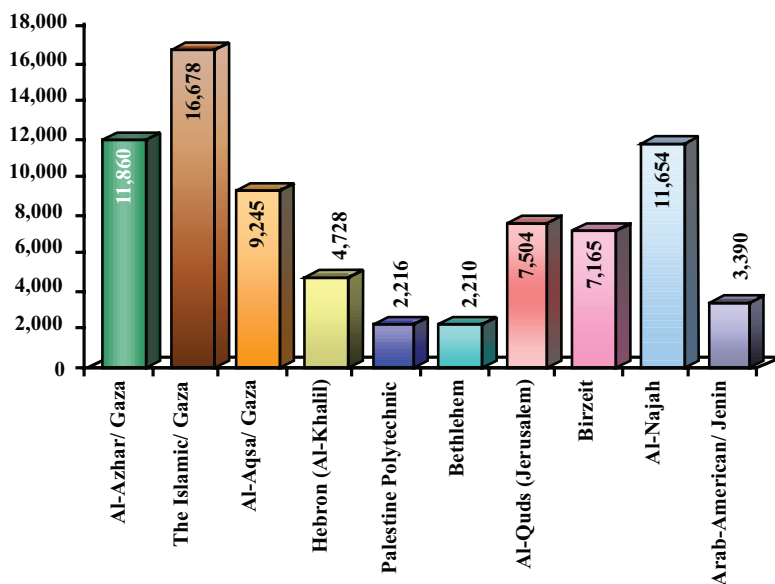


Table 15/8: Classification of the Registered Students in the Open Education in the Academic Year 2004/2005

Serial	University	Registered students		
		Males	Females	Total
1	Al-Quds Open University	22,398	24,055	46,453

Table 16/8: Distribution of the Registered Students in the Colleges in the Academic Year 2004/2005

Colleges	Number of colleges	Registered students		
		Males	Females	Total
University	13	2,681	3,353	6,034
Intermediate	19	5,070	3,932	9,002
Total	32	7,751	7,285	15,036

Students' Drop-out in the Palestinian Authority Schools:

A study prepared by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, in cooperation with many Palestinian and international scientific institutions, revealed that the rate of leaving education fell from 1.8% in 1999/2000 to 0.9% in 2004/2005. This rate of drop-out is

regarded among the lowest rates in the Second and Third World. It is noted that this rate decreased gradually from 1995 until 2005. This is due to the great effort of the educational authorities, and the increasing awareness of the Palestinian society that education is a national priority and a vehicle to achieve national liberation.⁹

The above study included all government and private schools in all the provinces of the WB and GS. The study attributed the drop-out to the following reasons:

1. Low educational achievement among school leavers.
2. Disinterest in education.
3. Engagement or marriage.
4. Poor capacity of understanding.
5. Joining the labor market; as the study indicated that 64% of the male drop-out and 20% of their female counterpart attributed their decision to quit education to economic reasons.

In addition, there are some other reasons for this tendency that are related to the educational environment in the schools. 40% of the female quitters and 44.7% of the males indicated that they did so because of their estrangement from the school. Another 27% of the female and 49% of the male drop outs blamed corporal punishment practiced by some teachers, lack of a sense of belonging to the school, difficulty of the school curricula, and fear and anxiety of failing examinations.

As for the reasons that pertain to the family, they are as follows:

1. Poor economic conditions of the student's family that forces him or her to the labor market.
2. Inability of the family to pay the educational expenses.
3. Family compulsion of a female or male student to quit education in order to help with the household chores.
4. Family problems that lead to discontinuity of studies.
5. Absence of a helping hand within families to finance, or contribute in financing education.
6. Some families compel their children to quit education.

Besides, there are external factors related to the Israeli occupation.

It is noteworthy that Article (19) of the Higher Education Law stipulates that basic education is compulsory for all children. Also, Article (11) of the same law states that basic education is compulsory until Grade Ten. The rate of drop out during the compulsory stage was 1.88% among male students, and 1.28% among female students in the school year 2002/2003. The rate decreased to reach 1.2% among male students and 0.9% among females in the school year 2004/2005. The number of students who deserted education between 1996/1997 to 2004/2005 reached 88,175. It is noted that the higher the level of education is the higher the rate of quittal will be.

Table 17/8: Leaving Education 1995/1996 – 2004/2005

Year	1995/96	1998/99	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
Percentage of leaving education %	2.15	1.61	1.3	0.9	0.9

The Impact of the Occupation on the Palestinian Education: Israel strove to destroy the infrastructure of the Palestinian society, including education and health. Hence, we saw the Israeli tanks devoured everything that came on their way during the *Intifadat al-Aqsa*. The number of the killed among students reached 579 in schools and 199 in universities, while those arrested and injured were totaled 720 and 3,491 respectively (see table 18/8).

Table 18/8: The Human Loss from 28/9/2000 to 20/1/2006¹⁰

State		28/9/2000 – 31/8/2001	1/9/2001 – 30/8/2002	31/8/2002 – 31/8/2003	1/9/2003 – 31/8/2004	1/9/2004 – till now	Total
Killed	Teachers	3	12	10	3	4	32
	School students	96	154	145	114	70	595
	Employees	-	4	2	1	-	7
	University students	-	-	-	8	2	199
	University employees	-	-	2	4	-	6
	Eliminating illiteracy students	-	-	-	-	1	7
Arrested	Teachers	21	55	45	46	9	176
	School students	71	101	140	296	61	669
	University students	-	-	-	10	-	720
	Employees	-	13	5	11	-	29
Wounded	Teachers	-	31	18	5	-	54
	School students	2,151	453	387	386	94	3,500
	University students	-	-	-	-	-	1,245
	Employees	-	5	4	1	-	10

The Israeli occupation caused severe damage to the educational infrastructure through various ways and means. 498 schools were closed, from the beginning of the academic year 2002/2003 until 2005, because of curfews, blockades and closure of towns and villages. In addition, 1,289 schools were temporarily closed during the *Intifadat al-Aqsa*; amongst which three were closed from the beginning of the *Intifadah* until 23 January 2005, and converted into Israeli military barracks. 297 schools were shelled with missiles or tanks since the outbreak of the *Intifadah*. Also, 9 schools were closed by Israeli military orders until 23 December 2005; including 3 converted into military barracks: Usama bin Munqidh School, Banat Jawhar School and Al-Ma'arif School in Hebron. The students lost 7,825 study days because of disruption of study during the above mentioned period.¹¹

At the time of writing this report, we do not have complete and accurate statistics for the year 2005. Thus, we will mention some statistics for previous years to give a general picture of the subject. The number of schools in which education was disrupted during the academic year 2002/2003 was 514 schools, i.e., 34.5% of the schools were closed down by the occupation (see table 19/8).

Table 19/8: The Closure of Schools during the Academic Year 2002/2003

Governorate	Closed schools	Affected students	Affected teachers & employees	Number of days	Number of the curfew days
Ramallah	37	19,001	844	257	26
Qalqilya	35	17,485	711	329	42
Jenin	47	23,785	947	816	62
Jericho	3	915	52	3	3
Qabatya	28	13,588	589	77	12
Bethlehem	33	15,082	664	685	36
Jerusalem Sub.	13	4,583	255	34	5
South Hebron	55	23,123	9,018	206	16
Salfeet	17	6,334	307	22	11
Nablus	94	38,413	1,761	2,506	71
Tulkarm	51	23,603	1,011	856	47
Hebron	101	52,581	2,137	2,214	63
Total	514	238,493	18,296	8,005	394

The buildings of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education were not immune from this destruction. The Israeli military establishment shelled everything: schools, universities and chambers, forcibly entered into university campuses and ministries and closed down many schools and universities (see tables 20/8 and 21/8).

Table 20/8: The Material Destruction from 28/9/2000 to 21/11/2004

Kind of damage	Total
Shelling and storming into schools	288
Shelling and storming into educational offices	6
Shelling and storming into colleges	5
Shelling and storming into universities	8
Shelling and storming into the Ministry of Education	2
Converting schools into barracks and jails	43
Closure of schools	10
Closure of universities	2
Demolishing schools' walls and classrooms	49
Disrupting schools	1,125
Emptying schools	50
Devastating schools' contents	50

No university or college was immune from this violation and destruction, whose cost totaled more than \$7 million.

Table 21/8: The Damages Inflicted on Colleges, Institutes and Universities, According to an Estimation in 31/3/2003

University/ College	Buildings	Laboratories	Deficit in salaries	Students' allocations	Death of animals	Total
Total (US\$)	3,536,000	201,800	4,104,833	5,000	40,500	7,888,133

The Israeli aggression on the areas of the PA had seriously hindered the educational projects and programs. Consequently, the Ministry of Education had to focus its effort on emergency, not development. The report of the United Nations Children's Funds (UNICEF) revealed the magnitude of the crimes that were committed by the Israeli occupation against the PA and the Palestinian people in general, and the education sector in particular.

UNICEF announced that the Israeli occupation inflicted a severe blow on education in the areas of the PA.¹² *Al-Ayyam* newspaper revealed that the US had offered a subsidy to develop the Palestinian higher education, which

had considerably suffered from the Israeli attacks. Mazin Sunnuqrut stated: “This funding (\$41 million) will benefit the institutions of higher education, students and teachers alike; as it will enable them to get better research tools and technology, and to learn the contemporary trends in the fields of science and technology”¹³ The PCBS indicated that the Israeli actions had severe negative effects on the economic and social wellbeing of the society.¹⁴ This was clearly reflected in the families and their living conditions, where the rates of poverty increased and, in turn, affected education, labor market, economy and health conditions. The Israeli siege deprived 36.1% of the Palestinian families from health services, and forced 4.5% of the school students and 34.6% of the university students to change their residence.

It can be said that Israel, as a colonial state, bears the responsibility of the prevalence of illiteracy among some Palestinians. The deterioration of the economic conditions and the desire of the occupation to retain this status in some families had compelled the parents to send their children to the labor market, which, in turn, made them unable to supervise their children, particularly as they themselves were fully engaged in finding a means of living. For example, during the *Intifadah* of 1987 – 1994, the programs of combating illiteracy, which were adopted by some organizations, stopped. Moreover, during the second *Intifadah* that erupted in 2000, Israel hit the illiteracy programs and the educational process itself, which increased the rate of the drop-out students. Its policies of establishing barriers and imposing closures and the comprehensive war that it pursued increased the proportion of the students who deserted education, while the rate of illiteracy in the WB and GS reached 15%.¹⁵

Meanwhile, Israel refused to give the teachers who held Identity Cards of the WB permits to reach their places of work in East Jerusalem, which illustrates the occupiers’ intention to worsen the life and to spread ignorance among the Palestinian people in order to remain under the clutches of the Israeli occupation.

The Impact of the Separation Wall on Education:

A report issued by the PCBS showed that 7% of the Palestinian families have changed their place of residence or migrated because of the Separation Wall, while another 31% indicated that they will eventually do so. Another report issued by the Ministry of State for Jerusalem Affairs revealed clearly that the Apartheid Wall aims

basically at dismantling the social fabric and to absolutely control the Holy City. This will result in depriving East Jerusalem from being, with its suburbs, one political, social and economic unit. In addition, the report indicated that 2,000 Jerusalemites cross the Wall daily to reach schools in al-Ram and the suburb of al-Barid. Behind the Wall, other 6,500 Jerusalemites come daily from the north of the city to cross the Wall to reach the schools located in the heart of the city. ‘Atirut Industrial School is the most vulnerable school affected by the Wall; as the number of its students decreased from 350 in the school year 2002/2003 to 180 in 2005/2006. 77 students out of 230 in al-Jil al-Jadid School in Abu-Dis left education during the academic year 2004/2005 due to the Separation Wall and the consequential restriction of freedom to reach the school.¹⁶ Thus, the Apartheid Wall has a severe devastating effect on the educational structure in some areas and schools. Nazlit Issa School represents the ugly image of the Apartheid Wall, as the school was separated from the village, which it serves. Besides, the Wall threatens to extend a cross Al-Quds University, and disrupt its campus. Table 22/8 shows the damage inflicted upon some students.

Table 22/8: Some Cases of Students Affected by the Separation Wall in Northern West Bank

Governorate	School	Number of the students affected
Jenin	Barta'a Secondary/Boys	362
	Barta'a Secondary/Girls	345
	Um al-Rehan Basic	98
	Al-Farouq Basic	85
	Total	890
Tulkarm	Nazlit Issa Secondary/Boys	329
	Nazlit Issa Secondary/Girls	328
	Baqa Sharqieh Basic/Boys	389
	Baqa Sharqieh Basic/Girls	244
	Baqa Sharqieh Secondary/Boys	208
	Baqa Sharqieh Secondary/Girls	377
	Total	1,875
Qalqilya	Ras Tera/Dhaba'a	133
Total		2,898

To show the hardship experienced by the students of the abovementioned schools, we have to record that 2,765 students are behind the Wall and 101 teachers come to teach them (see table 23/8).

Table 23/8: The Number of School Students and Teachers who Forced to Cross the Wall to and from the Areas of Jenin, Tulkarm and Qalqilya

Jenin					
Area	School	Students	Students out	Teachers in	Teachers out
Barta'a Sharqieh	Barta'a Secondary/Boys	362	15	10	4
	Barta'a Secondary/Girls	345			
Um al-Rehan	Um al-Rehan Basic/Co-ed	98	13	5	2
Khirbet Abdallah Alyounes	-	-	30	-	1
Khirbet Thahr al-Maleh	-	-	17	-	-
Khirbet Barta'a	Al-Farouq Basic	85	-	3	1
Tulkarm					
Area	School	Students	Students out	Teachers in	Teachers out
Nazlit Issa	Nazlit Issa Secondary/Boys	329	-	29	3
	Nazlit Issa Secondary/Girls	328			
Baq Sharqieh	Baq Sharqieh Basic/Boys	389	-	54	13
	Baq Sharqieh Basic/Girls	244			
	Baq Sharqieh Secondary/Boys	208			
	Baq Sharqieh Secondary/Girls	377			
Nazlit Abu Nar	-	-	61	-	0
Khirbet Jbara	-	-	61	-	4
Qalqilya					
Area	School	Students	Students out	Teachers in	Teachers out
Ras Tera	Dhaba'a & Ras Tera/Co-ed	60	95	-	2
Khirbet Dhaba'a	Dhaba'a & Ras Tera/Co-ed	73	90	8	3
Arab al-Ramadanien Aljanoubi	-	0	75	-	-

In the province Bethlehem, the Wall will prevent more than 600 students and 140 teachers from reaching 14 schools on regular basis. Consequently, students and teachers will have to resort to different ways, or change their schools to others in accessible areas. Hence, great hardship will be inflicted upon students, teachers and families, besides the long distances and high financial cost.

The Curricula during the era of the Palestinian Authority:

The Ministry of Education stated that: “The general orientation of the Palestinian curricula stems from the comprehensive vision

of the educational process, with all its elements, from unity and integration among the various fields of knowledge and from the premises that the curricula represent the backbone of the education system.”¹⁷ The curricula are built on five bases: the intellectual and national basis, the social basis, the traditional basis, the psychological basis and the educational basis.

In 2004, the Ministry of Education issued its detailed educational plan for the year 2004 (the school year 2004/2005); its budget was about \$318 million & 600,000, of which 80.6%, i.e., \$256 million & 900,000, were considered as running costs.

Table 24/8: The Financial Costs of the Plan of the Ministry of Education for 2004

	Program	Costs (US\$ million)
1	Providing admission opportunities for all students in the different educational years	322.6
2	Improving education	6.6
3	Developing vocational and technical education	5.1
4	Developing the educational system as a whole	1.2
5	Developing the administrative and organizational system in the Ministry	16.4

The structure of the general education in Palestine depends on three bases:

1. The period of general education: Twelve academic years, starting from the first to the twelfth grade.
2. The admission age in grade one is six years.
3. Education is divided into two stages: Basic stage from grade one until

grade ten and the secondary stage.

The following table shows the distribution of classes for lower basic stage (see table 25/8).

Table 25/8: The Classes of Each Grade in the Lower Basic Stage
(grade one to grade four)

Subjects	Grade one	Grade two	Grade three	Grade four	Total	Percentage
Islamic education	3	3	3	3	12	10%
Arabic language	8	8	8	8	32	26.7%
English language	3	3	3	3	12	10%
General sciences	3	3	3	3	12	10%
Mathematics	5	5	5	5	20	16.66%
Social studies & national education	2	2	2	2	8	6.66%
Arts and Crafts	2	2	2	2	8	6.66%
Sports education	2	2	2	2	8	6.66%
Free activity	1	1	1	1	4	3.33%
Civil education	1	1	1	1	4	3.33%
Total	30	30	30	30	120	100%

As for the number of classes for the higher basic education of the first stage, i.e., from the fifth grade to the tenth, they are 35-36 classes; as the Minister added one class according to the following table 26/8:

Table 26/8: The Weekly Classes in the Higher Basic Education
(grade five to grade ten)

Grade	Governorates of the WB	Governorates of Gaza		Plan of the Palestinian curriculum
		Males	Females	
Grade 5	33	34	35	35
Grade 6	34	37	36	35
Grade 7	34	33	34	36
Grade 8	34	33	34	36
Grade 9	35	34	35	36
Grade 10	35	34	36	36

Grade Ten in the Palestinian education system has a special importance; as it is an intermediate stage between the basic education and the secondary education. It is regarded as a preparatory grade before the categorization of the secondary education into academic or technical. It gives students an opportunity to choose what is appropriate according to their inclinations, abilities and aspirations. Therefore, the curriculum focuses on five subjects (Arabic, English, Science, Mathematics and Technical sciences) as a basis for formulating the student's inclination (see table 28/8).

Table 27/8: The Classes of Each Grade in the Higher Basic Stage
(grade five to grade nine)

Subjects	Grade five	Grade six	Grade seven	Grade eight	Grade nine	Total	Percentage
Islamic education	3	3	3	3	3	15	8.43%
Arabic language	7	7	7	7	7	35	19.66%
English language	4	4	4	4	4	20	11.24%
General sciences	5	5	5	5	5	25	14.04%
Mathematics	5	5	5	5	5	25	14.04%
Social studies & National education	3	3	3	3	3	15	8.43%
Arts and Crafts	2	2	2	2	2	10	5.62%
Sports education	2	2	1	1	1	7	3.93%
Free activity	1	1	1	1	1	5	2.81%
Civil education	1	1	1	1	1	5	2.81%
Technology and Applied sciences	2	2	2	2	2	10	5.62%
Optional subject	--	--	2	2	2	6	3.37%
Total	35	35	36	36	36	178	100%

These five subjects constitute 66.7% of the Palestinian curriculum for the students of the tenth grade; while the other subjects constitute 33.3%.

While the Palestinian curriculum was under preparation and before its total application at the beginning of 2000, the Egyptian and Jordanian curricula were applied. Thus, the Palestinian curriculum made great use of these two curricula, and added to them (see table 29/8).

Table 28/8: Classes and their Percentage for Each of the Subjects of the Tenth Grade

Subjects	Classes	Percentage	Technical subjects (The student should choose two only)	Classes
Islamic education	3	8.3%	Agricultural sciences	3
Arabic language	5	13.9%	Industrial sciences	3
English language	4	11.1%	Commercial and Administrative sciences	3
Sciences (Physics, Chemistry and Biology)	4	11.1%	Tourist sciences	3
Mathematics	5	13.9%		
Social studies & National education	2	5.6%		
Arts and Crafts	1	2.8%		
Sports education	1	2.8%		
Technology and Applied sciences	2	5.6%		
Optional subject	2	5.6%		
Vocational culture	1	2.8%		
Technical subjects	6	16.7%		
Total	36	100%		

Table 29/8: Number of the Weekly Classes for the Arts, Science and Technical Subjects of the Tenth Grade

Subjects	Governorates of the WB	Governorates of Gaza		The plan of the Palestinian curriculum
		Males	Females	
Literature subjects	22	23	25	19
Mathematics	5	5	5	5
Sciences (Physics, Chemistry and Biology)	6	6	6	4
Technology and Applied sciences	2	0	0	2
Technical subjects (Agricultural, Tourist, Commercial and Industrial)	0	0	0	6
Total Classes	35	34	36	36

As for the curriculum of the secondary stage (11-12), the Palestinian curriculum book of 1998 has this to say:

To develop the secondary education, the First Palestinian Curriculum took into consideration preparing the student academically to study all the following basic subjects: Islamic education, Arabic language, English language, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Social and National sciences, Technology, Applied sciences, and Sports and Arts. These subjects will be a continuation of what was taught in the tenth grade.¹⁸

Table 30/8: The Percentage of the Scientific Subjects in the Former and the Planned Palestinian Curriculum

Grade	Governorates of the WB		Governorates of Gaza		The plan of the Palestinian curriculum
	Science branch	Literature branch	Science branch	Literature branch	
First (Secondary)	45%	15.6%	47%	0%	37.5%
Second (Secondary)	53.9%	14.3%	48%	0%	41.2%

The Palestinian curriculum is distinguished by its due attention to the future subjects such as mathematics and technical subjects from grade 10 to 12.

Table 31/8: Number of the Weekly Classes of the Arts and Science Subjects of the Second Secondary Grade

Subjects	Governorates of the WB				Governorates of Gaza				The plan of the Palestinian curriculum
	Males		Females		Males		Females		
	Science branch	Literature branch	Science branch	Literature branch	Science branch	Literature branch	Science branch	Literature branch	
Literature subjects	14	22	15	23	16	30	18	32	20
Mathematics	6	3	6	3	7	0	7	0	4
Sciences (Physics, Chemistry and Biology)	11	3	11	3	9	0	9	0	8
Classes of all subjects	31	28	32	29	32	30	34	32	32

The school year 2000/2001 witnessed the application of the first Palestinian curriculum. This achievement aroused controversy and criticism; as many stood up for it, while many others opposed it. It is known that the Palestinian curriculum came in stages, starting from grade one to six. During the years that followed 2000, the Israeli occupation sought through the MIP (an Israeli

extremist right institute which conducted several studies and issued reports that aimed at obstructing the progress of the Palestinian education), to stop the extension of funds to the PA to finance printing of books, and to instigate various quarters against the Palestinian curriculum, notwithstanding its flexibility that was criticized by some educationalists. A major point of criticism was directed to the submission of the authors of the curriculum to the pressures exerted by the Israeli occupation through some international networks and the donors states. Dr. 'Izzu 'Afanah, a lecturer at the Islamic University in Gaza, believes that the process of preparing the curriculum was accompanied by many mistakes. It was not based on scientific bases, and it neglected the characteristics of the Palestinian child, training of teachers, providing schools with necessary equipments and defining a specific philosophy of education. Dr. Na'im Abu al-Hummus, the Minister of Education, asserted that the Palestinian curriculum is distinguished by its exposition to the outside world, and by its focus on building the personality of the student through the educational system. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education did not abandon the Palestinian national fixed principles; as it deals with Palestine as one historic unity. Dr. Yusri Zidan, the specialist in curriculum and teaching methods, says:

It is the politician who draws the boundaries, not the educationalist. Therefore, we have dealt with historical Palestine, and what is required of us is required from Israel; as the agreements are binding on the two parties. As long as no agreement has been reached, we will deal with historical Palestine. Israel has not yet determined its political map, and does not allow us to determine ours.¹⁹

Jonathan Brown, an international expert from Georgetown University, stated that the general approach of the Palestinian curricula is sound. The Israeli demand of not mentioning the historical cities is a kind of erasing the Palestinian memory!²⁰

The Congress of the United States commissioned an Israeli/Palestinian Center for Research and Information (IPCRI), (which includes a number of Israeli and Palestinian academics), to examine the Palestinian curricula and the extent of its conformity to the political reality. The institute testified that it is peaceful and scientifically oriented. Wolfum, a German researcher, added that the Palestinian curriculum is much better than others, particularly in its tolerant approach to the issue of religion, which he highly commended.²¹

Conclusion: The Palestinian people showed great steadfastness and wonderful persistence on education, in spite of their exceptionally difficult conditions under the oppressive occupation. However, the future vision of education should observe the following:

1. Provision of an integrated vocational education.
2. Building new schools to solve the problem of over crowdedness and the rented classrooms.
3. Improving the status of endowment/government schools, especially in Jerusalem, to be upgraded in harmony with scientific standards.
4. Addressing the phenomenon of drop out.
5. Supporting the sustainability of the system.
6. Confronting the Separation Wall.
7. Enhancing the role of libraries and the electronic services.
8. Reducing the two-shift system (morning and night classes in the same school).
9. Caring for the teachers by improving their scientific knowledge and living conditions.
10. Establishing a supervisory system to monitor the application of the curriculum.
11. Emphasizing the Arab and Islamic identity through the subjects of Islamic and national education.

Endnotes:

- 1 Dr. Ibrahim Hasan Abu Jabir: PhD holder from University of Goethe – Frankfurt, General Manager of the Centre of Contemporary Studies – Um al-Fahim (Israel).
- 2 Mustafa al-Dabbagh, *Biladuna Filistin* (Our Homeland Palestine) (Beirut: Dar Attaleeah, 1976), Vols.1-2, p.210; and Ahmad al-Mir’ashli (Editor), *Al-Mawsu’ah al-Filistiniyyah* (The Palestinian Encyclopedia) (Damascus: The Foundation of Palestinian Encyclopedia, 1984), Vol.2, p.11126.
- 3 The Palestinian National Authority, Ministry of Education:
<http://www.mohe.gov.ps/stats/statistic.pdf>
- 4 Ministry of Education: <http://www.mohe.gov.ps/stats/statistic.pdf>; and the Palestinian National Information Centre, 7 December 2005.
- 5 Palestinian National Information Centre:
<http://www.pnic.gov.ps/arabic/edu/indicators/2006.html>
- 6 Palestinian National Information Centre:
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- 9 *Al-Ayyam*, Palestine, 1 September 2005.
- 10 Ministry of Education: <http://www.mohe.gov.ps/downloads/textdoc/assa.doc>
- 11 <http://www.mohe.gov.ps/downloads/textdoc/assa.doc>
- 12 *Alquds*, 20 April 2005.
- 13 *Al-Ayyam*, Palestine, 17 May 2005.
- 14 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 30 May 2005.
- 15 *Al-Ahram*, 12 September 2005.
- 16 *Al-Hayat al-Jadidah*, 7 October 2005.
- 17 Ministry of Education and Higher Education, The First Palestinian Curriculum Plan 1998, p.5.
- 18 Ministry of Education and Higher Education, The First Palestinian Curriculum Plan 1998, p.37.
- 19 ‘Abd al-Halim Abu Jamus, *Al-Tariq Raqam 17* (Rout No.17), December 2004.
- 20 *Ibid.*
- 21 *Ibid.*

The Palestinian Strategic Report 2005



This Palestinian Annual Strategic Report explains, discusses and analyses the events that took place during 2005, and pursues their developments. The primary objective of this Report is to assess the Palestinian situation on a regular basis through a rigorous study of its various aspects, i.e., internal political affairs, economic development, the educational system, demographic indicators, the Arab-Islamic and international positions and the Israeli attitudes and policies.

The chapters of this academic exercise were commissioned to distinguished meticulous specialists. These chapters were submitted to further scrutiny by another high caliber specialist in the Palestinian issue. Then, the two editors edited the texts and incorporated what may have been overlooked. Hence, it is important to note that this project is essentially a product of team work.



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