



منتدى الاستراتيجيات الأردني
JORDAN STRATEGY FORUM

The International Day of Education: The Status Quo in Jordan (24th of January)

January 2023

1. Background:

The 24th of January 2023 marks the fifth year of the United Nations celebration of “The International Day of Education. The theme of this year is “Prioritizing Education as a Means of Investing in People”.

Despite the demanding nature of teachers’ job, they serve an important role in ensuring that children learn effectively. For some children, learning can be challenging although a skillful teacher can help to make learning accessible and enjoyable. Schools serve an important function in our society.

- A. Schools provide students with basic foundational knowledge. Students acquire knowledge in various fields such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, history, and many others.
- B. Schools provide students with the opportunity to meet with other fellow students. Meeting with and getting to know others broadens their horizons.
- C. Without the completion of school education, one cannot get a university education. Indeed, higher education increases one’s probability of having a good and better-paid job.

As far as EDUCATION in Jordan is concerned, the 24th of January 2023 is special:

On the 27th of December 2022, the Council of Ministers approved the Implementation Plan of the Economic Modernization Vision **2023 - 2025**. The implementation plan, which is integrated with Roadmap for modernizing the public sector, involves 183 initiatives that cover the 8 national economic drivers including “**Smart Jordan**”. Among others, this driver includes “**Public Education**”.

As far as Public Education is concerned, the implementation plan involves a few initiatives.

Improving Jordan’s ranking in international reports (Global Knowledge & Human Capital Indices).

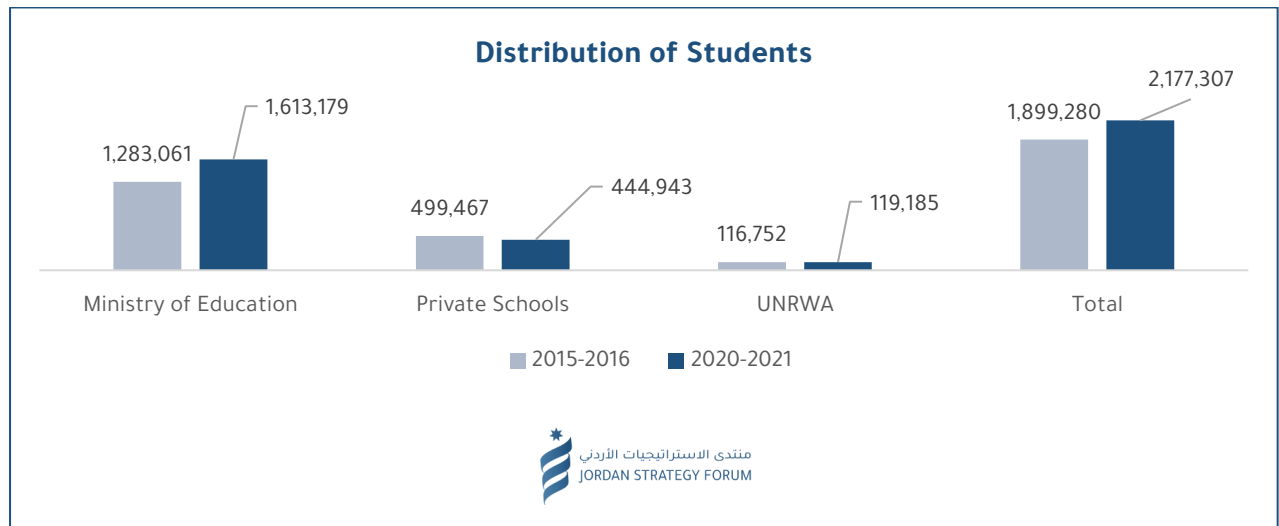
1. Expand access to children less than 6 years old to Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) while ensuring quality and education and care.
2. Improve the digital infrastructure of learning.
3. Develop curricula, standards, guides, and learning and teaching tools.
4. Improve professional development mechanisms for employees in the public education sector, and implementation mechanisms.
5. Ensure access to, equality in, and inclusion of all categories in public education.
6. Enhance investment and partnerships with the private sector.

The above-mentioned initiatives could not have been adopted at a timelier date. Indeed, based on a recently published report by the World Bank, UNICEF, FCDO, USAID, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and in partnership with UNESCO (The State of Global Learning Poverty: 2022 Update), **it is worth noting the following quotations.**

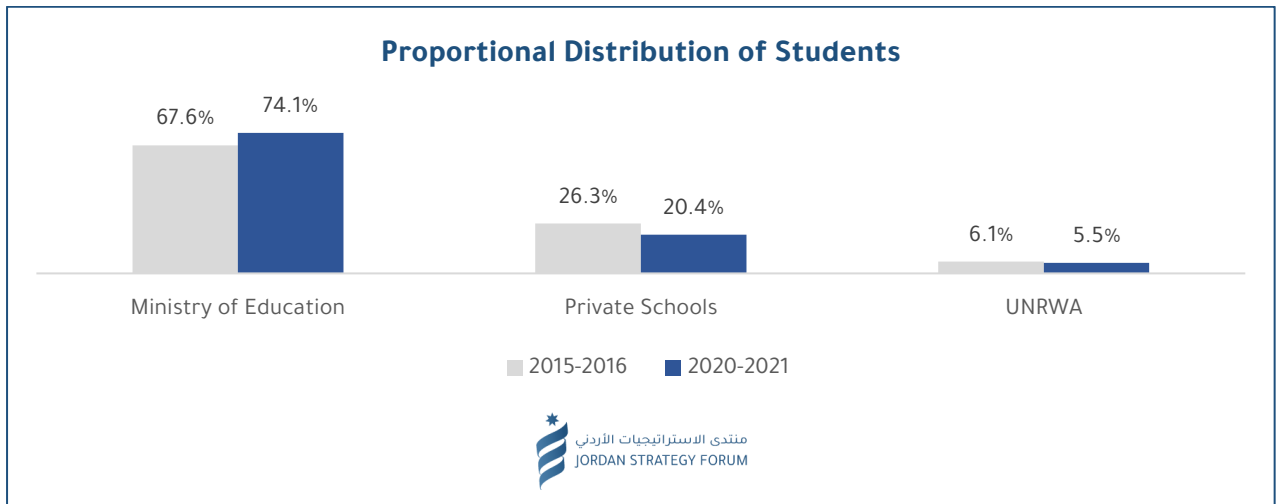
1. “Even before COVID-19, the world was facing a learning crisis, with nearly 6 out of every 10 ten-year-old in low- and middle-income countries suffering from learning poverty—meaning they were unable to read and understand a simple story”.
2. “Now COVID-19 pandemic school closures and disruptions have deepened the crisis, sharply increasing learning poverty and exacerbating the inequalities in education”.
3. “Without action, the current generation of students now risks losing \$21 trillion in lifetime earnings in present value, or the equivalent of 17 percent of today’s global GDP”.

2. School education in Jordan: some observations

In Jordan, the total number of students attending schools has increased from 1,899,208 (2015/16) to 2,177,307 individuals (2020/21).



Relative to the total number of students, it is interesting to note that proportion of those who attend private schools has fallen from 26.3% (2015/16) to 20.4% (2020/21).

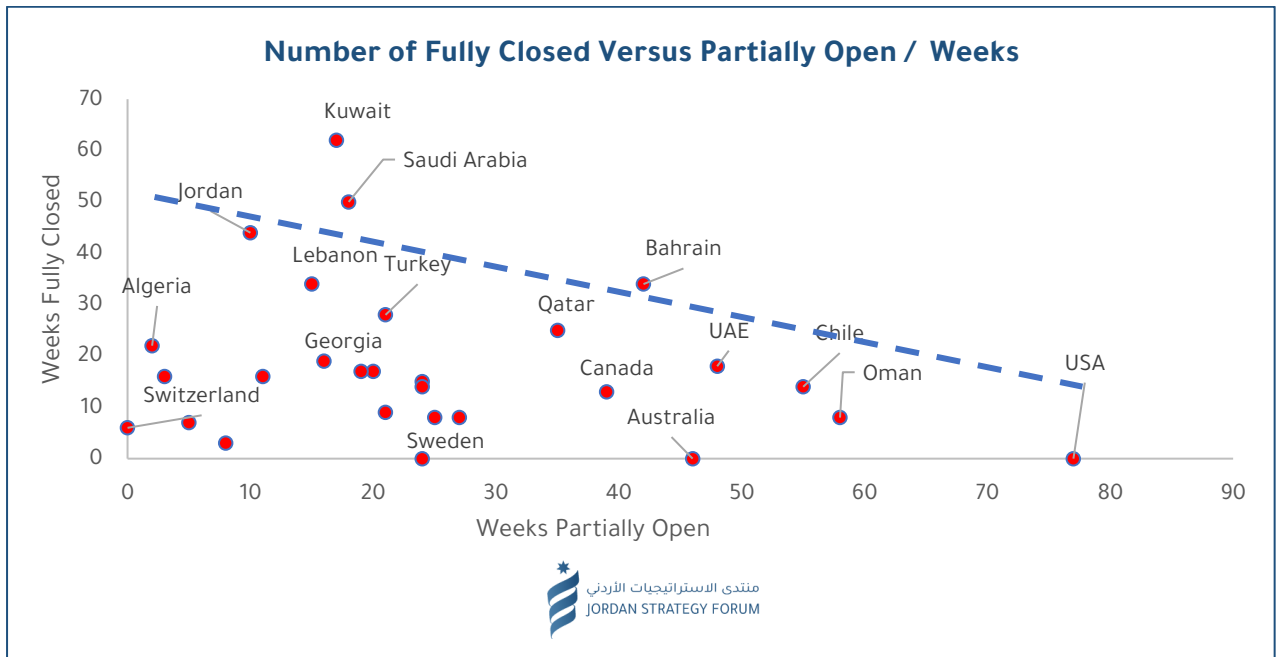


In addition to the above-mentioned quotations, and the number of school students, it is worth outlining few observations about primary and secondary education in Jordan.

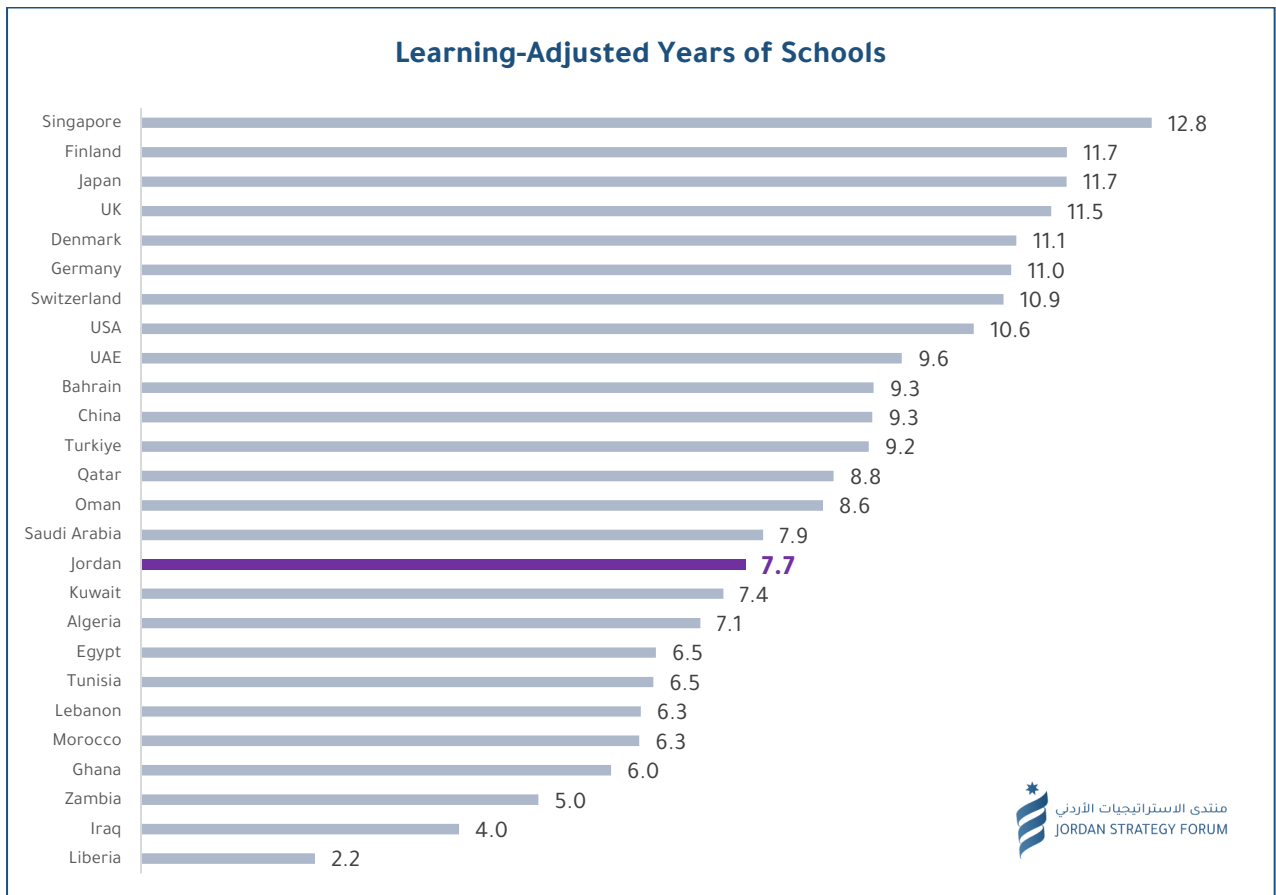
1. Covid-19 led to an unprecedented disruption of schooling. Globally, between 16 February 2020 and 31 March 2022, education systems were closed for a long time. Based on the UNESCO's database, Jordan's number of fully closed number of weeks (44) is one of the highest in the world.

Schools Across the Globe: Number of Fully Closed and Partially Open Weeks					
Country	Fully Closed	Partially Open	Country	Fully Closed	Partially Open
Kuwait	62	17	Austria	15	24
Saudi Arabia	50	18	Chile	14	55
Jordan	44	10	Germany	14	24
Bahrain	34	42	Canada	13	39
Lebanon	34	15	China	9	21
Turkey	28	21	Denmark	8	27
Qatar	25	35	Finland	8	25
Algeria	22	2	Oman	8	58
Georgia	19	16	France	7	5
UAE	18	48	Switzerland	6	0
Morocco	17	20	Japan	3	8
Tunisia	17	19	Australia	0	46
Egypt	16	3	Sweden	0	24
UK	16	11	USA	0	77

2. On average, countries that experienced higher numbers of fully closed weeks had lower numbers of partially open weeks.



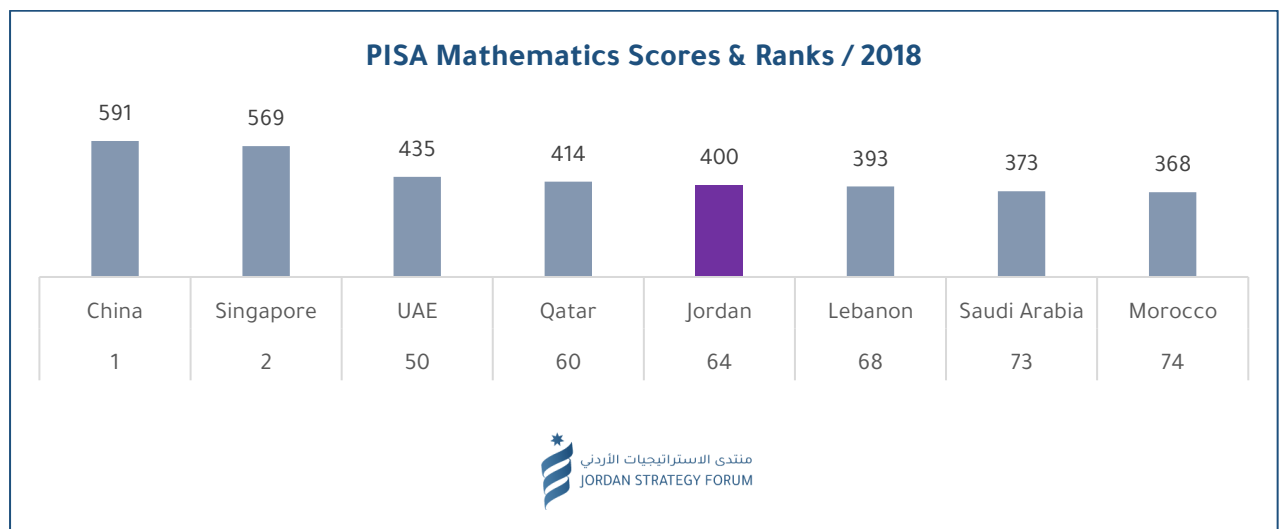
3. Based on the World Bank’s “learning-adjusted years of schools, Jordan’s score is on the lower end of countries. Indeed, Jordan’s score which is equal to 7.7 years, is way lower than those in Singapore (12.8), UK (11.5), and the UAE (9.6). **In Jordan, the gap is equal to 4.3 years.**



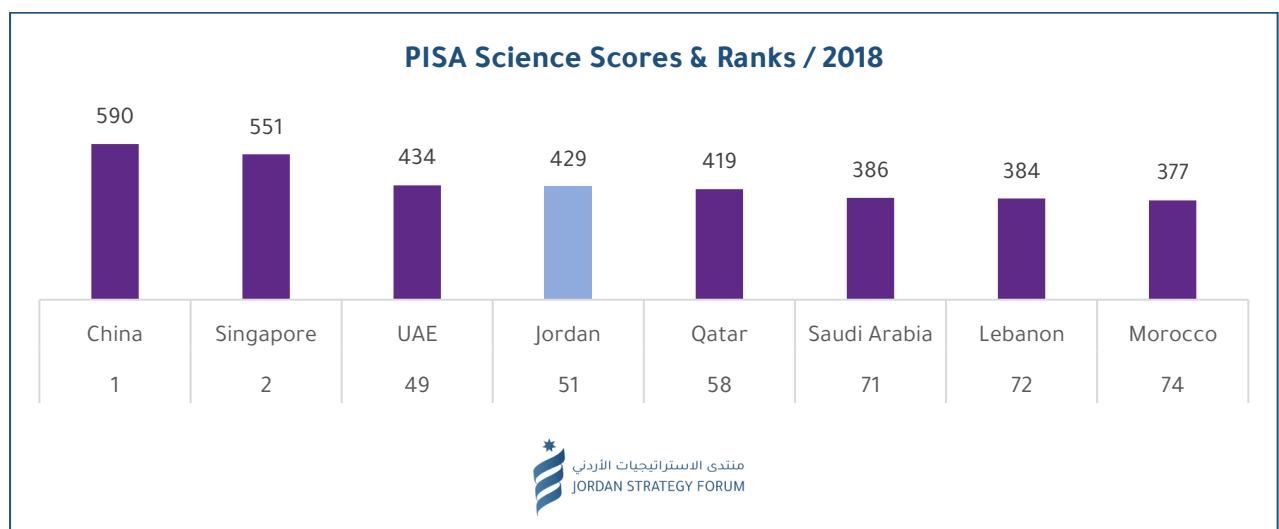
4. The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) is the OECD’s benchmarking tool that assesses the achievement and application of key knowledge and skills of 15-year-olds. Based on the latest PISA results (2018), we outline few observations about Jordan’s performance.

PISA Mathematics Scores & Ranks / 2018

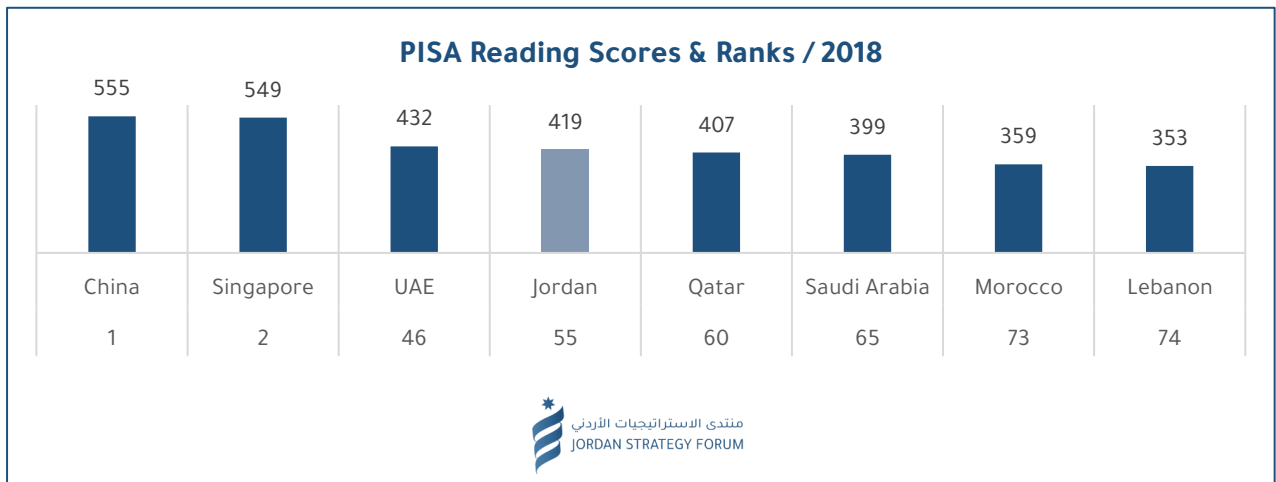
- A. Relative to the top two countries (China and Singapore), the performance of Jordan’s students in mathematics is poor. Relative to the Arab countries which participated in the PISA 2018, Jordan’s performance is third highest after the UAE, and Qatar.



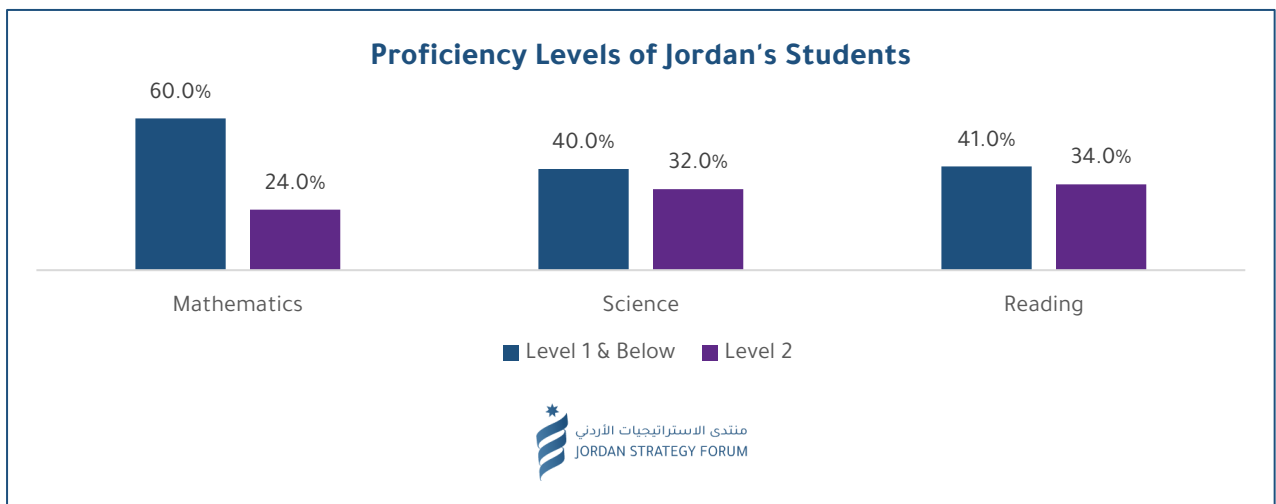
- B. On average, relative to the top two countries (China and Singapore), the performance of Jordan’s students in science is poor. The difference in score is huge. Relative to the Arab countries which participated in the PISA 2018, Jordan’s performance is second highest after the UAE.



- C. On average, relative to the top two countries (China and Singapore), the performance of Jordan’s students in reading is poor. The difference in score is huge. Relative to the Arab countries which participated in the PISA 2018, Jordan’s performance is second highest after the UAE.



- D. In all three subjects, Jordan’s students performed at the lowest “**proficiency**” levels. For example, in mathematics, 60.0% of the students performed at level 1 or below. In addition, 24.0% performance at level 2. **Indeed, virtually no student performed at high-end of the proficiency levels (5 or 6).**



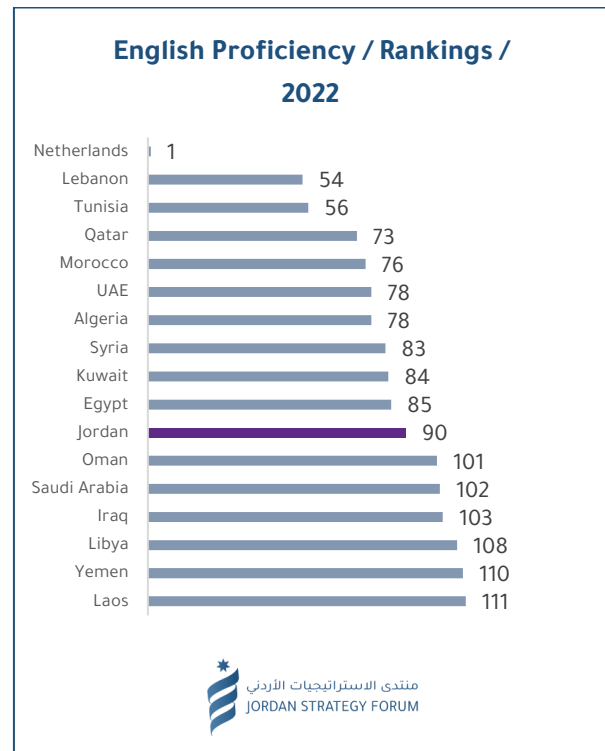
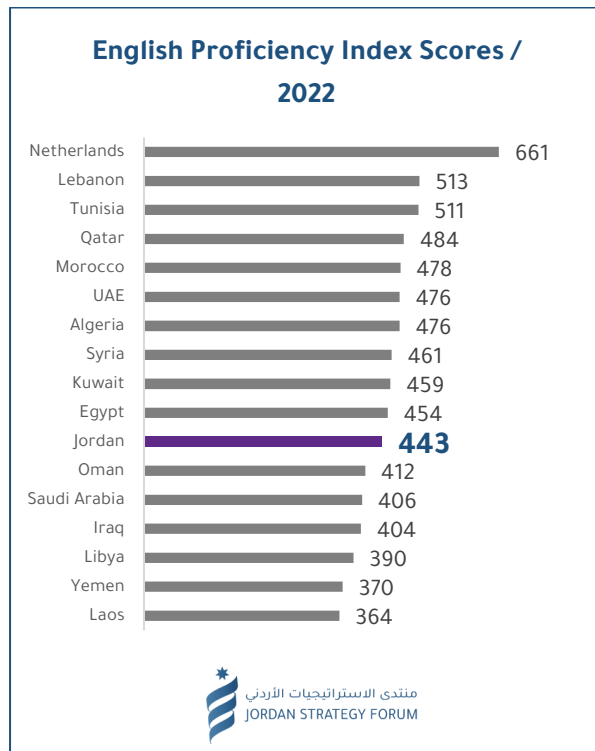
The OECD member countries and Associates decided to postpone the PISA 2021 assessment to 2022. We all hope that this round will reflect better results for Jordan’s students.

“EF Education First” is a Swedish institution, founded in 1965, that focuses on language, cultural exchange, and educational travel programs. The mission of EF is to “open the world through education”. Since 2011, EF has been publishing what is called the “EF English Proficiency Index”. The index is based on testing the English proficiency of **adults** in 111

English Proficiency Index (EF Education First)

countries where English is considered a foreign language. **Naturally, adults in Jordan are mostly taught in Jordanian schools.**

Based on the 2022 report, there is a big difference between the top score of Netherlands (661) out of (800) and the bottom score of Laos (364). Jordan's score (443) is closer to the poor performing countries. Jordan's score is even lower than in many Arab countries. In actual fact, Jordan is ranked among the **"very low proficiency"** countries.

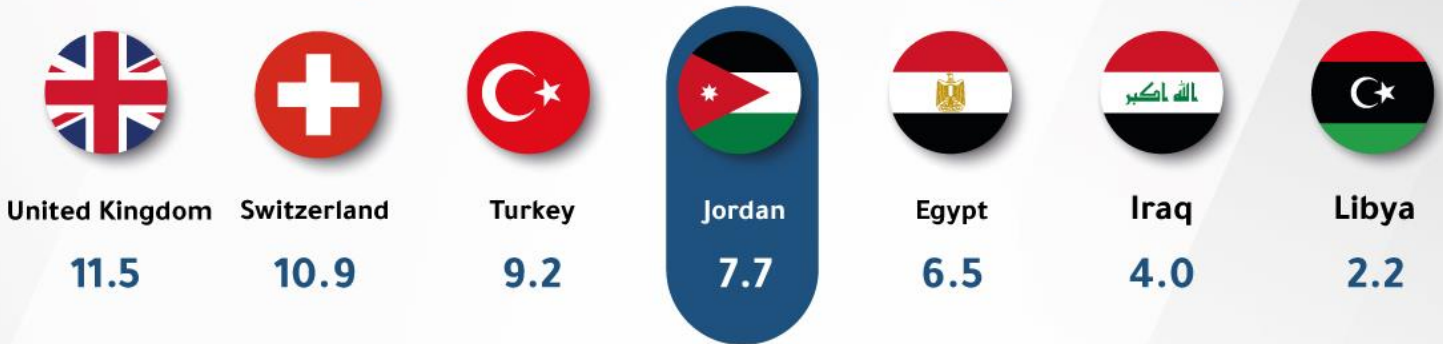


3. TO SUM UP

The increase in the student population is both an opportunity and a threat to Jordan's economic future. A well-educated population has the potential to lead to economic prosperity and sustainability, whilst a poorly educated youth can create both an economic and social threat. Therefore, it is necessary to invest in a quality education system to deal with future challenges. We call on all to stand and work together on implementing the education initiatives mentioned in the Economic Modernization Vision. We hope that the stated initiatives will reflect positively on the level of school education in Jordan.

School Education in Jordan: Some Observations

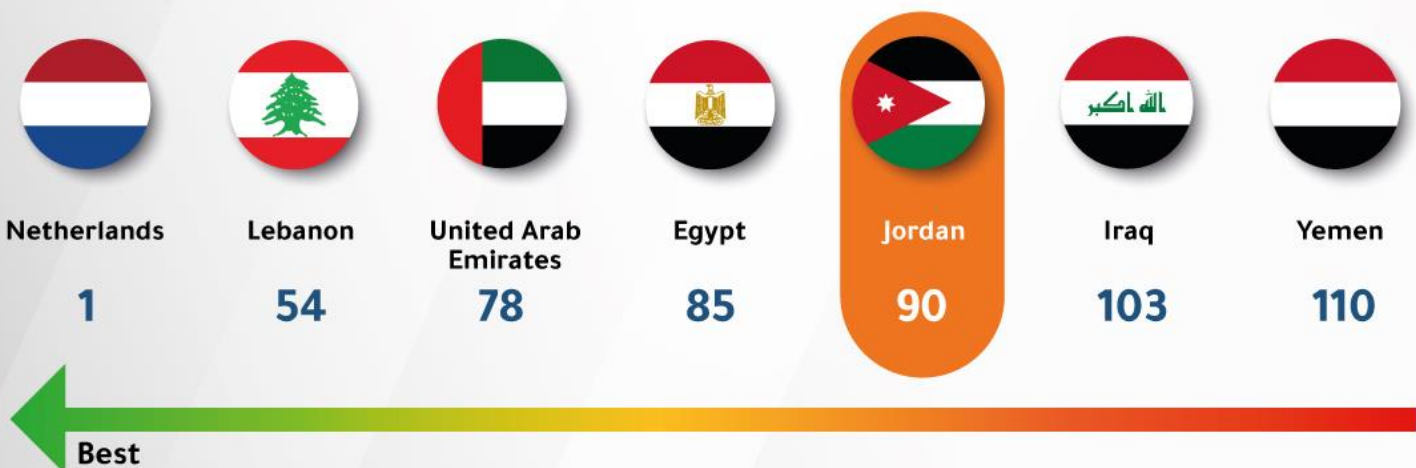
Actual years of education compared to 12 years of study



Jordan's ranking in (PISA/2018) out of 78 countries



Jordan's ranking compared to some selected countries in the English language proficiency index issued by (EF Education First) out of 111 countries





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