



# The Status of the Rights of Palestinian Children 2013



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August, 2013





State of Palestine  
The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics

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This document is a periodic report on the status and description of the rights of children in Palestine. It also aims to pinpoint most important lacuna in the data available in order to collect necessary information in the near future to draw a clearer and comprehensive picture of the reality. PCBS is committed to providing disaggregated data and ensuring that information on the most vulnerable and marginalized groups of children is made available.

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PCBS is also grateful to the members of the National Technical Committee who provided data for the purpose of this report and conducted a revision of its contents.



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## Preamble

Children compose nearly half of the Palestinian population. Investment in this social group is important in order to guarantee children's rights and provide them with the opportunity to live in dignity and safety. Accurate statistics on this sector allow policy makers to develop plans that translate figures into programs that address the needs of Palestinian children in various areas of their lives. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), in cooperation and partnership with relevant ministries and institutions working with children, and with financial support and technical assistance from Save the Children, issues this national report on The status of the rights of Palestinian children.

The publication of this report is consistent with PCBS's policy of providing data within an integrated national statistical system that serves all sectors, including indicators related to the rights of Palestinian children. PCBS also aims to enable progress for indicators to be monitored by publishing data annually in order to maintain a current database for comprehensive national monitoring which can inform the development of policies and plans that address the wellbeing of Palestinian children.

The report presents an analysis and diagnosis of the status of the rights of Palestinian children, highlighting disadvantaged groups and the lack of access to basic services, namely education, health, security, culture and entertainment, as well as issues related to children under military occupation and early childhood development. Data for this report was derived from two main sources: household surveys carried out by PCBS and data from relevant ministries and institutions, including the Ministries of Health, Education, Social Affairs, Interior, Culture and the Higher Council for Youth and Sports.

We at PCBS hope that this report will be a starting point for effective mobilization and for the consolidation of efforts for the promotion of the rights of Palestinian children and for addressing the needs particularly of vulnerable and marginalized children. Investment is needed in the areas identified in this report in order to close the gaps in services for children and the lack of access by marginalized groups in the future. We hope that the annual publication of this report will provide a consistent record over time of the status of children which can inform reports by the State of Palestine to the United Nations on the status of children in Palestine.

**Ola Awad**

**PCBS President**





## Palestine in Figures (2010-2013)

Item	Data	Documented
Estimated population: <sup>[1]</sup>	4,420,549	Mid-2013
West Bank	2,719,112	Mid-2013
Gaza Strip	1,701,437	Mid-2013
Population under 18 years of age	47.5%	Mid-2013
Average size of household ( individuals):	5.3	2012
West Bank	5.1	2012
Gaza Strip	6.0	2012
Percentage of households headed by a female:	9.3%	2011
West Bank	10.0%	2011
Gaza Strip	7.9%	2011
Illiteracy rate among males aged 15 years and over <sup>[2]</sup>	1.8%	2012
Illiteracy rate among females aged 15 years and over	6.4%	2012
Labor force participation rate:	43.0%	2011
Males	68.7%	2011
Females	16.6%	2011
Labor force participation rate:	43.6%	2012
Participation rate of males in labor force	69.2%	2012
Participation rate of females in the labor force	17.4%	2012
Unemployment rate:	20.9%	2011
Males	19.2%	2011
Females	28.4%	2011
Unemployment rate:	23.0%	2012
Males	20.5%	2012
Females	32.9%	2012
Total fertility rate: <sup>[3]</sup>	4.4	2010
West Bank	4.0	2010
Gaza Strip	5.2	2010
Average number of births deliveries by Palestinian women who have been married	4.3	2010
Average number of live deliveries	4.1	2010
Median age at first marriage for women aged 20-54- years	19.0	2010
Percentage of women married to a close relative or same kin	50%	2010

1- Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2012. Population Estimates. Ramallah, Palestine.

2- Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2013. Labor force survey 2012. Ramallah, Palestine.

3- Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2012. Palestinian Household Survey, 2010. Ramallah-Palestine.



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## Chapter One

# Introduction

### 1.1 Children's rights, needs and wellbeing

The Palestinian government takes its commitment to children's rights seriously. Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1991. In 1995, on the occasion of Palestinian Children's Day, the convention was legally adopted and was referred to in the special session on children of the General Assembly of the United Nations in May 2002. In 2004, the Palestinian Child Law No. 7 was adopted and the Palestinian Ministry of Planning drafted the National Plan of Action for Palestinian Children. In 2009, the Child Rights Protection Unit was transferred from the Ministry of Planning to the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA). The MOSA was tasked with implementing amendments to the Palestinian Child Law and ensuring compliance with the United Nations convention.

In 2010, the Palestinian National Authority issued its first report on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the occupied Palestinian territories by Palestinian institutions. The report reviewed the Palestinian legislative and legal framework, action plans and services from a human rights perspective and discussed significant Palestinian achievements in terms of addressing the requirements of the convention. The report also analyzed key obstacles and gaps that prevent Palestinian children from accessing their rights and presented recommendations to be addressed. A number of initiatives were taken in response to these recommendations. These included the drafting of legal opinions, the adoption of amendments to the Palestinian Child Law by President Mahmoud Abbas and new developments in terms of policy addressing education, health, disability, protection and participation for children, as well as the development of national indicators corresponding to the rights of the child. A program of the Independent Commission for Human Rights which monitored children's rights developed a special mechanism by which children could register their complaints.

In 2012, the General Assembly of the United Nations recognized and

promoted Palestine to “non-member observer state” status. Subsequently, the formal recognition of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international conventions and their implications for the State of Palestine have been placed high on the agenda of the Palestinian Authority.

Despite international recognition of the State of Palestine and the existence of a national framework of laws, regulations, policies, plans, strategies and programs, Palestine continues to have limited sovereignty and control over its territory, borders and natural resources due to Israel’s military occupation. Hostile actions on the part of Israel include the closure on towns and villages to restrict the movement of goods and people; further restrictions of movement within Palestinian territory through Israel’s system of military checkpoints and electronic gates and the apartheid wall. These have had a detrimental effect on political, economic and social conditions and have adversely affected the rights of Palestinian children in terms of health, education, social protection, recreation, safety and security. Perhaps the most affected are children in remote, marginalized areas, poor children, children with disabilities, children without family care, children in conflict with the law, female children and younger children.

This increases the challenge faced by the Palestinian government to ensure equality and justice in terms of access to services and prioritization of vulnerable children in the implementation of the amended Palestinian Child Law and of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the Palestinian context. Greater efforts are needed in terms of monitoring the implementation and enforcement of the law, documenting violations against Palestinian children, collecting data and reporting on the status of Palestinian children, revising current laws and regulations to ensure consistency with the amended Palestinian Child Law and the CRC and defining responsibilities and accountability. The current adverse conditions and scarcity of resources do not exempt any governmental or non-governmental organization from their responsibility to ensure the wellbeing, rights and protection of Palestinian children.

### **Purpose of this Report**

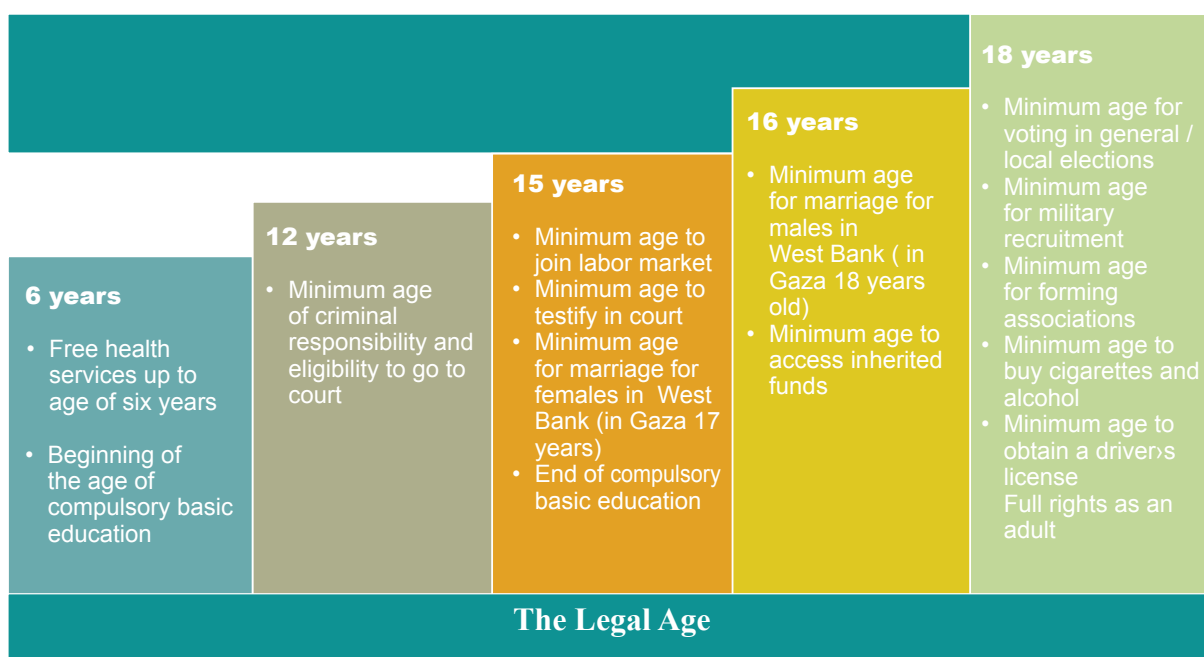
This report is intended to describe the current situation of Palestinian children and their access to services, but it also highlights the situation of vulnerable and marginalized groups of children and their failure to access the available services due to geographical location, gender, disability or chronic illness (impacted by their social status and health), their inability to repay direct and indirect costs (impacted by their social and economic status) and their lack of awareness of networks and services which could assist them (access to information). Identification of gaps in the existing data will facilitate these being addressed more effectively and aid reporting to the United Nations on the status of children in Palestine. A better knowledge of the facts and realities on the ground will also provide a foundation from which decision-makers can develop national policies and plans and set national priorities. Existing data has typically been gathered when children have accessed services. Nation-wide surveys are therefore needed in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of children’s issues. The fact that no program

exists which identifies and tracks marginalized and vulnerable children means results in some distortion of the overall picture in terms of the situation of children. This report describes trends in the direction of national indicators on the rights of children and not on the data itself. The data is made available through health reports, an annual report providing statistics on Palestinian children, annual statistics for monitoring and evaluation conducted by the Ministry of Education and the annual reports of the Ministry of Social Affairs.

This report reflects ongoing efforts to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Palestine and to embody and institutionalize national indicators based on the rights of the child in various sectors within the framework of the role of PCBS in developing a system to monitor national indicators.

## 1.2 Definition of the Child

According to the Palestinian Child Law No. 7 of 2004 and its amendments, the child is defined as any human being under the age of eighteen years, including the unborn. Other laws, however, are not necessarily consistent with this definition in terms of the minimum age of legal responsibility and accountability. The following are examples:



A child under the age of eighteen is considered a juvenile. International laws advocate raising the minimum age for criminal responsibility and for provision of free services, child protection and participation without specifying a minimum legal age of responsibility; governments have the freedom to set and define this age. Incongruously, the Palestinian child has the right to marry at the age of 15-16 years, but is not entitled to vote or obtain a driver's license until the age of 18. Children over the age of 12 years may be introduced to court hearings (criminal accountability),

but cannot testify or bear witness before the court under the age of 15 years. Also, the age of legal responsibility and accountability varies from one law to the next, as in the case of the amended Palestinian Child Law and laws dealing with labor, public health, penalties, juveniles and education. Laws in force also vary between the West Bank and Gaza Strip. For example, the minimum age for marriage in the Gaza Strip is 18 years for males and 17 years for females (according to the Hijri calendar). The age also varies according to Sharia or church laws. There is clearly a need for the legal age of responsibility to be standardized across Palestinian legislation.

### **1.3 Monitoring the Children Rights**

Improved access to reliable data would enhance the ability of government and other players to monitor and protect children's rights. Henceforth, the government and other players shall be held legally and ethically accountable to ensure that Palestinian children's rights are addressed with transparency and accountability. Such a mechanism involves monitoring indicators measuring children's wellbeing, subsequently, such indicators may constitute a reference to all other children related indicators rather than the other way around. Children's rights are monitored primarily through the following mechanisms:

#### **Monitoring Indicators in the National Surveillance System**

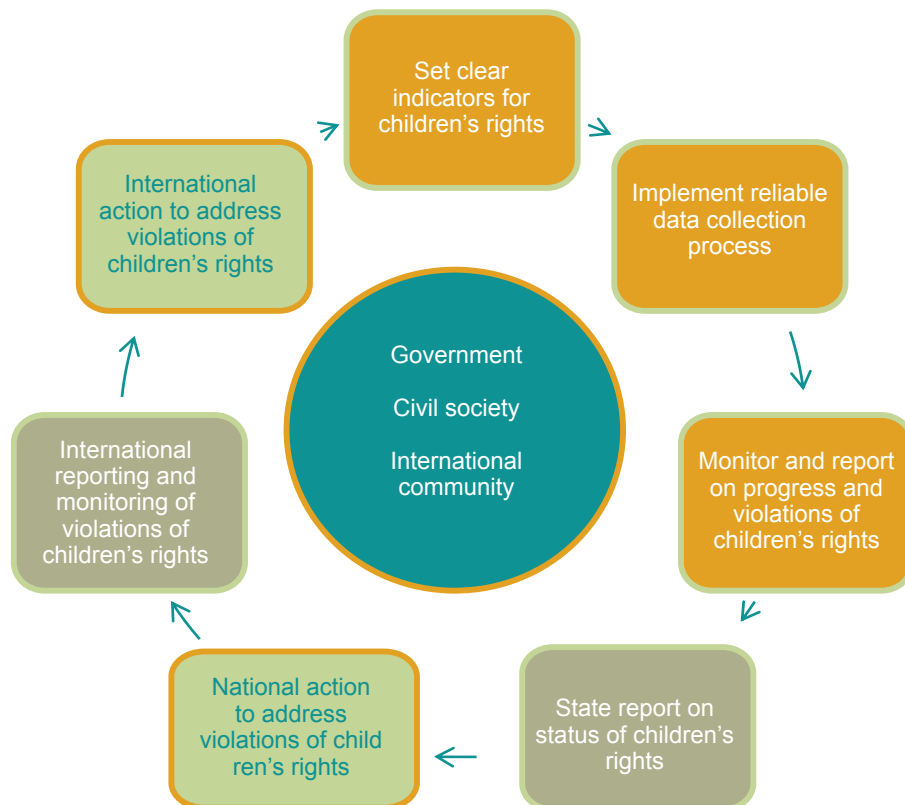
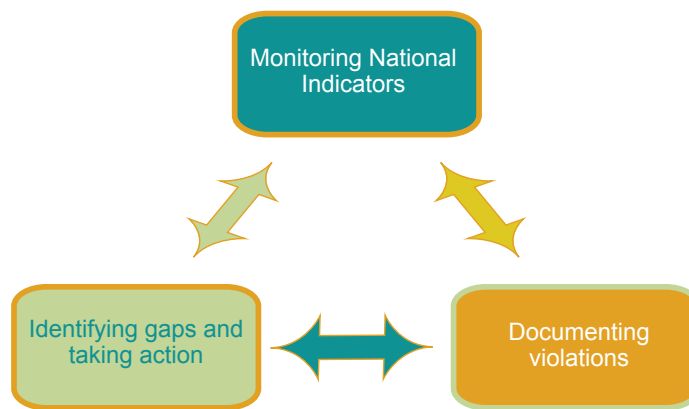
On the recommendation of its advisory council, PCBS established a statistical monitoring system in 2011 which maintains a comprehensive database. The Council of Ministers established, by decree, a national team to manage the system which is chaired by PCBS and includes representatives from several ministries, including the Ministries of Planning and Administrative Development, Health, Finance, Education, Women's Affairs and Social Affairs. The team is tasked with establishing a surveillance system and developing indicators, creating an inventory of data sources for indicators in the monitoring system, collecting required data from the records of public and private institutions, developing tools and methodologies for collecting data for the monitoring system, reviewing and overseeing activities implemented within the statistical monitoring system, reviewing and evaluating outputs and outcomes and reporting on and controlling the flow of work. The team is also required to form taskforce committees on various sectors or topics covered by the system, including governance, security, justice, labor, economy and living standards, international cooperation, education, culture, health, population, children, women and young people, rights violations by Israel and the apartheid wall.

#### **Monitoring of Violations of Children's Rights by the Independent Commission for Human Rights (ICHR)**

The Independent Commission for Human Rights investigates complaints filed by members of the public and prepares periodic reports on human rights violations. In 2012, a special unit was established for complaints and the monitoring of violations of children's rights run by field researchers in 5 geographical areas: the northern, central and southern West Bank and the northern and southern Gaza Strip. In addition, the ICRC monitors the courts and reviews national laws and policies for their consistency with children's rights.

## Documentation of Abuses by National and International Civil Rights Organizations

Numerous local NGOs and international organizations, including Save the Children, UNICEF and OCHA document the violation of children’s rights by the Israeli government and Israeli settlers. However, such organizations generally lack the political will to oppose these violations on the ground in any meaningful way and the United Nations has failed to hold Israel accountable as an occupying authority for these violations. Ongoing reporting and strategic action at both local and international levels are needed in order to halt the violation of children’s rights, regardless of who the perpetrator is.



## **1.4 Sources of Information and Statistics on Children's Rights and Information-Related Problems<sup>[4]</sup>**

The General Statistics Law No. 4 of 2000 states that the PCBS is the sole national institution charged with producing comprehensive and consistent statistical analysis of demographics, social, economic and environmental services and conditions in Palestinian society in order to provide Palestinian institutions with the data needed to effectively diagnose problems and evaluate progress. It is tasked with conducting population, housing and agricultural censuses every 10 years and a census of establishments every 5 years.

Ministries within the Palestinian government collect data and monitor implementation and progress within their programs and track the indicators for their specific sectors. Data is collected at regional and national levels and evaluated. International civil society organizations, United Nations organizations, higher education institutions, research centers and human rights organizations also contribute data generated through their studies. Quarterly and annual reports which monitor progress are made to the Council of Ministers and the Palestinian Legislative Council, for which the Ministry of Finance provides detailed information on the budgets allocated to each sector.

Civil society organizations, UN organizations, Higher Education establishments and human rights think-tanks and organizations also contribute with information and data in their research and studies and by surveying children to nourish the national information system. Such information is then used to establish, analyze and monitor data.

## **1.5 Methodology**

For the preparation of this report, the following steps have been applied:

1. A committee was formed representing PCBS, the Ministries of Social Affairs, Education, Health, Labor, the Higher Council for Youth and Sports and Ministry of Interior. A number of meetings were held to establish the framework of the report and the means of dissemination.
2. A list of the indicators on children's rights which have been developed nationally was drawn up. Available data was collected using 2009 as a base year except in cases where 2010 data were more reliable.
3. Data was tabulated and analyzed. Gaps were identified.
4. Agreement on representing the data to reflect the status quo through graphs with several variables to enable comparisons over different years and across regions and segments to the best extent possible.
5. A final meeting was held with the committee and representatives from the Ministry of Planning and Administrative Development to use available data in strategic national planning.

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4 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2013. General Statistics Law No. 4 of 2000.

Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2012. Indicators of the Rights of the Palestinian child, 2012. Ramallah – Palestine.

## 1.6 The Gaps and Obstacles in Preparing the Report

- Data derived from the administrative records of the relevant ministries and institutions is limited to individuals who received services from those ministries and institutions. Additional data would have to be collected from sources such as UNRWA, the civil society and the private sector. As a result, gaps exist in the data and documentation, particularly with regard to the private sector and civil society, and there is insufficient accurate and detailed data to be able to make comparisons and identify those groups which do not have access to services.
- This is due to the fact that reliable national data systems were only put in place in 2009.
- In some cases the required data is stored in different departments and sections within a single institution there is limited sharing of data.
- Another factor is that the data collection methodology, definitions and periods vary between different institutions and different departments.
- It also proved difficult to access administrative records in some sectors in the Gaza Strip due to the current political split; available data are based solely on national surveys and the personal efforts of staff in some ministries.





## Chapter Two

# Status of the Political, Economic and Social Situation in 2013

The Israeli occupation is detrimental to all sectors and at all levels within Palestinian society as it hinders progress and economic independence due to the lack of Palestinian control over borders and natural resources, lack of self-sufficiency and the resulting dependence on Israeli markets. In addition, Israel's control over revenue transfers to the Palestinian government which it uses as a means of sanctioning the Palestinian government at will, its separation of Palestinian areas from each other and its policy of closure of towns and cities all negatively impact social and economic development. Taxes and foreign aid are the primary sources of revenue for the Palestinian government. The global economic crisis has also had a negative impact on the ground as Palestine relies heavily on external support. The Palestinian government had a deficit of 32%, equivalent to US \$632 million, in the first half of 2012 due to high spending and low returns; external support constituted 40% of the government budget during this period, which did not cover expenditures. The accumulation of government debt to private sector banks is estimated at US \$1.3 billion.<sup>[5]</sup>

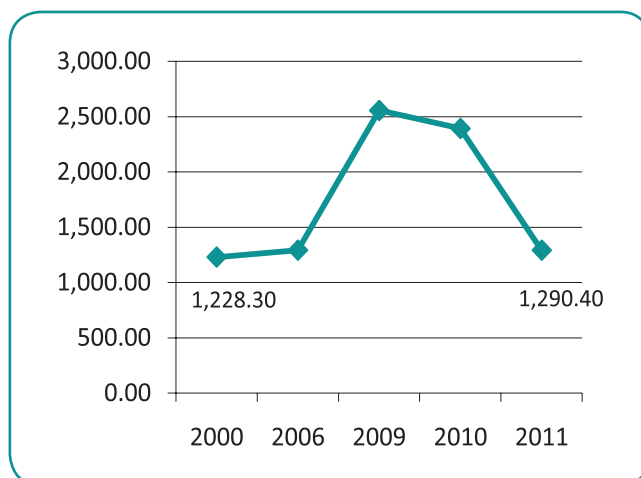
Foreign aid decreased by 4.8% in 2011<sup>[6]</sup> which rendered the government unable to pay salaries. Additional factors affecting economic and social conditions are the impact of inflation and rising prices, the depreciation of the US dollar and the Israeli shekel, devaluation of salaries and external support and low purchasing power. Support peaked at about US \$1780 million in 2008, according to the International Monetary Fund.

5 Palestinian Economic Bulletin - Portland, No. 76, January 2013.

6 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2013. The performance of the Palestinian economy, 2012. Ramallah – Palestine.

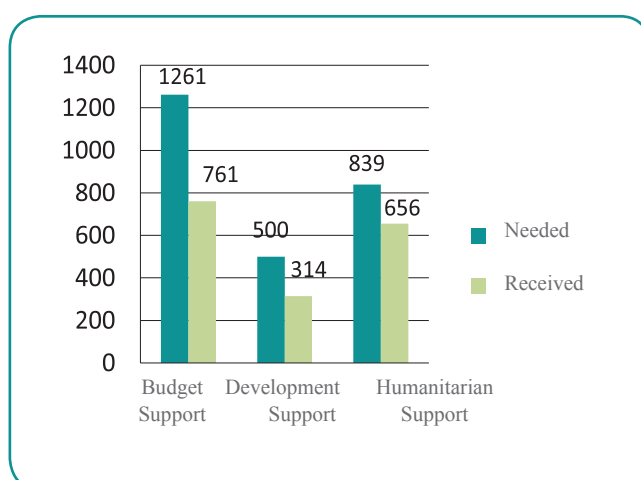
The Israeli occupation, military checkpoints, the apartheid wall, the partitioning of the Palestine and the presence of remote rural population clusters far from services and areas not under the control of the Palestinian government have all led to a scarcity of opportunities in education, health, cultural activities, social protection and security services in these areas. Severe discrepancies have arisen between different regions and communities, increasing the risk of marginalization and opening up a vicious circle of poverty, unemployment, sickness, disability, crime and inadequate security. Deterioration in the humanitarian situation has been apparent despite positive indicators in health, education, social conditions, legal and policy frameworks, planning and services. It is a fragile and often bizarre set of circumstances co-existing within a very small geographical area and distinct from the situations found in other developing countries.

**Figure 1 :Value of Foreign Aid 2000-2011(Million Dollars)**



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2013. Palestinian Balance of Payments, 2000-2011. Ramallah- Palestine (non published data)

**Figure 2: Financial Gap in External Aid 2012 (Million Dollars)**



Source: Ministry of Finance, 2013.

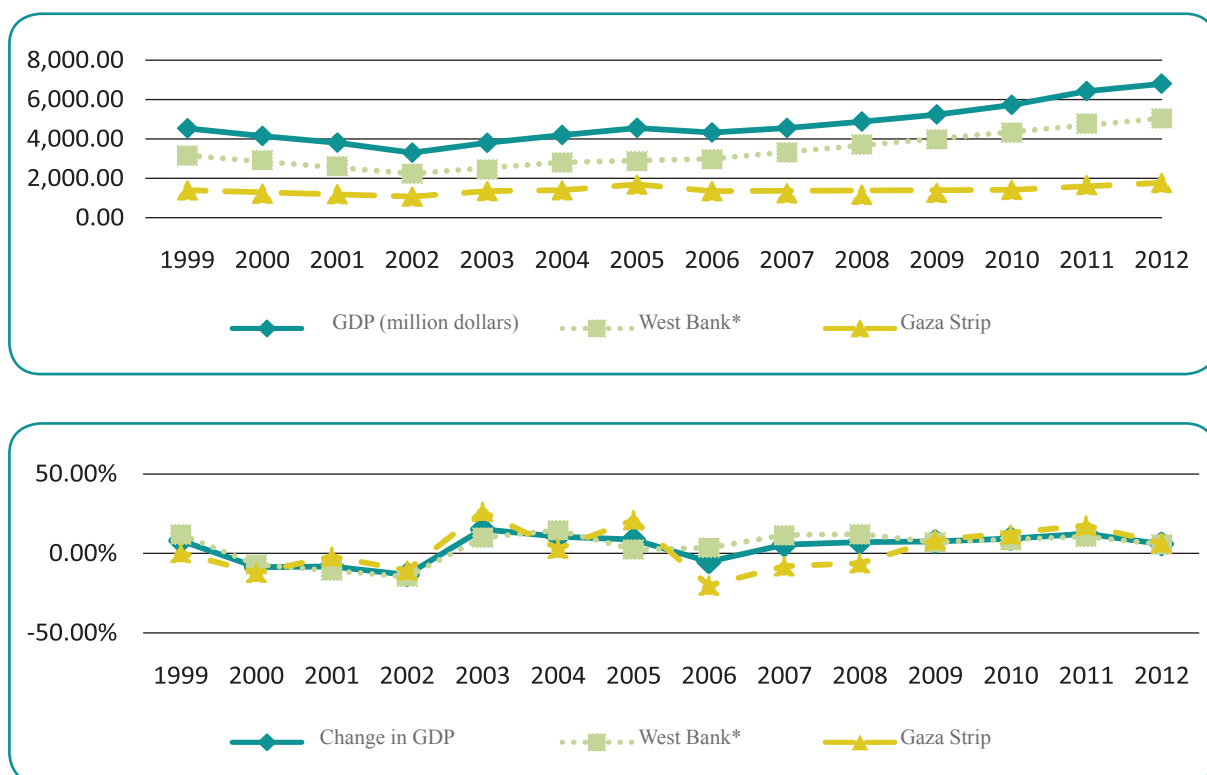
\* Data include official foreign transfers to the Palestinian National Authority and public institutions

## 2.1 The Economic Situation

In 2012, GDP in Palestine increased by 5.9%. The Palestinian economy has witnessed significant volatility over recent years, especially in the period since the Second Intifada, and a decline in the economy between 2000-2002. There was some recovery in 2003-2005 before falling again in 2006 due to the volatile political situation during that period, when around 160,000 government employees were not paid their salaries. The Palestinian economy began to flourish again in 2007 and growth peaked in 2011 at 12.2%; this was attributed to the high growth rate in the Gaza Strip of 17.6% compared to 10.4% in the West Bank. In 2012, growth in GDP per capita in Gaza reached 6.6%, exceeding that in the West Bank (5.6%) due to aid and the

easing of trade restrictions, in addition to a fall in spending in 2012.<sup>[7]</sup> However, poverty and unemployment rates in the Gaza Strip are still higher than in the West Bank.

**Figure 3: GDP Growth Rate 1999-2012 (At Constant Prices)**



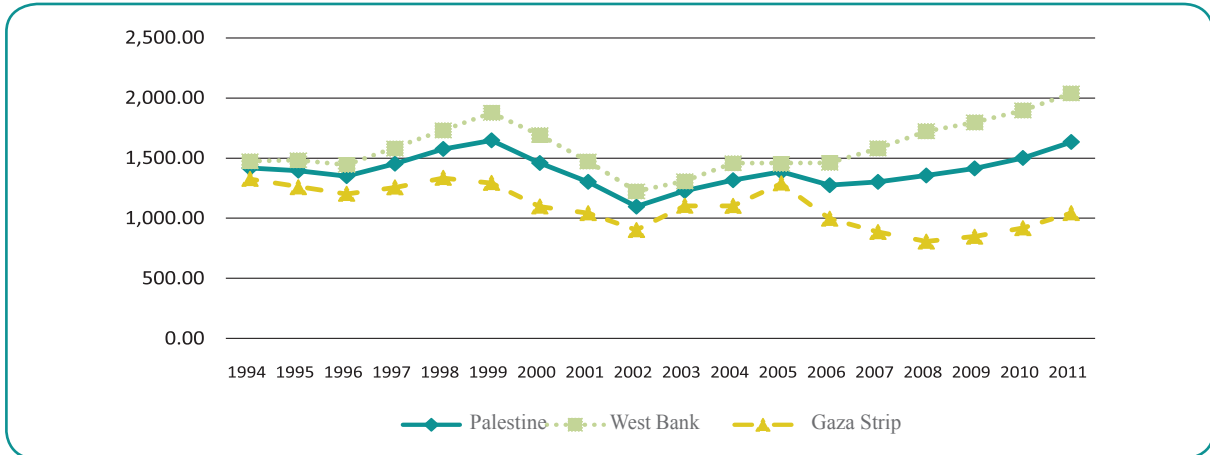
Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2013. National Accounts Statistics, 1999-2012. Ramallah- Palestine  
 \* Does not includes those parts of Jerusalem which were annexed by Israel in 1967.

Despite the surge in growth rates in the Gaza Strip during the last two years, GDP per capita remained lower than in the West Bank. The Gaza Strip contributed 25.8% of GDP in 2011 compared to 26.0% in 2012, in 2004 the Gaza Strip contributed 33.1% of GDP. Indicating that the rate of growth in that period was higher in the West Bank than in the Gaza Strip. This increased the GDP per capita in 2011 by 8.9% compared with 2010 (\$ 1,635.2 in 2010), and 2.7% increasing to 2012 and compared to 2011.<sup>[8]</sup>

7 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. The performance of the Palestinian economy, 2012. 2013. Ramallah – Palestine.

8 The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2012. The performance of the Palestinian economy, 2012. Ramallah–Palestine.

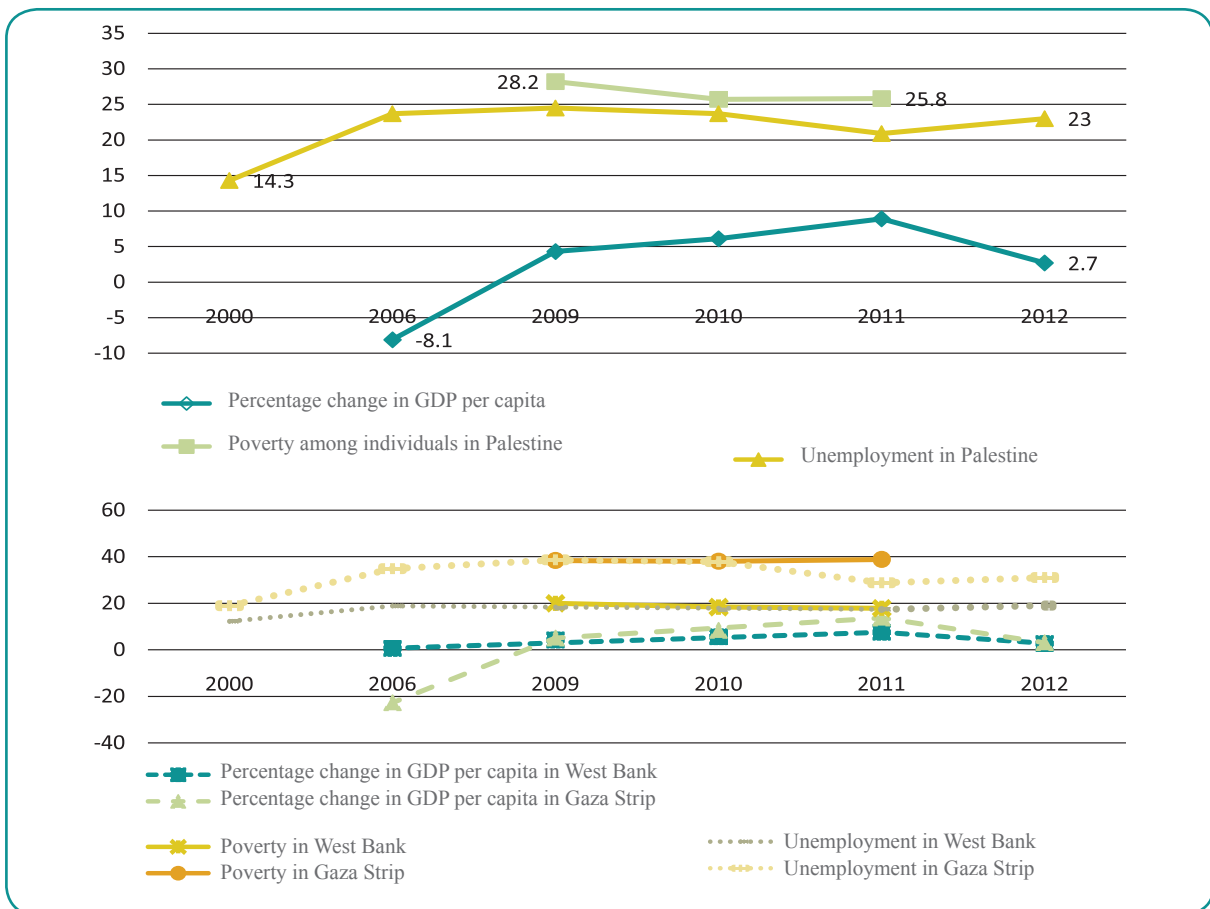
**Figure 4: GDP per Capita by Region 1994-2011 (At Constant Prices)**



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2013. National Accounts Statistics, 1994-2011. Ramallah- Palestine

These factors affect standards of living. Unemployment and poverty rates were low in 2011 when growth was at its peak.

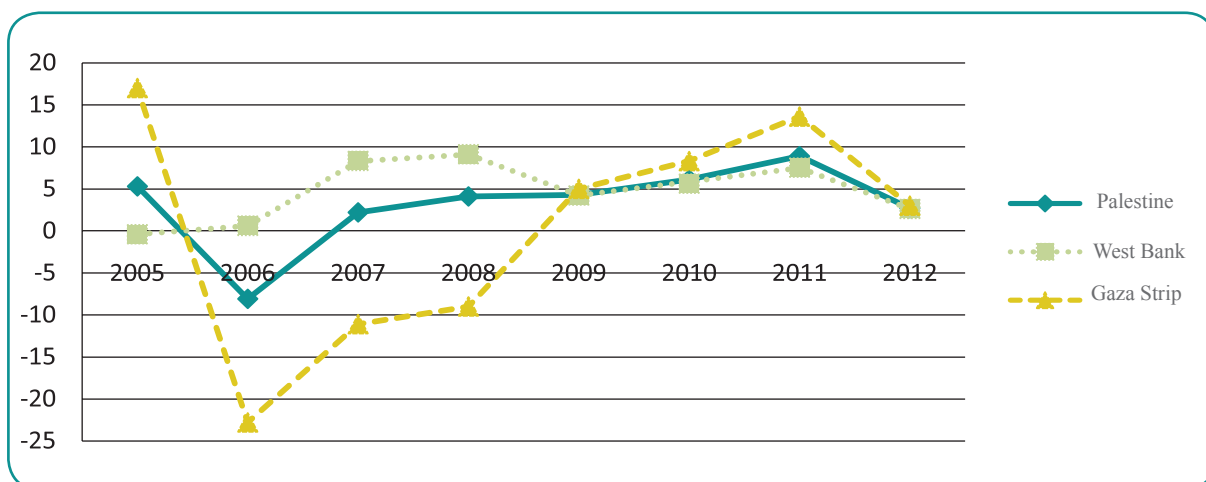
**Figure 5: Effect of Rate of Growth in GDP per Capita on Poverty and Unemployment Rates in 2000-2012**



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2013. National Accounts Statistics, 1994-2011. Ramallah- Palestine

There is a clear relationship between growth in economic indicators and the severity of Israeli restrictions and measures. A report submitted by the International Monetary Fund to the Liaison Committee Interim Force in September 2012 examined the growth in GDP per capita in 1994, in the wake of the Oslo Accords, as a base year. A percentage rise was apparent in the index up to 2000 (when the Al Aqsa Intifada erupted), and the index then declined until 2002 when it fell below the base year level. This period was characterized by tighter Israeli measures against the Palestinian people. The period of 2003-2005 was marked by the easing of these measures, leading to a rise in the index to reach the base year level in 2006. In 2006, in the wake of the victory of Hamas in the legislative elections, their military coup and the internal political division that resulted, Israeli imposed a siege on the Gaza Strip and the gap in the index between the West Bank and Gaza Strip grew until 2009. Despite an improvement in the index after 2009 until the present, the Gaza Strip is still below the level of the base year.

**Figure 6: Percentage Change in GDP per Capita At Constant Prices by Region, 2005 - 2012**



Source: The performance of the Palestinian economy, 2012. Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics May 2013, p. 17 and data on poverty, employment and national accounts, 2013.

The deterioration in the economic and political situation has resulted in growing poverty and unemployment rates, especially in households with children and those living in remote areas and area C regions. For more information, please see the section on poverty and the humanitarian situation.

Growth in the GDP and per capita income is not reflected clearly in poverty and unemployment rates. A survey of the labor force in 2012 showed that the unemployment rate among refugees was 22.6% in the West Bank compared to 32.1% in the Gaza Strip. Nearly one fourth of unemployed people in the West Bank are women and nearly half are in the Gaza Strip.

The volatility in the economic situation has had a negative social impact and resulted in increasing dependence on foreign aid. Despite of humanitarian support provided to Gaza strip by Ministry of Social Affairs that lead to larger rise in GDP per capita in the Gaza Strip, a huge gap between West Bank and Gaza still exists among various indicators of unemployment, poverty, etc.) .

## 2.2 The Humanitarian Situation in 2012

The volatile political situation has resulted in a degree of disparity between different regions in Palestine that is unusual for a country that is relatively small in area. Negative impacts result from closures and checkpoints, the expansion of the apartheid wall which annexes land to Israel, Israeli settlements (colonies) on Palestinian land (in 2012 PCBS reported that there were 550,000 settlers in the West), settler violence, ongoing conflict in the Gaza Strip, the internal political split between the West Bank and Gaza, the separation and isolation of East Jerusalem from the West Bank, and the division and classification of Palestinian land into security zones A, B, and C. Area C<sup>[9]</sup> constitutes approximately 61% of the total area of the West Bank and remains under the control of Israel; it has many agricultural areas and services in this area are scarce. Forced displacement, destruction of property, deterioration in health, education, cultural and entertainment, food insecurity and a declining quality of drinking water are issues existing in this area.<sup>[10]</sup> In East Jerusalem, education, health, and social services for children are limited in quantity and quality according to reports issued by human rights organizations, in addition to the constant threats to civil rights, identity and residency.

The humanitarian situation also includes children who are victims of armed conflict. It was decided to include information on the children of martyrs, the wounded and mine victims in a chapter on children as victims of the occupation to provide further information on these groups of children.

Information on children who are victims of armed conflict is including martyrs, injured and victims of mines is reported in a later chapter dedicated to such cases.

Social indicators in 2011 indicated that 38.8% of individuals in Palestine were caught in the poverty trap; the poverty rate was<sup>[11]</sup> 25.8% (17.8% in the West Bank and 38.8% in the Gaza Strip), 12.9% in deep poverty (7.8% in the West Bank and 21.1% in the Gaza Strip). These figures are slightly higher than in 2010, when the percentage of poor individuals was 25.7%. Assistance to households reduced individual poverty rates by 18.0% and deep poverty by 29.1%.

9 Area A: This area comprises all main population centers and is subject to the control of the Palestinian security and administrative apparatus; it covers about 18% of the total area of the West Bank.

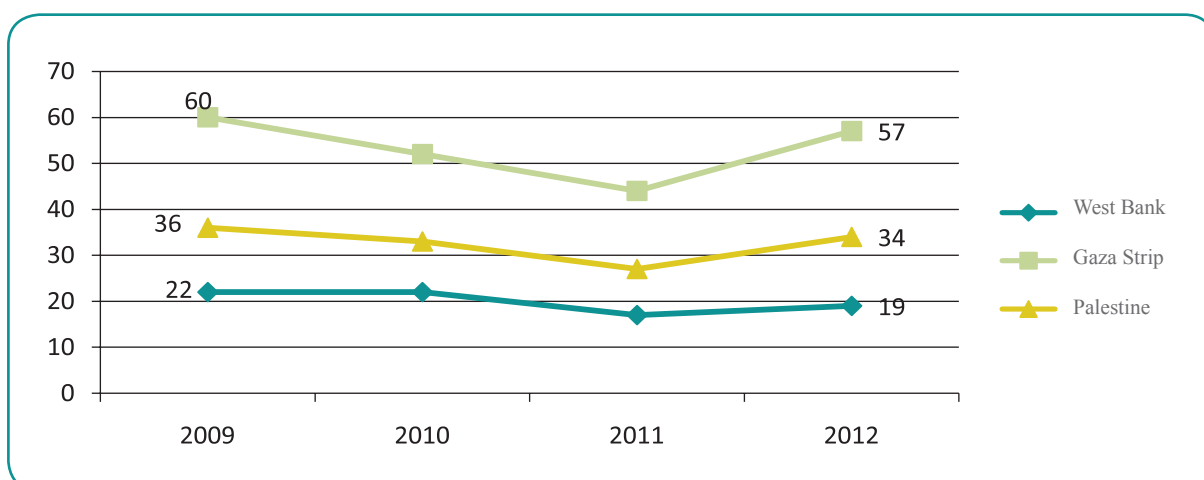
Area B: This area comprises towns and villages that are adjacent to cities and under the control of a Palestinian civilian administration while security is controlled by Israel; it comprises 21% of the total area of the West Bank and the PNA does not have the right to exercise its natural functions and duties in these areas.

Area C: They are the other areas in the West Bank and under the full control of Israeli administration and security; it constitutes about 61% of the total area of the West Bank.

10 United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territory from 2012 to 2013

11 Please note that there is one poverty rate for individuals and another one for households.

**Figure 7: Food Insecurity in Palestine by Region, 2009-2012 (Percentage)**



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2013. Economic and social conditions and food security, 2009-2012.

The issue of access to adequate quality food - food security - is a basic right of children and essential for their survival and development. Food insecurity and the risk of falling into food insecurity is a red flag in human rights and highlights the importance of intervention to ensure that no children in Palestine are deprived of food and basic needs. Data showed a rise in the percentage of food insecurity in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 2012 compared to 2011; in the West Bank it was 17% in 2011 compared to 19% in 2012, while these figures were 44% and 57% for the same years in the Gaza Strip.<sup>[12]</sup>

The poverty rate among individuals in Palestine in 2011 was 25.8% and food insecurity rate was more than 27%. Those who depend on food aid totaled 34%, while this aid is unsustainable and changes constantly according to the support available in contrast to the fixed social assistance from UNRWA and the Ministry of Social Affairs.

Food insecurity is defined as a lack of economic power (the government and households) to acquire continuous quantitative and qualitative food to maintain a healthy and productive life.<sup>[13]</sup> This means the inability to buy food from the market (households by income and consumption per day per adult of 6.39 US dollars), or lack of food. In Area C the percentage totaled 24%. This is a result of decreased employment opportunities, Israeli closure policy and hostile measures imposed by the Israeli occupation authorities, in addition to the depreciation of the new Israeli shekel (as well as the use of more than one currency supported in Palestine (NIS, US dollars, Euros and Jordanian dinars), inflation and high prices that mean that wages lost their value and had decreased purchasing power. This is confirmed by CAP data for 2013 that showed a rise in employment 11.1% in 2011, but it was accompanied by a decrease

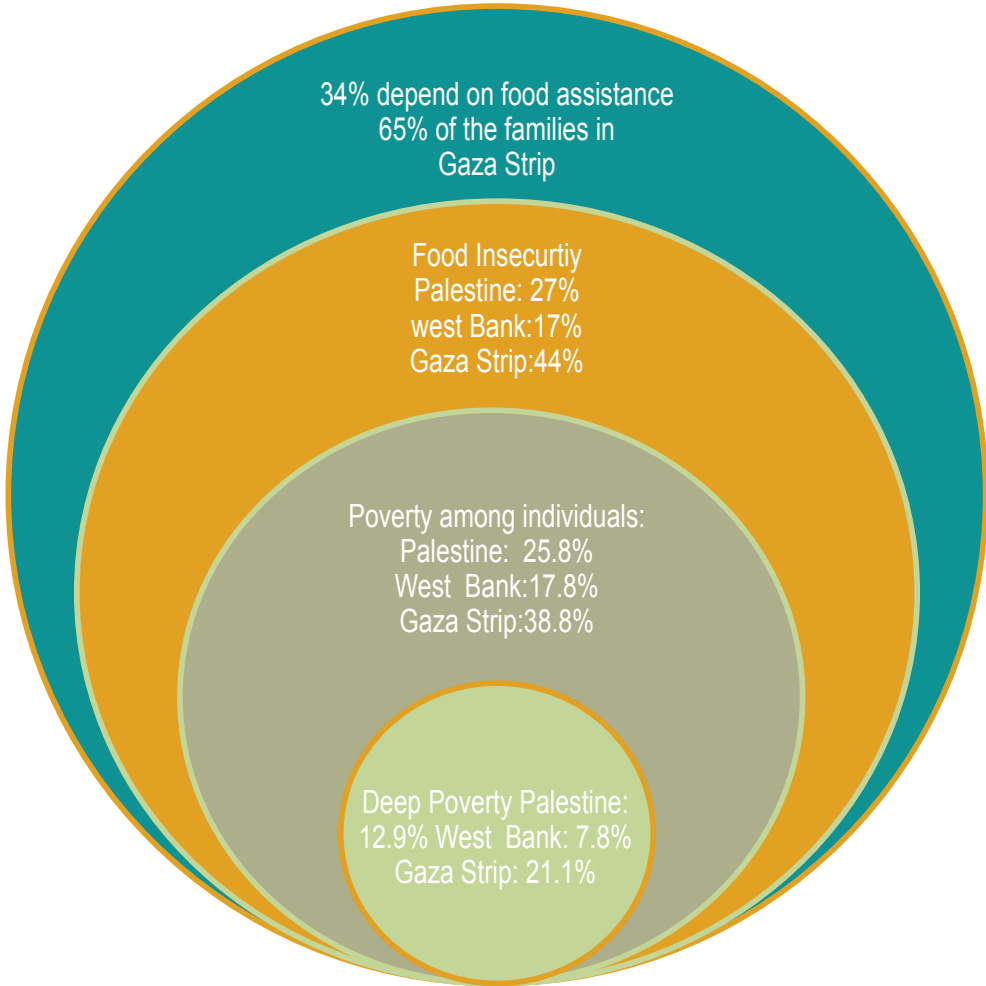
12 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2013. Economic and social conditions and food security, 2009-2012.

13 OCHA. CAP 2013 and Maan Food Security Report, 2013.



in monthly average wages of 1.3%. Thus, there are individuals who cannot afford to buy food, although they are not included among poor individuals.<sup>[14]</sup>

**Figure 8: Gap between Poverty Rates and between percentage of individuals who Suffer from a Lack of Food Security and are Dependent on Aid<sup>[15]</sup> in 2011.**



14 For more information about the humanitarian situation, please see the document of the humanitarian Flash Appeal of 2013 and the Report on Poverty in the Palestinian Territories: Main Results (2009-2011).

15 Diagram 1: Please note that poverty and deep poverty statistics come from actual PCBS data for 2011. Food aid and food insecurity data are abstracted from OCHA Cap 2013, SEF Sec Data. [www.ochaopt.org](http://www.ochaopt.org). Please note that the source of poverty data is the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2011. Food insecurity data are available on the website above.

**Table 1: Cash and In-kind Assistance by Region for 2011 and 2012**

Aid	Percentage of the population			
	2011		2012	
	Gaza Strip	West Bank	Gaza Strip	West Bank
Cash aid	22.0	17.5	25.0	18.0
Food aid	65.0	14.0	58.0	13.0
Vouchers	3.0	1.0	5.0	2.0
Generating jobs	5.0	1.0	2.0	1.0
Inputs for production	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2
Others	15.0	0.8	2.0	0.3
<b>Aid</b>	<b>80.0</b>	<b>25.0</b>	<b>74.0</b>	<b>24.0</b>

Source: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs at the request of Save the Children in May 2013. This does not include assistance from the Ministry of Social Affairs and only includes aid offered by UNRWA through CAP.

Most of the available humanitarian data do not include the received aid in Gaza Strip that comes from other Arab countries or Islamic or other international charities. For example, the

Ministry of Social Affairs in Gaza noted that during the period 2006-2012 it had received cash aid of \$226,741,054 for distribution to the needy and \$124,117,836 in in-kind assistance. The government in Gaza also paid compensation of up to \$50.5 million in cash to victims of Israeli aggression in 2008 and 2009 and approximately \$1,111,335 million in in-kind aid.<sup>[16]</sup> There is coordination on this issue between the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The issue of humanitarian aid is complex and involves a high degree of responsibility and accountability to ensure consistent delivery to aid recipients. As noted, the focus is mainly on the family itself and not the children. It is known that poor children are most at risk of neglect, exploitation and abuse, as well as child labor, health risks and growth retardation and academic underachievement. Poverty represents a vicious circle of marginalization leading to greater marginalization.

<sup>16</sup> Ministry of Social Affairs in Gaza report for 2006 to 2012.



## Chapter Three

# General Procedures for the Application of the Rights of the Child

### 3.1 National Plans, Strategies and Evaluation

The Ministry of Planning and Administrative Development (MOPAD) is responsible for national planning and the preparation of cross-sectoral plans. In 2010, MOPAD prepared 23 sectoral and cross-sectoral strategies for 2011-2013 in coordination and partnership with all relevant government institutions. National strategies were developed to combat violence against women and for social protection and juvenile justice. A plan was also drafted on the implementation of the Millennium Decade Goals. Children are not considered an independent sector and in many sectors, such as the rule of law, security and local government, are not even given specific mention. As a result, a focus on children as a group with special needs and priorities and as one of the most vulnerable groups in the volatile economic and social environment within Palestine is lacking. While the national and sectoral plans for 2014-2016 contain a planning framework and national strategy, these are not built on the premise of human rights. Many of the plans respond to urgent needs and priorities rather than focusing on long term development with a rights based agenda. This is frequently rationalized by the fact that the PA lacks financial resources and sovereignty and has inadequate control over its own territory (such as Area C and East Jerusalem, as well as border crossings and natural resources) and relies heavily on external support to fund salaries and development, with the result that it has limited control over its internal development agenda. For further information on all of the national policies and plans in different sectors, refer to the PNA report on the implementation of UN Child Right Agreement (2010) <sup>[17]</sup>. A draft of the national plan of action for the protection of children's rights was to be completed by 2013 within the framework plan of the Ministry of Social Affairs and UNICEF.

<sup>17</sup> Plans and policies are also available on the websites of the Palestinian Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education: <http://www.ldf.ps>

### 3.2 Legal Environment

In 2012, President Mahmoud Abbas endorsed the amendments to the Palestinian Child Law No. 7 of 2004 that were submitted by the Cabinet. Drafts of legislation for the Protection of Juveniles and the Protection of the Family are still underway. The draft Law on the Protection of Juveniles and Law of Social Affairs have been approved by the Council of Ministers and are in the process of being endorsed by President Abbas. A decree was also issued to end violence against women. Work is currently taking place on preparing executive regulations of the amended Children's Act Child Law, a list of protection procedures and rights and a list of alternative households. The overall legal framework in Palestine requires modification to ensure consistency between laws and human rights, genuine implementation through the distribution of roles and responsibilities, and accountability and transparency in the implementation of regulations. Laws are currently under review by the Independent Commission for Human Rights to ensure compatibility with children's rights<sup>[18]</sup>. For further information, refer to the refer to the PNA report on the implementation of UN Child Right Agreement (2010).

### 3.3 General Budget and Foreign Aid

Within budgets for health, education, social protection and labor budgets for children – and particularly for children with disabilities or chronic diseases – are not clearly demarkated. Palestine relies heavily on fluctuating foreign aid from donor countries which makes is difficult to plan long term programs on year to year budgets. As a result, major gaps continue to exist in funding these sectors. For instance, the health sector has witnessed decreasing amounts of aid over the last few years compared to previous years.

The estimated amount of aid received by the Palestinian government from donors in 2011 totaled \$983 million (\$814 million for budget support and \$169 million for development) while the planned amount is 1.7 \$B (\$1.5 bilion for budget support and \$200 million for development).<sup>[19]</sup> However, this budget support is insufficient and has led to an erosion of the Retirement and Pension Fund, the accrual private sector liabilities and loans. The main sources of revenue for the Palestinian government are tax revenues, clearing revenues controlled by Israel and foreign aid. Most expenditures (80%) are used to cover operating expenses and salaries at the expense of development expenditure. The government estimated its 2013 budget at \$3.8 billion, less than 10% (\$350 million) of which was used for developmental expenditures or investments. Over \$1.88 billion was used to cover the salaries of 154,000 employees, most of whom work within the security apparatus. The Prime Minister indicated that debt and loans had reached \$3.8 billion by the end of 2012 (with \$1,375 billion owed to banks, \$400 million to the private sector, \$1.1 billion in foreign debt and \$919 million owed to the pension fund) constituting nearly 38% of GDP.

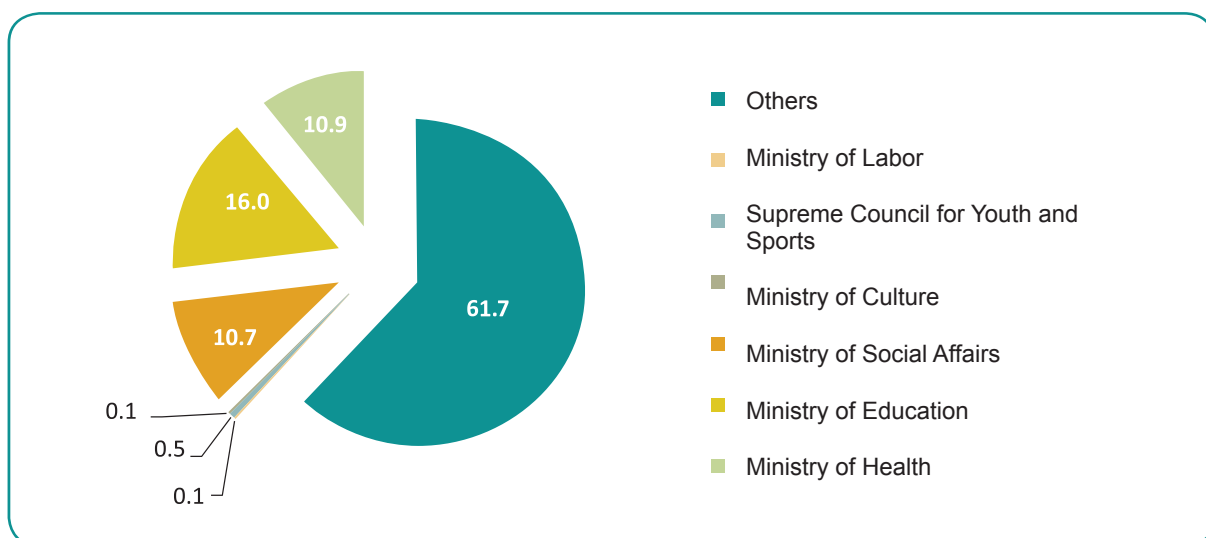
Sixteen percentage of the budget is allocated to the Ministry of Education, 10.9% to the Ministry

18 For more information, please see the report by the PNA on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, 2010.

19 World Bank (2012). Stagnation or Revival- Palestinian Economic Prospects- Economic Monitoring Report to the AHLC, March 21, 2012.

of Health and 10.7% to the Ministry of Social Affairs. Just 0.5% of the budget is allocated to the Higher Council for Youth and Sports and 0.136% to the Ministry of Culture. These figures indicate that the ministries that target children receive less than 40% of the budget.

**Figure 9: Percentage of Shares of Different Sectors in the General Budget for 2013**



Source: Ministry of Finance, 2013.

There is no regular procedure in place for conducting an analysis of the budget or assessing budget programs and plans. Without this it is impossible to assess government performance. In addition, the budget does not give adequate priority to the needs of children, which undermines the government's commitment to the rights and wellbeing of children.

## Flashes

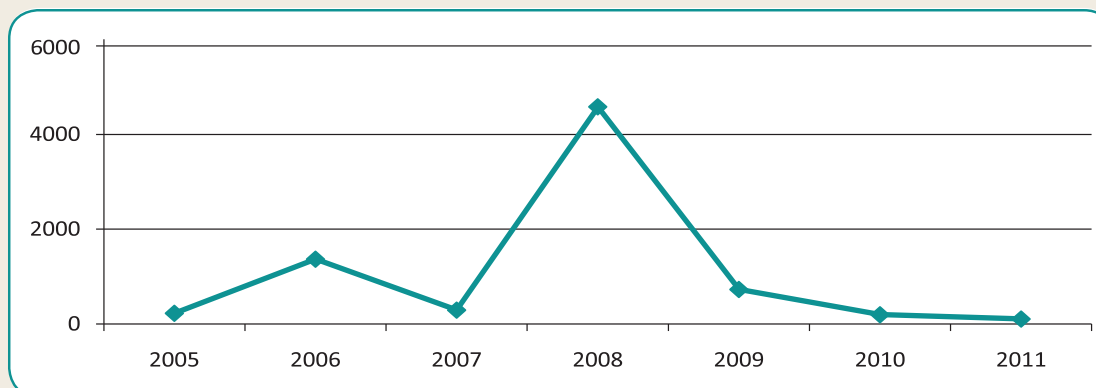
### Children in East Jerusalem

B'Tselem has investigated the implications of Israeli law governing citizenship and entry into Israel which prohibits citizens of Israel who marry someone from outside of Israel from residing with them within the borders of the country. As a result, children born in a Palestinian area or who have one parent from a Palestinian area but have one parent who is a citizen of Israel cannot obtain a permanent legal status in order to reside with that parent in Israel. Israel grants the child a temporary residence permit for two years provided that the family can prove that the center of the child's life is in Israel. These restrictions and policies serve to support the maintenance of a Jewish demographic majority in Israel and Jerusalem.<sup>[20]</sup> The figures indicate that children were those most deprived in terms of the right to citizenship in 2008: 99 children in 4,577 cases, under the pretext of a population review and because the child had lived outside Israel for 7 years continuously.<sup>[21]</sup>

20 [www.btselem.org/arabic/jerusalem](http://www.btselem.org/arabic/jerusalem)

21 OCHA. East Jerusalem. Key Humanitarian Concerns. Special Focus, March 2011. P.16.

**Figure 10: Number of Palestinians deprived of citizenship, 2005-2011**



Source: [www.btselem.org/arabic/jerusalem](http://www.btselem.org/arabic/jerusalem)

Various authorities oversee schools in East Jerusalem: the Awqaf, the private sector, Maaref, the municipality, semi-governmental schools and UNRWA. A total of 175 schools serve 80,972 students. Around 20% of students and teachers come from areas near to Jerusalem and have to pass through the blockades and closed off areas near the apartheid wall every day. Violence has increased among students in East Jerusalem and the dropout rate has reached 50%. Students are also exploited as cheap labor in the Israeli labor market. Poverty rates are high and alcohol and drug abuse among young people totaled 7.8%.<sup>[22]</sup>

Data from the Directorate of Education in Jerusalem indicated that 86,018 out of 88,845 children aged 6-18 years were enrolled in educational institutions in 2012. However, according to municipal data, there are 106,534 children in that age group; this may indicate that 20,516 children were not registered in records of the Directorate of Education and were not attending school. Also, 3,806 children were not registered at the compulsory school age of 5 years. The percentage of dropout from Jerusalem schools from seventh to twelfth grade was 17.3%, but reached 40% by the twelfth grade alone. There were approximately 32 students per classroom. Around 720 classrooms were of a poor standard. During the 2012-2013 academic year, only 800 out of 15,000 children from Jerusalem were enrolled in kindergartens of the municipality.<sup>[23]</sup> It should be noted that kindergarten is compulsory and government funded in Israel, but it fails to apply these criteria to Palestinian children living in East Jerusalem.

In 2009, 704 of the 1360 classrooms in East Jerusalem were of a poor standard and 221 classrooms were located in unsuitable premises. Around 12.7% of school aged children in East Jerusalem (11,900 children) were not enrolled in any educational institution, especially during the 2009/2010 academic year. The Jerusalem municipality spent four times the amount on a child from Israeli West Jerusalem than on the education

22 Education in Jerusalem; Challenge and Steadfastness. Ministry of Education, April 2012.

23 Tag: failure of the education system in East Jerusalem, August 2012. Ir Amim Foundation and Rights of Citizen, [www.acri.org.il](http://www.acri.org.il)

of Palestinian children in East Jerusalem. In 23 schools in East Jerusalem, there were 2,250 children whose home was under a demolition order by the Israeli authorities.

In 2012, there was an estimated shortage of 1,800 classrooms according to the head of the Jerusalem Affairs Unit in the Palestinian Ministry of Education.<sup>[24]</sup>

### **Area C**

- ◆ The total area under Israeli security control is approximately 61% of the West Bank with about 150,000 Palestinians, 18% of which were Bedouins or pastoral families.
- ◆ Around 50,000 students enrolled in 183 schools had difficulty accessing education due to a shortage of schools and the risks of commuting to school on foot. Some schools were threatened with demolition.
- ◆ A survey of 113 businesses conducted by Save the Children, UNICEF and the Ministry of Education produced the following results:
  - 15% of communities stated that children were forced to walk in a crowded and dangerous manner when commuting to school on foot.
  - 33% of localities (37 localities) stated that more than 1,700 children walked about 5 kilometers or more to school.
  - 11% of localities (12 localities) stated that more than 700 children walked about 3-5 kilometers on foot to school.
  - 31% of localities stated that around 2,500 children were forced to cross military checkpoints to reach school on a daily basis.
  - 29% of localities (33 localities) said children had to cross the apartheid wall to reach school.
  - 16% of localities (33 localities) reported harassment by the Israeli army during crossing the wall.
  - 28% of localities reported violence by Israeli settlers.
  - 26% of localities reported violence and harassment by the Israeli occupation army.
  - 10,000 children were learning in tents, caravans and tin shacks that provided no protection against heat or cold.
  - In 2010, 31% of schools lacked adequate water and sanitation systems.<sup>[25]</sup>

24 Save the Children Fact Sheet: Children's Right to Education in Armed Conflict. October 2011.

25 Ibid.



## Gaza Strip

In recent years the Gaza Strip has been subjected to an economic blockade and several military incursions and air strikes by Israel, resulting in the deterioration of health, social and psychological conditions and of education and economic development. Numerous children have been killed, wounded, or disabled. Anemia is common and chronic health problems result from the lack of access to health services and shortage of safe drinking water.

- Operation Cast Lead, an intensive assault by the Israeli military against the Gaza Strip between 27 December 2008 and 18 January 2009, had the following impact:<sup>[26]</sup>
- 431 children were killed and 1,872 were injured.
- 18 schools and kindergartens were destroyed, 262 were damaged, 6 university buildings were destroyed and 16 other buildings were damaged.
- 250 students and 15 teachers were killed and 856 students and 19 teachers were injured.
- 441,452 children were unable to attend school regularly and others had difficulty reaching school.
- There was a dramatic increase in child labor. 120,000 people were unable to go to work
- 15,000 homes were destroyed and 100,000 people were forcibly displaced. By August 2009, About 20,000 people remained displaced.
- 15 of Gaza's 27 hospitals were damaged, 43 of its 110 primary health care centers were damaged, along with 29 of its 148 ambulances.<sup>[27]</sup>

As a consequence of these conditions: overcrowding increased in schools that were not damaged, moreover these schools became with two shifts and reducing extracurricular activities and lesson times to one third of the normal times. Around 150,000 students whose schools were destroyed were transferred to other schools for evening lessons; 94% of UNRWA schools and 78% of government schools operated in two shifts. It is estimated that 130 new public schools and 100 UNRWA schools are needed. Israel, however, does not allow construction materials to enter the Gaza Strip.<sup>[28]</sup>

26 Assessment of the educational, social and psychological reality in Gaza - UNESCO - September 2010.

27 The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights - December 2009.

28 Al Mezan Center for Human Rights Fact Sheet on Children's Access to Education in Gaza Strip. December 2011.

In the period from February 2009 to the end of October 2011, the Gaza Strip was subjected to 31 air strikes or military incursions which affected 72,391 students who were either injured or were unable to attend school. UNICEF estimates the number of people in need of psychological support and counseling following the attacks to be between 14,000 and 18,000: 59.4% of students in elementary and middle schools suffer from psychological disorders and 69% of students at secondary schools have experienced fear, anxiety and insecurity when commuting to or from school. The impact on academic performance in 2011 was apparent as less than 60% of fourth grade students in public schools passed their Arabic language exam and less than 50% passed their math exam.<sup>[29]</sup>

### **Health Situation in the Gaza Strip**

The Gaza Strip suffers from overcrowded schools and homes, contaminated drinking water and an environment that contributes to a high incidence of diseases such as typhoid and diarrhea among children under three years of age. Chronic malnutrition had led to a high percentage (10%) of children under five years with stunted growth. A nutritional monitoring program indicated that 68.1% of children aged 9-12 months in Gaza had anemia in 2010, along with 58.6% of school children and 36.8% of pregnant women.<sup>[30]</sup> PCBS data showed that 25.6% of children aged 6-59 months had anemia, with the highest incidence in Deir al-Balah, Gaza City and Khan Younis. Anemia and chronic malnutrition may affect a child's development and academic performance. There is a high incidence of chronic malnutrition, anemia, osteomalacia and vitamin A deficiency among children in Gaza due to the high poverty and unemployment rates that prevent parents from providing children with nutritional supplements, proteins and micronutrients. Infant mortality increased in the Gaza Strip during the period 2005-2010 to 20.1 per 1,000 live births, while in children under five years of age it was 26.8 per 1,000 live births.

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29 Ibid.

30 Gaza's Children: Falling Behind. The Effect of the Blockade on Child Health in Gaza. Save the Children, MAP.



## Chapter Four

# Sectoral Analysis of the Status of Children's Rights

### 4.1 Education Situation<sup>[31]</sup>

An investment in education provides children with knowledge and skills without which they are unlikely to reach their highest potential. For children living in poverty or from marginalized areas, education may prove critical to survival and to breaking a cycle of poverty; it may also provide the opportunity for a child to thrive. The role of the government is to facilitate children's access to education by creating a supportive environment at all level: through legislation and legal support, policy planning, the development of budgets, programs and services and through building partnerships.

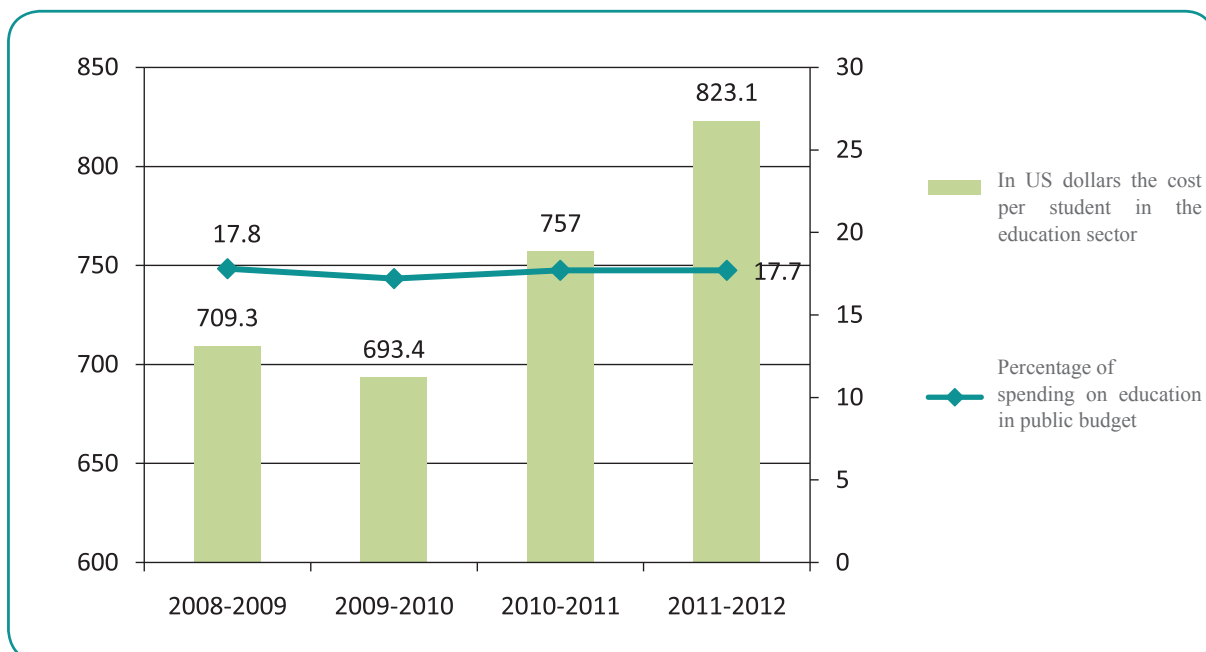
#### 4.1.1 Public Spending on Education

While the cost of education per student increased from US \$709.3 in 2008/2009 to US \$823.1 in 2011/2012, the budget allocation for education declined from 17.8% to 17.7%, slightly lower than in 2008/2009.<sup>[32]</sup> Only 10% of the education budget was allocated to development, with operating expenses and salaries comprising the bulk of expenditure.

<sup>31</sup> Reference: Ministry of Education, unless indicated otherwise.

<sup>32</sup> Ministry of Education, State of Palestine. Monitoring and evaluation report of the Strategic Development Plan 2008-2012.

**Figure 11: Percentage of Spending on Education Compared to Cost per Student in Selected School Years**

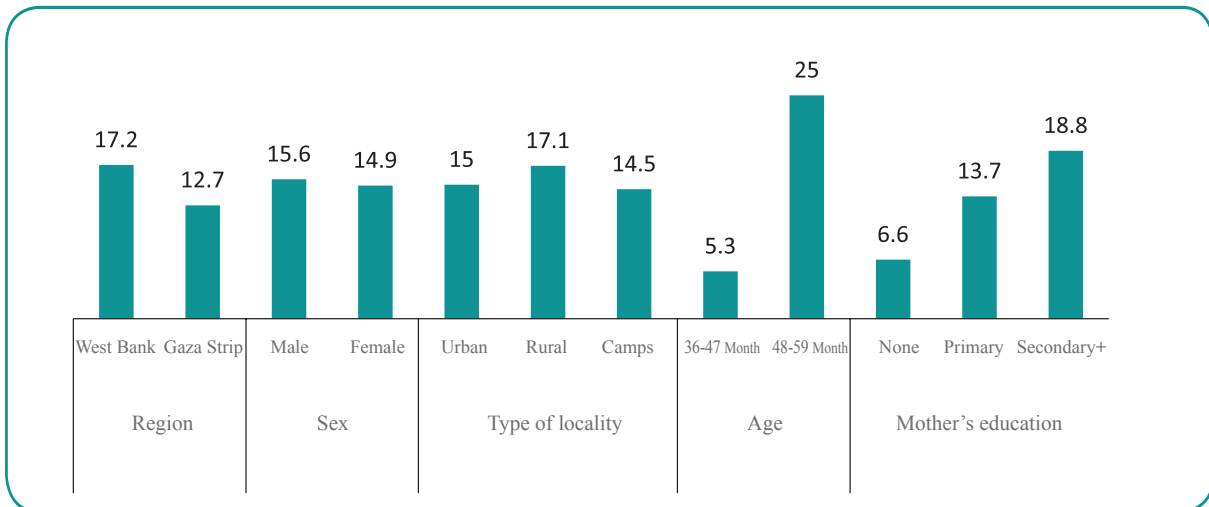


Source: Ministry of Education, State of Palestine. Monitoring and evaluation report of the Strategic Development Plan 2008-2012. May 2013.

#### 4.1.2 Early Childhood Education

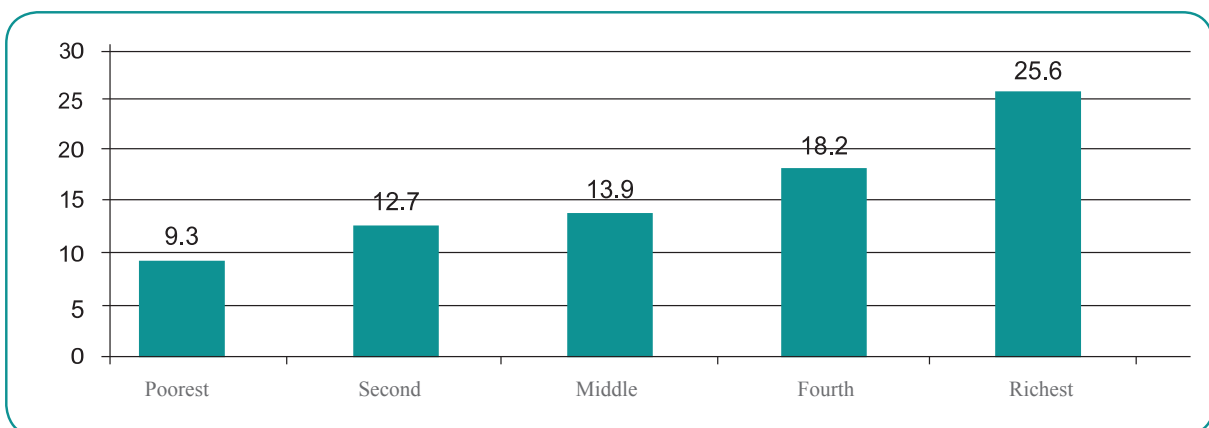
Pre-school education following a well-planned curriculum or educational program plays an important role in preparing children for school. In 2010, about 15% of children in the 36 to 59 months age group were enrolled in preschool (17.2% in the West Bank and 12.7% in the Gaza Strip), with 5.3% of children in the 36-47 months age group and 25.0% of children in the 48-59 months age group enrolled. Enrollment was highest in Tulkarm governorate (33%), followed by Jericho and the Jordan Valley (15%). The lowest enrollment was in Tubas (7%), while enrollment in other governorates ranged between 9-33%. Interestingly, enrollment was higher in rural areas (17.1%) than urban areas (15.0%). Minor differences were found with regard to gender, with 15.6% of male children enrolled compared to 14.9% of female children. Clear differences were apparent according to socio-economic status however. While enrollment was 25.6% for children from richest households, it dropped to 9.3% for children from poorer households.

**Figure 12: Percentage of Children Aged 36-59 Months Enrolled in some form of Early Childhood Education Programs in Palestine by Various Background Characteristics, 2010**



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. Palestinian Family Survey, 2010. Main Report. Ramallah-Palestine

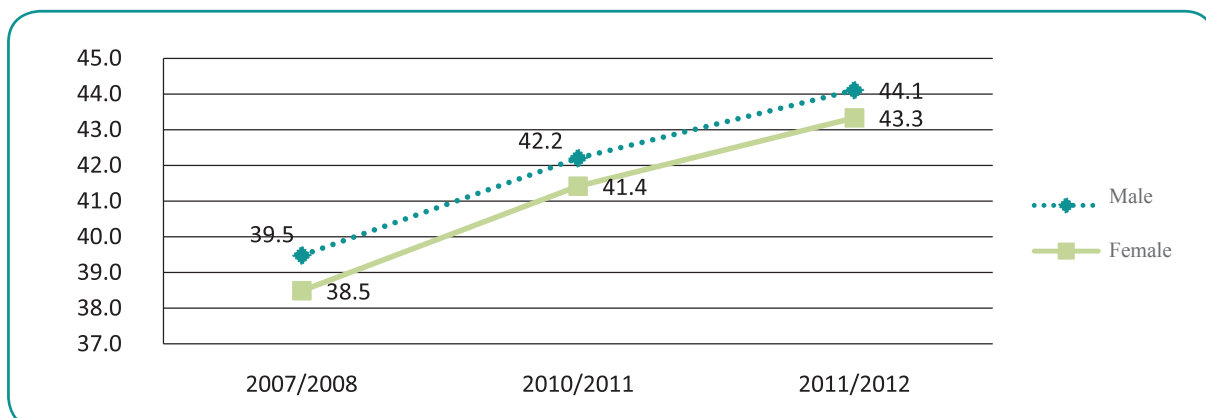
**Figure 12A: Percentage of Children Aged 36-59 Months Enrolled in some form of Early Childhood Education Programs in Palestine by Wealth Index, 2010**



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. Palestinian Family Survey, 2010. Main Report. Ramallah-Palestine

According to data from the Ministry of Education for 2011/2012, the average number of preschool students per class was 22.2 students in the West Bank and 27.1 in the Gaza Strip. The average number of students per teacher in the West Bank was 17.1 compared to 21.5 in the Gaza Strip. Around 41.2% of teachers in the West Bank hold a bachelor's degree compared to 10.9% in the Gaza Strip. About 25% of female teachers hold an intermediate diploma in the West Bank compared to 30.3% in the Gaza Strip. Around 33.4% of female teachers hold a general secondary certificate or lower qualification in the West Bank compared to 38.2% in the Gaza Strip.

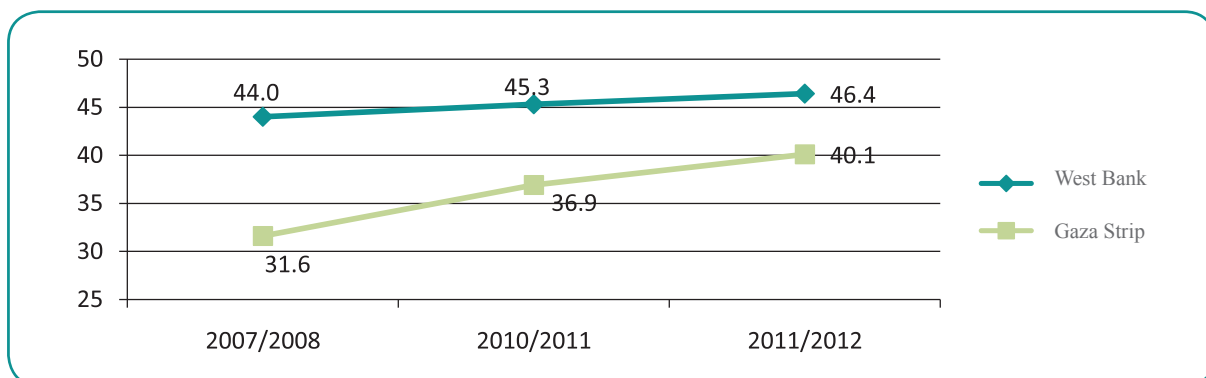
**Figure 13: Enrollment Rates in Early Childhood Education by Gender for Selected School years**



Source: Educational databases: General Administration of Planning, Ministry of Education.

Differences in enrollment in early childhood education by gender and between the West Bank and Gaza Strip were minimal. Overall, there is a trend emerging that supports an increase in enrollment in early childhood and an increase in the number of licensed preschool programs due to strict follow-up by the Ministry of Education. Only licensed preschools were included in national statistics.

**Figure 14: Enrollment Rates in Kindergarten in Selected School Years by Region**



Source: Educational databases: General Administration of Planning, Ministry of Education.

#### 4.1.3 Enrollment Rates<sup>[33]</sup>

Calculations of enrollment are based largely on population estimates and projections, with Israeli statistics used in the case of Jerusalem, and are therefore subject to change. Enrollment rates are relatively high in Palestine and may be higher than calculated due to difficulties of estimating population which have arisen through the political division of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip

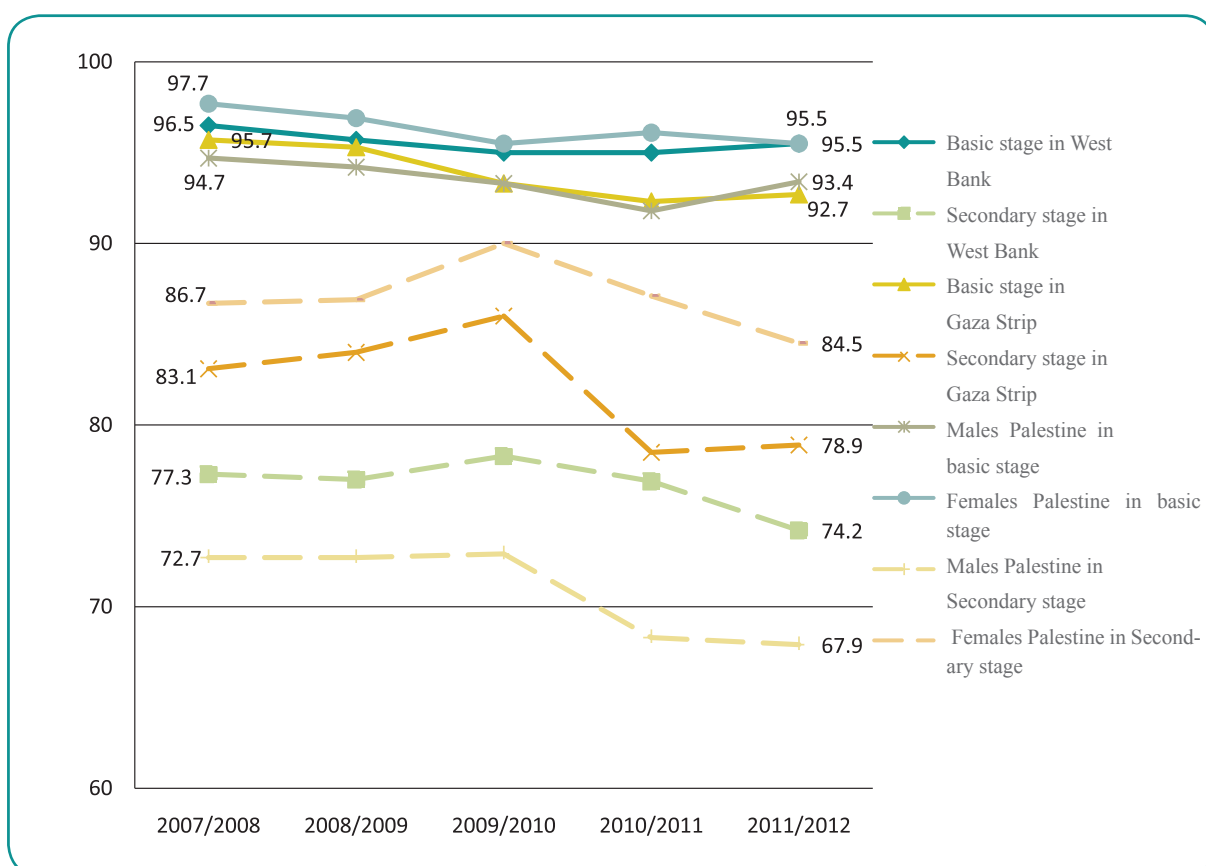
33 This indicator includes school students in Jerusalem who fall under the Israeli Department of Education. It relies on population estimates from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and the annual census of students conducted by the Palestinian Ministry of Education.

and East Jerusalem. For example, among those who are registered and hold Palestinian identity a considerable number live abroad. In addition, there have been problems with the registration of births and deaths.

In general, female enrollment in secondary level education is higher than that of males in the Gaza Strip compared to the West Bank. Enrollment by both genders is approximately 6 times higher at the primary educational stage than for secondary school. In the 2011/ 2012 academic year, there was a relative decline in enrollment rate by males and between both genders at the primary level compared to the 2007/2008 academic year, with a significantly decline rate than in the Gaza Strip. It is generally presumed that changes in enrollment rates are affected by population estimates and marginal statistical errors. Total enrollment in preschool rose among both males and females, but has not yet reached 50%.

Data does not currently exist for children who are not enrolled in the educational system in terms of the reasons they are not enrolled. The Ministry of Education does not yet have procedures in place for monitoring such children and compelling guardians to comply with the legal requirements for compulsory primary education.

**Figure 15: Enrollment Rates by Stage, Region and Gender for Selected School Years**



Source: Educational databases: General Administration of Planning, Ministry of Education.



Enrollment rate up to fifth grade was 97.8% in 2012, with minor differences between males and females, but this rate had declined slightly from 98.5% in 2011 and 98% in 2010. Enrollment up to tenth grade was estimated at 84%: (90.8% among females and 77.4% among males.) This indicates that most students dropped out after fifth grade.

#### 4.1.4 Dropout Rates<sup>[34]</sup>

Overall dropout rates were relatively low in Palestine. The dropout rate in government, private and UNRWA schools at the secondary level was 3 to 4 times higher than at the primary level. According to the Department of Education, the dropout rate was 1.2% in 2010/2011 (1.5% among males and 1% among females). At the primary level it was 0.9% (1.3% among males and 0.6% among females), but it was nearly three times higher at the secondary level at 3.2% (3.2% among males and 3.3% among females): 1.2% in the West Bank and 1.3% in the Gaza Strip. The highest rate was in Hebron (3%) and the lowest was in Jerusalem (0.4%).

**Figure 16: Drop-Out Rates by Gender and School Stage for 2010/2011**



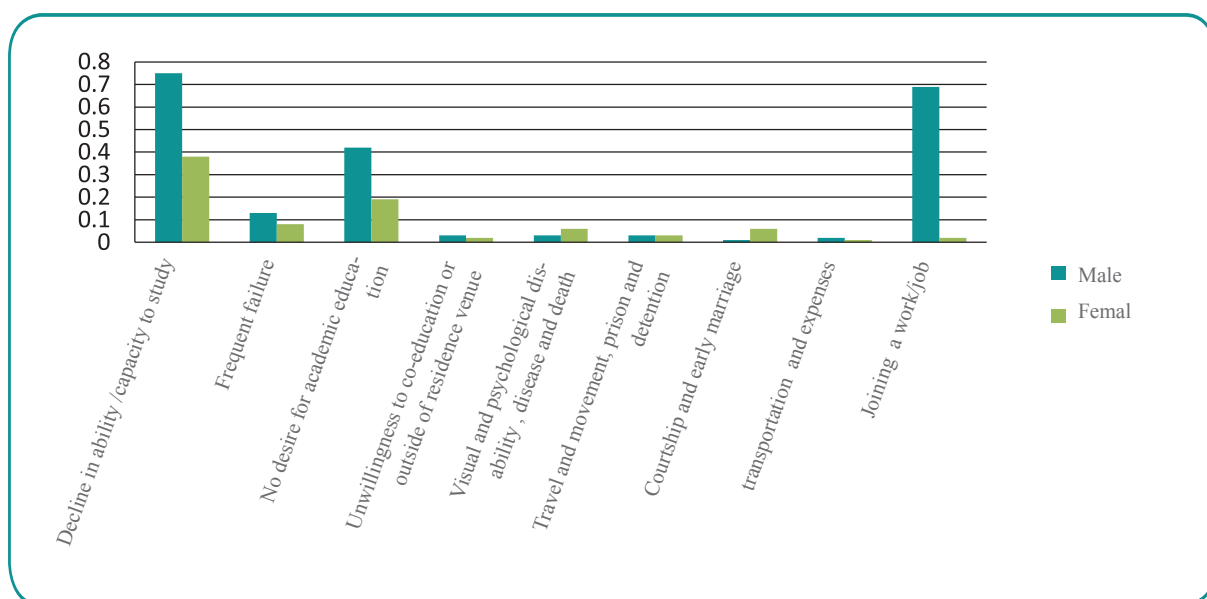
Source: Ministry of Education, General Administration of Public Education. 2012.

The data for 2010/2011 indicated that 11,646 students at UNRWA schools in the West Bank dropped out due to low academic achievement. Other reasons for dropping out included lack of interest in education, frequent repetition of the same grade, joining the labor market (especially for males) and early engagement and marriage (especially for women), objections to co-education, distance of residence from school and transportation expenses, visual disabilities and mental illness.

34 Ministry of Education, General Administration of Public Education.

In the West Bank, 11,277 students dropped out: 0.6% due to poor academic abilities or in order to work (0.37%), particularly among males. Reasons for poor academic performance may include poverty, malnutrition, slow learning, work responsibilities, psychological and social problems or poor quality of the education and learning environment or housing. Currently effective programs are not in place to diagnose learning disabilities or initiate appropriate early intervention and reasons for poor performance should be probed further. The Ministry of Education summarized the reasons for dropping out of school as poor ability and unwillingness to learn (higher among males than females), child labor (males) and early engagement and marriage (females). The figure below indicates that the dropout rate among males is greater than among females, except for early engagement and marriage, disability and disease.

**Figure 17: Reasons for Dropping Out of School Year 2010/2011 by Gender**



Source: Ministry of Education. Annual report to monitor and evaluate the Strategic Development Plan 2008-2012.

The dropout rate in schools in Area C was 1.4% in 2009/2010 and 1.8% in 2010/2011.<sup>[35]</sup> This was higher than in public schools in areas under the control of the Palestinian government. Difficulties in commuting to schools, lack of infrastructure, fear of settler violence and body searches at checkpoints and at the apartheid wall, especially for girls, may make parents reluctant to send their children to school. This is especially the case if they live in a remote area or have more than one child, which increases the cost of transportation, taking into consideration the rate of poverty and food insecurity in Area C. It is known that poor nutrition, anxiety and lack of an appropriate educational environment negatively affect academic performance.

35 Annual report to monitor and evaluate the Strategic Development Plan 2008-2012. Ministry of Education. 2012.

**Figure 18: Drop-Out Rates in Schools in West Bank and Area C schools, 2009/2010 and 2010/2011**



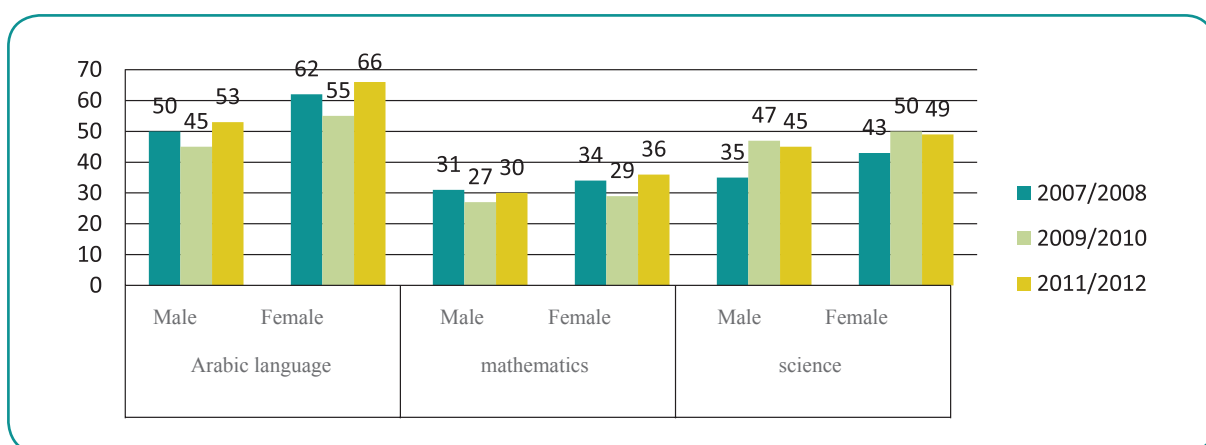
Source: Ministry of Education. Annual report to monitor and evaluate the Strategic Development Plan 2008-2012.

Some students who drop out of school may enroll at a vocational center for youth run by the Ministry of Social Affairs or another agency.

#### 4.1.5 Students Performance in National Exams

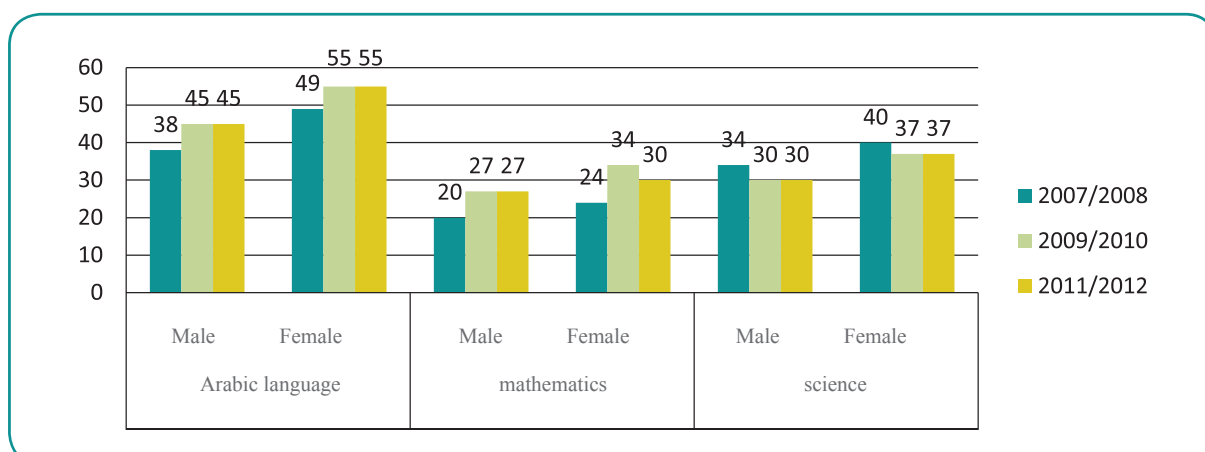
Dropout was found most frequently to be linked to poor academic performance. The results of the bi-annual national examinations showed an overall decline in the level of student performance in science, mathematics and Arabic language from 2007/2008 to 2009/2010, although there were some exceptions: high performance in science by fourth grade students and improvement in performance in Arabic language and mathematics by tenth grade students. Females performed better than males; still the academic performance is still low and many do not succeed; it is also noticed that performance of females declined in the 2011/2012 academic year from previous years, knowing that the national assessment test take place once every second year.

**Figure 19: Academic Performance of Fourth Grade Students in National Examinations for Selected School years**



Source: Ministry of Education, 2013.

**Figure 20: Academic Performance of Tenth Grade Students in National Examinations for Selected School Years**



Source: Ministry of Education, 2013.

These results are alarming, as despite efforts by the Ministry of Education to raise the level of education in Palestine, the national performance of students remains very low. Determining the causes and areas of low academic performance is crucial to tackling these issues. There are many reasons behind low academic performance, some related to the social environment (poverty, unemployment, child labor, disability, disease, malnutrition) or the physical environment and education, such as the availability of a suitable school environment and buildings, overcrowded facilities, equipment, transportation, adequate qualified educational staff and appropriate curricula.

#### 4.1.6 Qualified Teachers

The percentage of teachers whose qualifications meet the standards of the Ministry of Education may be one of the causes of low student academic performance. Just 29.3% of teachers had qualifications that met ministry standards in 2011. The figure was higher among females than males. This means that less than one-third of teachers have appropriate qualifications for the teaching profession. The percentage was 45.7% among teachers of grades 1-4, with twice as many females in that category as males. Other factors contributing to low student performance could be high student density in classrooms, the new curricula and inappropriate teaching methods. Data from the Ministry indicates that a large percentage of teachers and applicants for teaching jobs obtained low grades in their high school exam certificates and half would not want to continue working as teachers if they found better jobs.<sup>[36]</sup> While in the past teachers were highly respected and had higher levels of satisfaction with their pay, teachers no longer receive the same respect and are not satisfied with their fees. Currently, due to the deteriorating economic and social conditions, teaching is considered as a last resort for most young people, many of whom rely on private tutoring or other after-school part time jobs to support their income. However, teaching remains one of the most socially acceptable professions in Palestine for women and suits a married woman with children due to the shorter work day and school holidays. Half of the new teachers hired in 2011 were qualified as the Ministry of Education has adopted new standards and implemented a new strategy for the recruitment and training of teachers.

36 Conference on Promoting Teachers on Feb.20, 2013.

**Figure 21: Percentage of Qualified Teachers by Gender, 2009-2011**



Source: Ministry of Education, 2013.

#### 4.1.7 Students per Teacher<sup>[37]</sup>

This indicator refers to overcrowding in the class and it is important to assess the educational environment in schools since high students per teacher averages, increase the teacher's burden and their ability to focus on the student's individual potential and abilities, as well as having insufficient time for extracurricular or practical activities. On average, there are 21 students per teacher - In UNRWA schools (26.7) and in Gaza (23.8) the average is higher than in the West Bank (19.3) and in public schools (20.2). It is lower in private schools (15.8) compared to public schools and UNRWA.<sup>[38]</sup> This average is relatively high when compared to OECD countries (2005), where the average is 16.7 for basic education, and 13.4 for secondary education.

#### 4.1.8 Density of Students in Classrooms<sup>[39]</sup>

Overcrowding in the classroom decreases opportunities for participation and interaction and impacts a teacher's ability to control the class, which in turn can impede understanding, comprehension and academic performance.

While student numbers are increasing, the number of classrooms available to absorb them is not keeping pace, especially in UNRWA schools. Classroom density in Palestine decreased from 2009/2010 up to 2011 /2012, but classrooms in government and UNRWA schools remain overcrowded, especially at the primary stage (below grade 10). The average number of students per classroom at the primary level is 31, compared to 27.6 at secondary level. Overcrowding is greater in the Gaza Strip than the West Bank; UNRWA schools and schools in East Jerusalem have a shortage of classrooms. Average classroom density in countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development for 2005, were 21.7 students at primary school in government schools and 23.8 students in secondary schools. Density in Palestinian schools, therefore, is relatively high.<sup>[40]</sup>

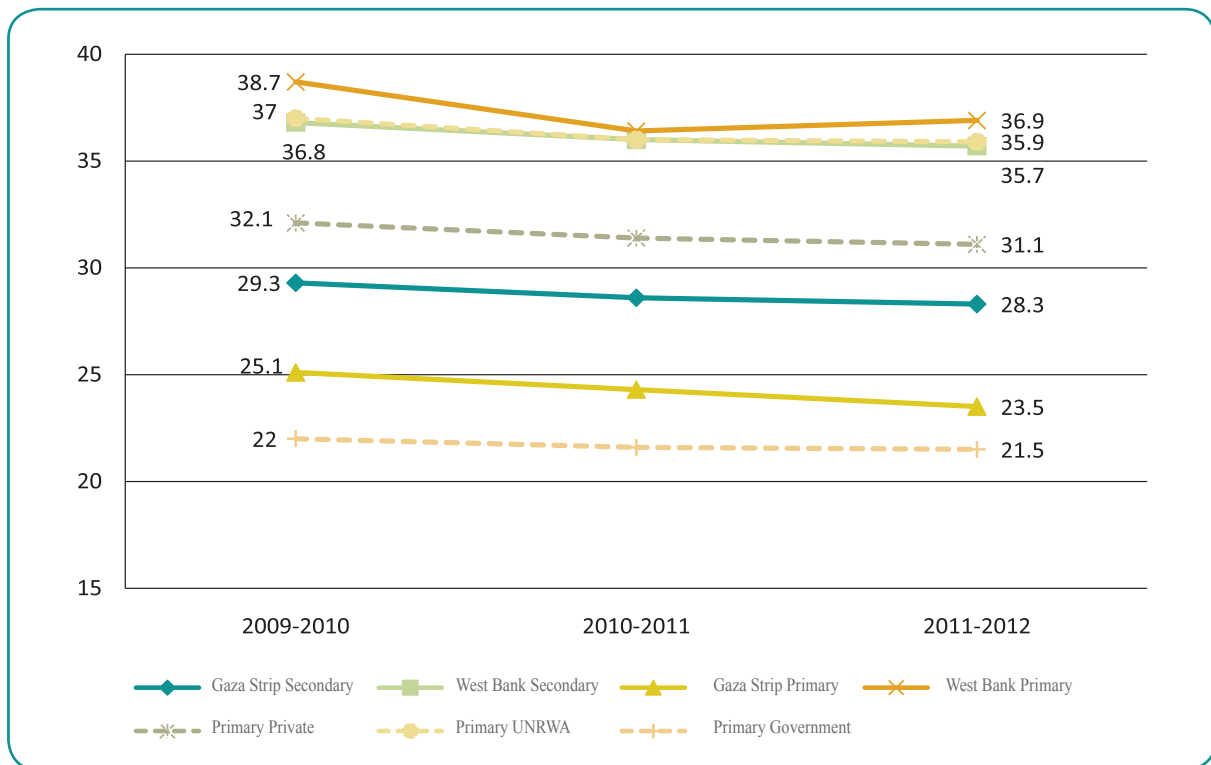
37 Educational databases. General Directorate of Planning. Ministry of Education.

38 Survey of knowledge, perceptions and practices in water, sanitation and school hygiene in the occupied Palestinian territories. The Ministry of Education. UNICEF, with support from the Australian government. December 2011.

39 Educational databases. General Administration of Planning. Ministry of Education.

40 Survey of knowledge, perceptions and practices in water, sanitation and school hygiene in the occupied Palestinian territories. Ministry of Education, UNICEF with funding from the Australian government. December 2011.

**Figure 22: Classroom Density by Region, Academic Stage and Supervisory Authority for Selected School Years**



Source: Ministry of Education. Survey of knowledge, perceptions and practices in water, sanitation and school hygiene in the occupied Palestinian territories. December 2011.

#### 4.1.9 Provision of Specialized Classrooms and Canteens

The availability and use of technological laboratories and libraries are crucial indicators of the quality of education. Around 70% of government and UNRWA schools have specialized facilities: 75.4% have a computer laboratory (Gaza: 84.2%, West Bank: 72.4%), 75.6% have a library (Gaza: 83.6%, West Bank: 72.9%) and 66.2% have a science laboratory (Gaza: 70.6%, West Bank: 64.6%).<sup>[41]</sup>

Although the percentage of schools in which there are computers in Gaza is greater than in West Bank, an average of 32.5 students share a computer (Gaza: 57.3, West Bank: 25.0). The percentage of UNRWA schools with a computer lab is higher than that of public schools, but a comparison of the number of students per computer in UNRWA schools shows that figures (45%) are still high compared to government (32.2%) and private schools (19.2%). The percentage of schools with a computer lab and library is higher than those with a science laboratory. In considering this indicator, it is important to determine the status of these laboratories in terms of the availability of materials and equipment and their suitability and frequency of use by students and teachers. Most schools in Gaza are run by UNRWA with the result that these two indicators are linked.

41 Source: Educational databases. General Administration of Planning. Ministry of Education. Educational Statistical Yearbook for school year 2011-2012. Ramallah - Palestine. Pp. 57, 60. Data do not include Jerusalem schools run by Maaref and the Israeli municipality of Jerusalem.

Ministry of Education data for the 2011/2012 academic year show that 50% of elementary schools have internet access compared to 44% of secondary schools; 99% of UNRWA schools (and therefore almost all schools in Gaza) have internet access, while 59% of private elementary schools compared to 98.9% of private secondary schools have internet access.

In 2011, the use of technology by students increased to 14.7%; the use of tools, equipment and materials by science students increased to 47.1% and to 42.4% in 2012. The percentage of students using a computer lab fell to 41% in 2011 and 33% in 2012 while the percentage of students who used the library increased to 8.1% in 2012 over previous years.<sup>[42]</sup> However, the figures for library use are still very low. This may be due to multiple factors, including use of the internet, lack of motivation to read and lack of adequate, modern and appropriate books that would encourage students to read. In Area C, the use of modern teaching aids and science laboratories decreased, while the use of computers and the library increased by a greater percentage than in other regions. This may reflect the need of people in this area to communicate with the outside world as a result of the limitations of their local environment outside the walls of the school.

More schools in the Gaza Strip (94%) have a canteen than in the West Bank (80%). In Area C, 44% of the canteens in schools are unsuitable and better catering facilities are required, according to the Ministry of Education. The quality of food provided in canteens, the suitability of infrastructure, compliance with food hygiene standards, and options used by students in schools without canteens to obtain food should be monitored.

#### 4.1.10 Schools by Main Source of Water, Electricity and Wastewater Drainage<sup>[43]</sup>

The physical environment of the school affects the academic performance of students and the quality of education. Data indicate that basic infrastructure is available in most schools in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Electricity is not available in only 0.7% of schools in the West Bank, with the highest percentage of these schools (1.5%) in the south of Hebron, followed by Nablus (0.5%), and Ramallah and Al-Bireh (0.4%). Most schools in the Gaza Strip are connected to public water and a sewage network and all are connected to the public electricity network. Connection to infrastructure is higher than in the West Bank.

**Table 2: Percentage of Schools by Main Source of Water, Electricity and Wastewater Drainage in 2011/2012**

Region	Septic Tank	Sewerage network	Special power generator	Public electricity network	Water tanks	Public water network
West Bank	48.4	34.3	0.4	99.3	4.9	87.6
Gaza Strip	11.9	83.6	0.0	100	0.9	95.9
Total	39.2	46.8	0.3	99.5	3.8	89.7

Source: Ministry of Education. Educational databases. General Administration of Planning, 2013.

42 Annual Report 2012. Monitoring and Evaluation System for the Education Development Strategic Plan 2008-2012. Ministry of Education.

43 Educational databases. General Administration of Planning. Ministry of Education 2013.

#### 4.1.11 Students per Drinking Water Fountain, Toilet and Hand Basin<sup>[44]</sup>

On average, 42 students share a single drinking water fountain (Gaza: 60, West Bank:36) and one toilet (Gaza: 52, West Bank: 37), while approximately 65 students share a washbasin (Gaza: 72, West Bank: 60). Figures in private schools are nearly half of those in government schools. These facilities have the potential to spread disease and reduce school attendance and overall satisfaction with the school. Drinking water fountains must be located away from toilets and females need twice the number of units in bathrooms than do males.

Studies indicate that about half of students do not use their school ablution facilities due to lack of cleanliness and offensive odours, although they are reported cleaned daily in more than 90% of schools. In some cases (45-85%) soap or toilet paper are not provided, preventing students from following adequate hygiene practices. The data indicate that there are 33% more toilets for males than for females.<sup>[45]</sup> In comparison with some international standards, the toilet:student ratios in Palestine are relatively high. In Britain, for example, there is one toilet for every 10 students under the age of five and for every 20 students in older age groups.<sup>[46]</sup> Other sources indicate norms of one toilet for every 25 or 30 students, a toilet and urinal basins for every 50 students or a toilet for every 60 students. A manual on health and environmental standards in schools published by the Ministry of Education in 2003 states that a drinking water fountain and a washbasin should be provided for every 30 students. International standards indicate a washbasin for every 50-100 students but do not specify the number of students per water fountain<sup>[47]</sup>.

#### 4.1.12 School Counseling<sup>[48]</sup>

School counseling plays a vitally important role in protecting students from the negative social, economic and political consequences of their surroundings. Counseling empowers students with tools necessary for survival and development and reduces risks. It also enables students with social or psychological problems to be identified so that early intervention can be taken.

During the 2011/2012 academic year, 1,047 public schools (65.1%) in the West Bank had a school counseling service with an average of 786 students per counselor. There were 682 counselors during that period.<sup>[49]</sup> In the Gaza Strip, there were 402 counselors in public schools (56.2% of which were females and 43.8% males); almost 10% of them held a bachelor's degree or higher qualification.<sup>[50]</sup> This percentage is inadequate to meet the need for preventive work that is required under the volatile circumstances that prevail in Palestine.

44 Educational Statistical Yearbook for school year 2011-2012. Ministry of Education.

45 Ministry of Education, Survey on knowledge, perceptions and practices in water, sanitation and school hygiene in the occupied Palestinian territories. Ministry of Education, UNICEF, with funding from the Australian Government. December 2011.

46 <http://www.atl.org.uk>. Health and Safety. Accessed 13 June 2013.

47 Survey on Knowledge and trends of use of water and wastewater, school hygiene in OPT, Ministry of Education, UNICEF, with Australian Government funding, December 2011

48 Educational Statistical Yearbook for school year 2011-2012. Ministry of Education.

49 Educational databases. General Administration of Planning and Educational Statistical Yearbook 2012. Ministry of Education 2013.

50 Statistical Yearbook 2012-2013. General Administration for Educational Planning. Ministry of Education and Higher Education. Gaza..



#### **4.1.13 Child-Friendly Schools<sup>51</sup>**

The Ministry of Education has identified the following five criteria for a child-friendly school:

1. A friendly, healthy and supportive environment that strengthens the role of students and their participation in the educational process
2. The use of active learning and interaction with the environment
3. A school environment free of violence
4. Community participation in promoting and supporting the school and its activities
5. Friendly teachers

Areas which need work include gender sensitivity, effective stimulus, a review of the curricula, students, teachers, and the educational process and outputs. The results indicate that the degree of satisfaction with schools is lowest among parents and students compared to teachers. Students with disabilities are reluctant to attend school because of difficulties in commuting to and from school, fear of victimization and harassment by others in addition to their concerns to be rebuked by teachers. The Ministry aspires to address 70% of these issues during 2014.

#### **4.1.14 Violations Against Students and School**

Children and students in Area C are exposed to abuse and legal violations by Israeli soldiers and settlers such as, arrests and shootings. In 2011, 31 schools were attacked by Israeli soldiers and settlers. Two students were killed, 41 injured, 121 arrested and 31 detained. As a result of Israeli aggression teachers lost 462 school hours (an average of four hours per teacher) and students lost 572.9 hours of the first school period and a total of 859.4 class periods; in addition 203 class periods were lost due to curfews. As a result of curfews, students missed their first class period 36.6% of the time; 2,350 students were delayed for their first lesson with an average delay of 14.6 minutes.

The impact of Israeli aggression on the educational process for the 2011/2012 academic year can be summarized as follows:

- The number of classes missed by teachers due to delays was about 684 (171 teachers x 4 classes per teacher) in 2011 and 2,460 (98,400 minutes/40 minutes per class) for 638 teachers in 2012: losses were nearly four times greater in 2012 than in the previous year.
- The total number of days disrupted for 227 teachers and 5,040 students due to Israeli violations in the first semester of 2011 was 29 days; there were seven days of partial disruption for 139 teachers and 3,917 students. In the first semester of 2012, there were 32 days of total disruption for 638 teachers and 9,981 students and six days of partial disruption for 212 teachers and 3,049 students.

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51 The annual report to monitor and evaluate 2012. Ministry of Education.

Despite a negligible increase in the number of days of disruption, the disruptions affected twice as many students and three times the number of teachers in 2012 compared to the previous year.

The increase in Israeli violations in Area C from year to year also contributes to that region having the highest number of students suffering from psychological and social issues. The monitoring report of the Ministry of Education for 2011 and 2012 indicates that children in schools in Area C were subjected to challenging psychological and social circumstances and 9% of students were affected by problems associated with residing in an area under strict control by the Israeli occupation authorities. The Palestinian authorities do not have control over 10% of schools in Area C and children in those areas tend to have difficulty accessing health, education and social services and experience violence linked to Israeli settlers and soldiers. The results of the evaluation report indicated that a high percentage of students in government schools in Area C suffered from psychological and behavioral problems in 2012 (69.2%) compared to the previous year (38%).

**Table 3: Distribution of schools in Area C by location, 2012**

Schools in Area C	No.	Percentage
Schools affected by the wall	30	16
Schools affected by Israeli settlements	34	18
Jerusalem schools	32	17
Schools in the old town of Hebron	31	17
Remote schools	12	6
Schools affected by roadblocks and curfews	48	26
Total (10% of schools in West Bank, 9% of students)	187 School	100

Source: Ministry of Education, Educational databases. General Administration of Planning 2013.

**Table 4: Percentage of Students in Public Schools in Area C Experiencing Psychological or Social Problems, 2011-2012**

Psychological effects	School Year	
	2011	2012
Withdrawn behavior	40.0	66.9
Fear	39.0	68.2
Low motivation /desire to study	37.0	69.8
Anxiety	36.4	69.4
Aggressiveness	36.0	71.3
Speech disorders	35.0	71.1
Deviant social behavior	34.0	72.4
Hyperactivity	43.0	65.1
Total	38.0	69.2

Source: Ministry of Education. Educational databases. General Administration of Planning 2013.

As the figures from 2011 had almost doubled by 2012, this requires further investigation in order to determine whether there is a correlation with an increase in the number and severity of violations by Israel or whether this is due to the Ministry of Education targeting schools and different communities in Area C for the survey. The occupation remains a major obstacle to achieving national educational and qualitative goals as well as justice and equality in accessing services. Despite dedicated efforts on the part of the Ministry to raise the level of education in Palestine, some areas will continue to be marginalized due primarily to the Israeli occupation.

## 4.2 Health Status

An investment in children's health lays the foundation for a healthy society. A suitable legal environment, adequate policy planning and programs and dedicated budgets should support this. Education is needed to raise the awareness of children, families, society in general and also government of choices that support healthy patterns of living that prevent illness. Programs targeting children in general, with a focus on marginalized children and those at risk of marginalization, could reduce the impact of health and social issues among children in Palestine and ultimately reduce the financial burden of protecting children from disease, especially chronic diseases that may result in further complications and disabilities.

### 4.2.1 Spending on Health

The health sector spending accounts for approximately 11% of the public budget. Salaries form the bulk of the expenses of the Ministry, comprising 47.3% in 2011 but falling to 38.3% in 2012. Expenditure on curative/treatment services is ten times higher than that for preventive services. In 2011 the Ministry spent 65% of its budget on curative services compared to 6.6% on preventive services, which was lower than in 2010 (7.3%). Expenses for the treatment of chronic diseases comprise a significant percentage of the ministry's budget. In addition, the

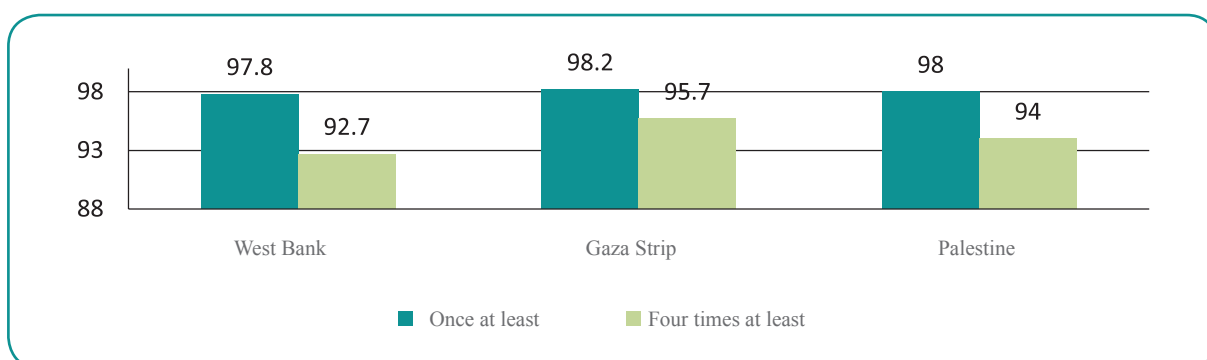
Ministry of Health does not provide any rehabilitation services, so these must be purchased from other providers. The Ministry has focused its policy on the health of the Palestinian child in terms of pre-natal and post natal maternal health, disease prevention, early detection and intervention of disease and disability, relieving suffering and the financial burdens resulting from chronic diseases, accidents and disability.

Spending on health increased during 2000-2008 to US \$893.8 million in 2008. According to data on funding sources, contributions by households and different government institutions were highest during this period with an average contribution by each of them of 37.4% and 35.4% respectively for total health expenditure. The percentage of health expenditure from the GDP increased from 9.5% in 2000 to 15.6% in 2008. The average per capita share of total expenses spent on health in Palestine was US \$165.5 per year.<sup>[52]</sup>

#### 4.2.2 Prenatal Care and Delivery

PCBS data indicated that most women aged 15-49 years who had given birth during the two years prior to the 2010 survey had received medical care during pregnancy at least four times (94.0%) and 98.0% of care had been from professional staff. The percentage in Gaza (95.7%) was higher than in the West Bank (92.7%). In the West Bank, the highest percentage was in Tulkarm (99.3%) and the lowest was in Hebron (88.3%). In Gaza, the highest percentage was in Rafah (98.9%) and lowest in northern Gaza (92.5%). The Ministry of Health data indicated that most births occurred in hospitals (governmental and non-governmental hospitals). A very small percentage of births occurred at home.

**Figure 23: Percentage of Women who Received Health Care During Pregnancy, 2010**

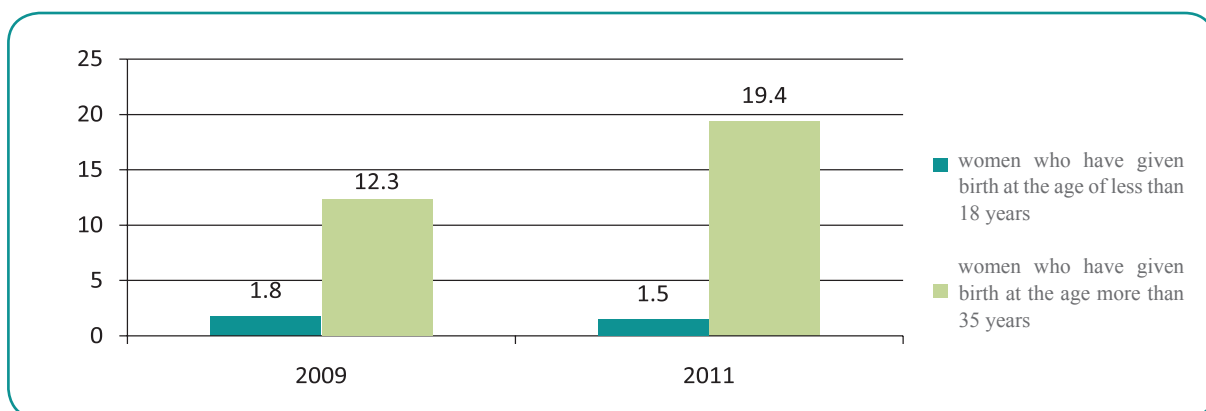


Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. Palestinian Family Survey, 2010. Main Report. Ramallah-Palestine .

52 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Health, 2011. National Health Accounts 2000-2008, basic results. Ramallah - Palestine.

There was no significant change in the percentage of births to women under 18 years of age from 2009 (1.8%) to 2011 (1.5%) while there was a significant increase in the percentage of births to women aged 35 years and over (12.3% in 2009 and 19.4% in 2011). This is a result of several factors, including the increasing participation of women in higher education and in the labor market and a trend towards longer periods between pregnancies.

**Figure 24: Percentage of Women who have Given Birth Aged Less than 18 Years old and more than 35 Years, 2009, 2011**



Source: Ministry of Health, annual reports of 2009, 2011

#### 4.2.3 Stillbirths

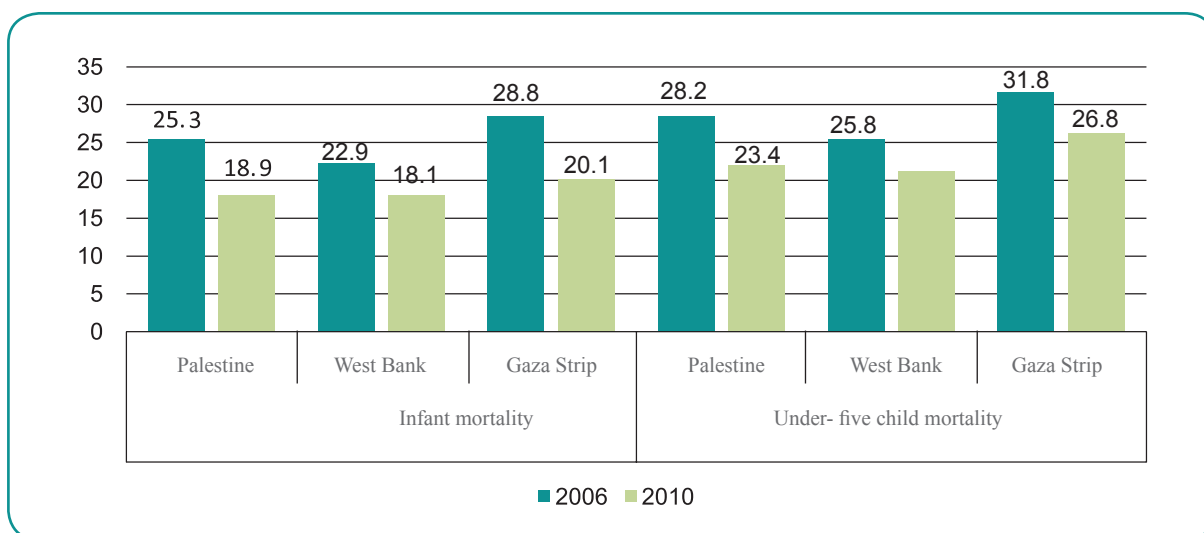
This indicator may be linked to the quality of pre-natal care. The total number of stillbirths in the West Bank 2009 was 198 births compared to 238 in 2010 and 227 in 2011. In the West Bank the rate was 3.5 per 1000 live births, which is lower than the previous year (11 per 1000 live births). In 2010, the percentage in the Gaza Strip was 6.3 per 1000 live births (378 stillbirths), but data on this indicator are relatively weak because of poor reporting, especially in the private sector. This indicator reflects the importance of preventive care and programs before and during pregnancy.

#### 4.2.4 Infant mortality

Infant mortality is considered an indicator of social and health conditions in a country. In general, a decline in child mortality and children under five years of ages was noted in Palestine (West Bank and Gaza Strip) from 2006. The highest rate was among males and was correlated to an increase in maternal age, although it decreased in relation to the educational level of the mother. This reflects the importance of education for women and also highlights an improvement in health services, especially basic ones. For the period 2005-2010, figures for infant mortality for Palestine were similar to those for Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt but almost four times higher than those for Israel.<sup>[53]</sup>

53 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_countries\\_by\\_infant\\_mortality\\_rate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_infant_mortality_rate) from CIA world fact book

**Figure 25: Infant Mortality Per 1,000 Live Births for 2006 and 2010**



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. Palestinian Family Survey, 2010. Main Report. Ramallah-Palestine  
 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. 2006 Palestinian Family Survey, 2010.

There is a strong correlation between infant mortality and social status (an inverse correlation to wealth and mother education). Infant mortality was high, especially during the first month of birth (11.6 per 1000 live births) compared to the period for ages 1-11 months (7.3 per 1000 live births). This may be due to improper healthcare during pregnancy or pre-natal and post natal care, poverty, premature birth, low birth weight and other reasons such as injury or infectious diseases, including respiratory and pulmonary infections.

### Main Causes of Death

Administrative records and reports of the Ministry of Health indicate that respiratory diseases were the primary cause of death among infants, followed by congenital malformations, low birth weight and blood poisoning. The main causes of child mortality in the 1-4 age group in the West Bank are birth defects, respiratory diseases, accidents, diseases of the nervous system, cancer, infectious diseases, malnutrition and metabolic imbalances. In the older age groups, the main causes of death were cancers, traffic accidents, respiratory diseases and pneumonia.<sup>[54]</sup> Traffic accidents may be considered the largest risk factor for children over one year of age compared to children below one year and are also the biggest cause of severe and medium type injury among children aged less than one year. Infectious respiratory diseases, premature birth and low birth weight are greater risk factors for younger children, but these can be prevented. Special care is essential for children during pregnancy and after birth to protect them from risk factors and death.

Although evidence is inconclusive on the causes of sudden death in children, putting a baby to sleep on its stomach, low birth weight or premature birth, subjecting the child to smoking in or out of the womb, poverty, teenage pregnancy, and sometimes suffocation as a result of sleeping with parents are considered to be factors. It is possible to raise awareness about these issues. Spacing pregnancies may reduce the likelihood of premature birth complications and thus the risk of death of newborns.

54 Annual Health Reports of 2010, 2011, 2012.

Data from a household survey conducted in 2010 indicated that 68.0% of mothers who had not completed their secondary school education took medical advice from an appropriate source, while only 59.4% of mothers who had completed their secondary school education did. 73% of children with suspected pneumonia were taken to appropriate provider from the West Bank compared to 56.0% in the Gaza Strip, it is higher for male children than females (66.5% compared to 62.4%), while the percentage were higher in urban areas than rural areas and refugee camps (67.4%, 65.3% and 50.9% respectively) and among wealthier families than poorer families (75% compared to 58%). Data indicate that one-third of mothers were aware of the symptoms of pneumonia and mothers in poorer families had greater knowledge of the symptoms and pneumonia than the mothers in wealthier families (35.7% compared to 29.0%). Although it was greater in Gaza and the refugee camps than in the West Bank but they did not take medical advice, not taking this advise may be due to the nature of the mother's work, it is difficult to leave during working time to attend a clinic, especially since government and UNRWA clinics working hours until three o'clock in the afternoon. After that time the child would have to attend a private clinic, which is costly.

#### 4.2.5 Traffic Accidents

In 2009 the Ministry of Health implemented a program to monitor traffic accidents in the West Bank which introduced measures to reduce the incidence of traffic accidents and related injuries. These included fines for speeding, using a mobile phone while driving or not wearing a seat belt, fixing maximum speed limits in some areas, putting speed bumps on some roads, especially in front of schools, making adjustments to infrastructure to raise awareness about public safety on roads, and introducing vehicle inspection for licensing and insuring vehicles. An increase in reported traffic accidents may therefore be attributed to improved reporting and documentation in both governmental and non-governmental sectors. During the period May - December 2009, there was a total of 3,903 accident-related injuries. The highest number of injuries occurred in Nablus, Ramallah, Jerusalem and Hebron within the 5-17 age group.

In 2010, there were 7,412 registered traffic accidents; 19.5% of the cases involved children under five years. There were 41 deaths. Most of the accidents involved males in the governorates of Ramallah and Nablus. No disabilities resulting from traffic accidents were reported in that year.

In 2011, there were 106 deaths due to traffic accidents and the death rate due to traffic accidents in the 0-4 age group was 6 per 100,000 people and 3.2 per 100,000 people among children in the 5-14 age group. There were 8,132 injuries, 74 resulting in a mobility-related disability; 71 of these occurred in Ramallah, Nablus, Jenin and Hebron. At least 20 cases of disability involved children and the highest percentage of severe and medium injuries were among children under one year of age.<sup>[55]</sup>

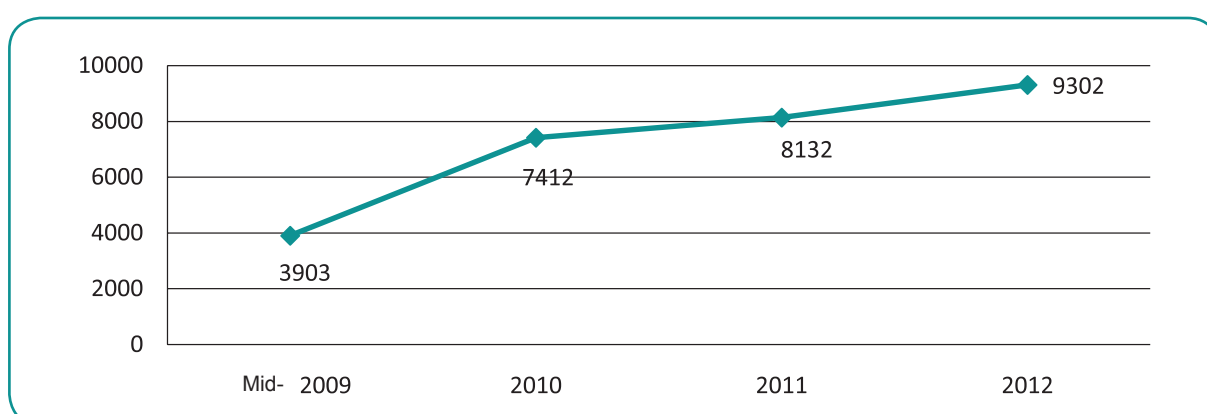
55 Annual Health Reports. Ministry of Health, 2009, 2010, 2011.

In 2012, about 9,302 injuries resulted from accidents, with the highest number occurring in Ramallah, Nablus and Hebron. These accidents resulted in 112 deaths (with at least 31 children died). In the West Bank, 1,661 children in the 0-14 age group were injured as a result of traffic accidents, representing 18.2% of total casualties from traffic accidents that year. Twenty-two children were left with disabilities: 19 involved physical/ motor impairment and another visual impairment.<sup>[56]</sup>

The areas where the highest number of injuries occurred are not necessarily the areas where the most severe injuries occurred. For example, Tulkarm had the highest number of severe injuries, Ramallah and Al Bireh had the highest percentage of minor injuries and Nablus had the highest number of moderate injuries.

It is important that the site of an accident, such as a city or village, be noted. The volume of traffic in Ramallah currently exceeds its capacity, with many families have more than one car. In addition, the causes of accidents must be analyzed, for example, excessive speed, inadequate infrastructure, vehicles not being roadworthy or non-compliance with traffic rules by pedestrians or drivers, including wearing a seatbelt.

**Figure 26: Number of Injuries in Reported Accidents in West Bank by Year**



Source: Ministry of Health, annual reports of 2009, 2010, 2011.

#### 4.2.6 Immunization Against Infectious Diseases<sup>[57]</sup>

Over 95% of the children is vaccinated in Palestine, which has contributed to the elimination of many infectious diseases. Available data does not specify the incidence of disease among children.

The last case of polio was reported in 1988, and one case of measles was reported in Jerusalem in 2010. No cases were reported in 2011. The ministry vaccinates children with two doses of measles at the age of 12 months and 18 months. Pregnant women attending government clinics are vaccinated against tetanus. The percentage of tuberculosis (TB) vaccine coverage in 2011

56 Unpublished data, Health information Center, Ministry of Health.

57 Annual Health Reports. Ministry of Health, 2009, 2010, 2010.



was 98%. There were no reports of any deaths due to tuberculosis, and only one case was reported in Gaza in 2012 in a child below the age of fifteen. No cases were reported of neonatal tetanus during the past eight years, with an exception of one case in 2011. During 2009 one case of tetanus was reported in the south of Hebron and one case in 2011 in Ramallah. No cases were reported during 2010. Mumps spread dramatically, especially after 2003 and particularly in Nablus; 4,000 cases were reported due to the deterioration in the political situation and incursions, and the impact of frequent power outages on the safety of the vaccine.

Hepatitis A and viral meningitis are the most prevalent infections per 100,000 of population. The incidence of Hepatitis A decreased after 2009, but viral meningitis increased in the Gaza Strip where there were three times as many cases as in the West Bank. Bacterial meningitis due to *Haemophilus Influenza* (Hib B) is relatively low due to efficient vaccination coverage among children through the Ministry of Health, UNRWA and the private sector. A higher number of cases of meningococcal disease were reported in Gaza compared to the West Bank, with similar numbers of cases of meningitis due to *Streptococcus pneumoniae* reported in both areas.

Most cases of hepatitis A cases occurred in early childhood. Hepatitis B and C were more widespread in the West Bank than in the Gaza Strip. There was no case of type B epidemic hepatitis among children under the age of fifteen. Since 1992 children have been vaccinated at birth, at one month and at 6 months against this disease. Brucellosis spread during the summer, with 25 times more cases reported in the West Bank than in Gaza in the years 2010 and 2011 and the highest number of cases occurring in Hebron. HIV/AIDS is not a major problem in Palestine. Since 1988 around 72 cases have been reported; 5.5% of the cases were due to blood transfusion and 2.8% were the result of mother to child transmission. Detailed data on these cases is needed, however.

#### **4.2.7 Nutritional indicators**

The right to adequate quantities and quality of food is one of the basic rights of a child. Studies point to the importance of adequate nutrition for both baby and mother during pregnancy. Breastfeeding exclusively during the first six months of a child's life enhances an infant's immunity against disease. Studies show that infant mortality increases with low birth weight (below 2500 g) and the probability increases by 40% in children who weigh less than 1000 grams at birth.

There is a direct relationship between vitamin A deficiency and stunting, retarded growth, night blindness, and increases in deaths when the body becomes susceptible to infections. Anemia due to iron deficiency may lead to increased rates of maternal and infant mortality, the chance of stillbirth, low birth weight, premature delivery, and the possibility of damage to the fetal brain. To prevent vitamin A deficiency, mothers should be educated about the benefits of breastfeeding as mother's milk is a natural source of vitamin A and provides infants with adequate amounts of vitamin A at breastfeeding age.<sup>[58]</sup>

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58 <http://www.who.int/nutrition/topics/vad/en/>

## **Breastfeeding**

The percentage of children (0-5 months) who were exclusively breastfed was 28.8%, while 54.4% of children (12-15 months) were continuously breastfed for one year, and 13.2% of children (20-23 months) for two years. Exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months increases with the mother's education (31% among mothers with secondary or higher education compared to 13% among non-educated mothers), and wealth (37.6% among the wealthier compared to 23% among the poorest).<sup>[59]</sup> This may be attributed to the need of working mothers to return to work after maternity leave, which according to Palestinian Labor Law is provided at 70 days. Despite the fact that the Labor Law gives the mother the right to one hour breastfeeding leave per day for a year after delivery, most mothers use this to leave work an hour earlier as it may be impossible to reach their child and return to the workplace within an hour. Continuous breastfeeding up to the age of one year and for a longer period occurred more often in rural areas (65.2%), and among mothers who did not receive education (72.4%), and among the poorest mothers (64.4%) and for male children more than female children. This is a clear indication of the high level of awareness among marginalized groups about the importance of breastfeeding.

## **Vitamins and Dietary Supplements**

The Ministry of Health distributes vitamin A and D free of charge at primary health care centers, but the percentage of children (0-12 months) who received the vitamin was relatively low (73.3%), especially in Gaza Strip (60.0%) during the six months prior to the survey in 2010. The reasons for this need to be examined further to ascertain if it relates to a lack of awareness on the part of mothers, or insufficient attention given by nurses and doctors to communicating the importance of these vitamins and proper intake.

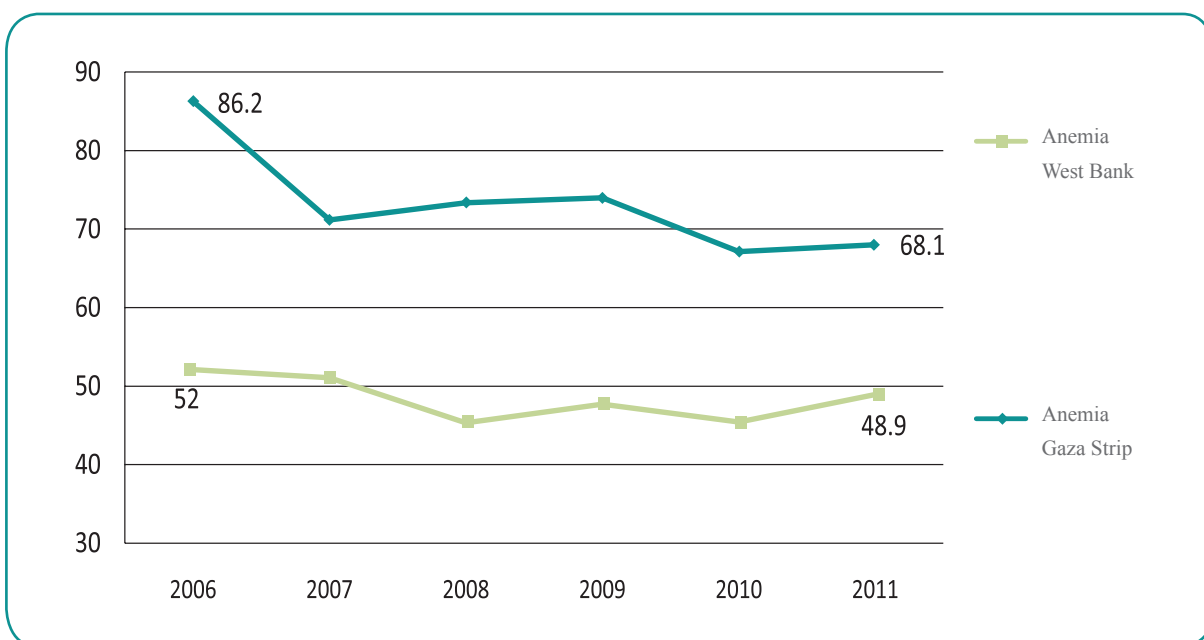
## **Underweight, Wasting, Stunting, and Anemia**

Underweight is a significant indicator of the nutritional, social and health status of children and is usually associated with acute malnutrition. Stunting is linked to chronic malnutrition, which may also reflect poverty. Anemia is associated with the availability of food (quantity and quality), the health status of the child in terms of healthy eating habits, or any problem that may affect the absorption of iron by the child.

Around 9.1% of the children who were underweight at birth during the two years preceding the survey in 2010 weighed less than 2,500 grams. This was more common in Gaza than in the West Bank, but the differences were small. Since 2006, anemia rates have decreased, especially in the Gaza Strip, but the percentage still remains very high. Other nutritional indicators are low and relatively similar for the West Bank and Gaza Strip. There is an urgent need to identify the reasons for this, especially as the Ministry of Health and UNRWA distribute a free iron supplement at primary health care centers. Nutritional interventions have been in place for more than 20 years. The figures below illustrate that anemia is the nutritional indicator of greatest concern and that the health situation in Gaza Strip is worse than in the West Bank in terms of nutritional indicators.

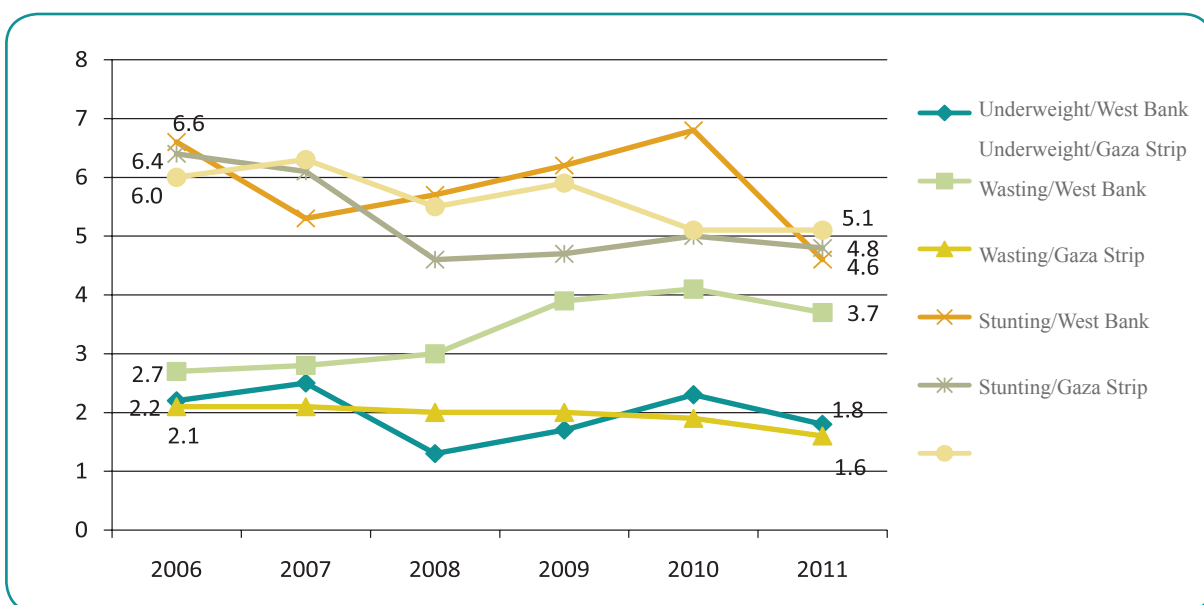
59 PCBS Household Survey 2010. UNICEF report on the analysis of the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. March version 2013.

**Figure 27: Prevalence of Anemia Among Children Aged 9-12 Months by Region, 2006-2011**



Source: Ministry of Health, Nutritional Surveillance Indicators Report 2011, page 93.

**Figure 28: Prevalence of Malnutrition Among Children 9-12 Months by Region, 2006-2011**

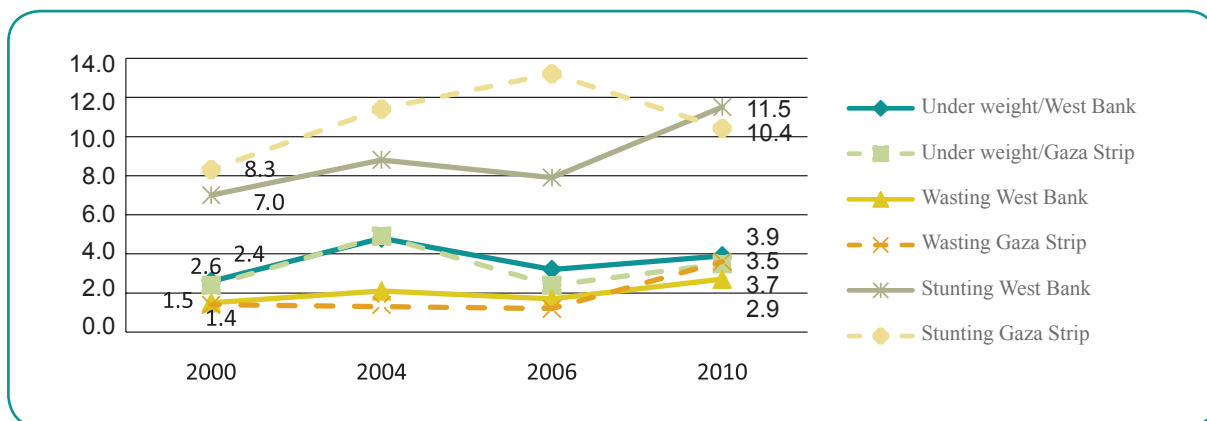


Source: Ministry of Health, Nutritional Surveillance Indicators Report 2011, page 93.

PCBS data show that 3.7% of children under five are moderately underweight; the figures are higher in the West Bank than in Gaza Strip. In addition, one percent are severely underweight. Around 11% of children under five suffer from moderate stunting, with a higher incidence in the West Bank than the Gaza Strip; 3.7% suffer from acute malnutrition. The percentage of children under five who suffer from moderate (3.3%) or severe (1.0%) wasting is much higher in the Gaza Strip than in the West Bank. Data from the Palestinian Household Survey of 2010

indicated that 5.3% of children under five were overweight, with a higher incidence in the West Bank and urban areas than in Gaza Strip and refugee camps. Jericho governorate and the Jordan Valley had the highest incidence and the incidence was higher among males than in females. This indicator is inversely correlated to the educational level of the mother.

**Figure 29: Prevalence of Malnutrition Among Children Under Five by Region, 2000-2010**



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. Palestinian Family Survey, 2010. Main Report. Ramallah-Palestine

The results of a nutritional surveillance study conducted in 2008-2010 found that the incidence of stunting in the age group 5-10 was higher in the Gaza Strip than in the West Bank. These indicators reflect the chronic nutritional status of the child, which is usually associated with the educational level of the mother and family income. Poverty is one of the main causes of chronic malnutrition. The results do not indicate nutritional percentages in the 3-5 years age group. Generally speaking, anemia is still a significant national health problem compared to wasting, stunting and underweight.

Children in the Gaza Strip suffer from anemia to a greater extent than do children in the West Bank. The problem is compounded in the governorates of Gaza, Khan Younis and Qalqilya. The reasons must be identified, especially as interventions in this area date back twenty years as mentioned earlier. Around 19.4% of Palestinian children in the age group of 6-59 months suffer from anemia; the percentage is 25.6% in the Gaza Strip.

**Figure 30: Percentage of Children 6-59 Months Living with Anemia by Region, 2010**



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. Palestinian Family Survey, 2010. Main Report. Ramallah-Palestine

Considering the amount of assistance that has been provided, this gap in health status between the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and the high rates of poverty in the Gaza Strip, are worrying, especially in terms of the delivery of assistants to the neediest on the one hand, and the proper quality and quantity of the assistants on the other hand. The substantial cash and food assistance from the Ministry of Social Affairs in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and from various sources, including social solidarity, social assistance and nutritional programs by local and international civil institutions were expected to mitigate the severity of the situation on the ground and reduce the gap. In addition, the majority of the population in Gaza are refugees who already receive social assistance from UNRWA.

#### **4.2.8 Smoking**

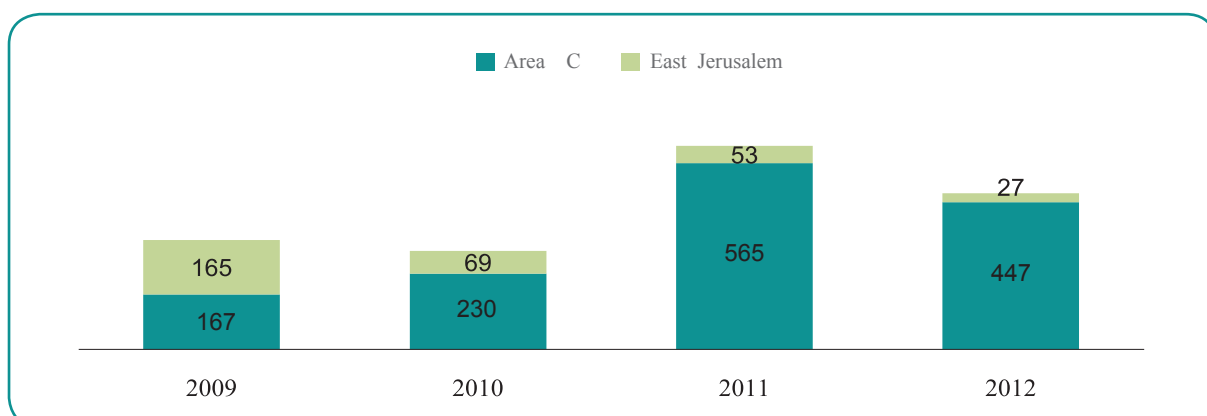
According to PCBS data in 2010, 1.6% of children aged 10-17 years smoke: 1.3% smoke cigarettes and 0.2% smoke water pipes. Smoking is 12 times higher in the West Bank than in Gaza Strip and it is 30 times higher among males than females. The social, economic, religious or other reasons for this need to be examined.

#### **4.3 Children Under Occupation**

UNICEF documents cases in which children are killed, wounded, forcibly displaced or recruited with an asserted intention of harm (for use as human shields or as informers) by Israel.<sup>[60]</sup> It does not document some violations, such as traffic accidents caused by Israeli settlers in Palestine. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) also documents all cases, regardless of intent. The different filters of these two agencies results in some differences in figures. Child victims whose age group was unknown are designated Age 0.

60 The Global Movement for the Defense of Children monitors and reports violations of children's rights. When comparing figures, the source and methodology for collecting information must be considered.

**Figure 31: Number of Children Forcibly Displaced in Area C and East Jerusalem because of House Demolition by Israeli Occupation Forces, 2009-2012**



Source: Global Movement for the Defense of Children, 2013.

### 4.3.1 Injured Children

Data indicated that the number of injured children doubled in 2012 from 2011. The number was higher in older age groups, with the highest number of children injured by the Israeli occupation was in the age group 15-17 years; most were males.

**Table 5: Number of Injured Children by Gender and Year**

Gender	2010	2011	2012	Total
Male	342	393	641	1376
Female	18	56	25	99
Total	360	449	666	1475

Source: Global Movement for the Defense of Children, 2013.

The causes of injury range from settler violence (12.5%) to military action, mines and explosive remnants of war (3.6% of cases during the past three years), and accidents, especially in Area C, Jerusalem, Gaza, Hebron and some areas of the West Bank. The number of injured children increases by age, particularly among males. There was also an increase in deaths and injuries among civilians, mostly children (40%), as a result of mines and the unexploded remnants of war. <sup>[61]</sup>

### 4.3.2 Child Martyrs

Most martyred children were killed as a result of Israeli military actions, mines and the remnants of war (10%) in Gaza and by settler violence in the West Bank (7.4%). Incidences of child killing have doubled, especially for males. In 2012 the number of martyred children was five times higher than in 2010. The highest number of martyrs was among children under 15 years of age; the number has tripled since 2011 and is 30 times higher than in 2010.

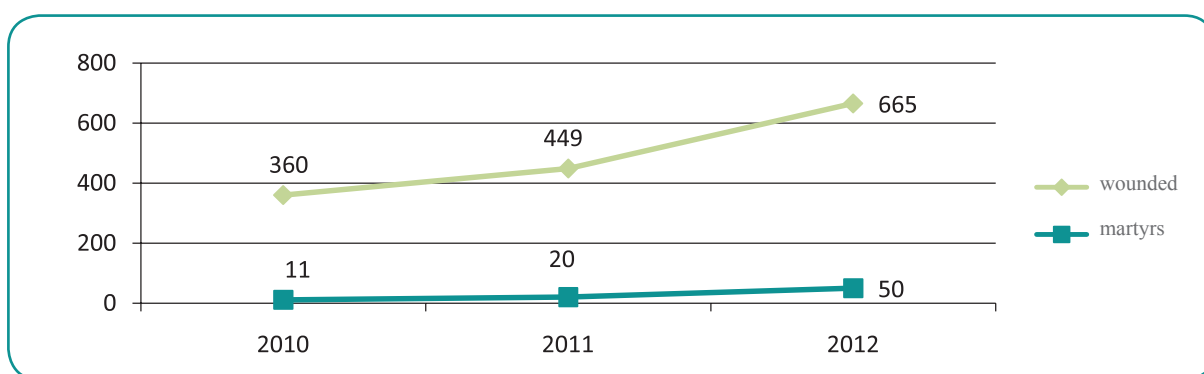
61 CAP 2013 Humanitarian Urgent Appeal - United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

**Table 6: Number of children martyred by region, year, and cause**

Year	Region	No.	Cause
2010	Gaza Strip	7	Mines, explosive remnants of war and military activities
	West Bank	4	Settler violence
2011	Gaza Strip	18	Mines, explosive remnants of war and military activities
	West Bank	2	Settler violence
2012	Gaza Strip	46	Mines, explosive remnants of war and military activities
	West Bank	4	

Source: Global Movement for the Defense of Children, 2013.

**Figure 32: Number of Martyrs and Wounded Children 2010-2012**



Source: Global Movement for the Defense of Children, 2013.

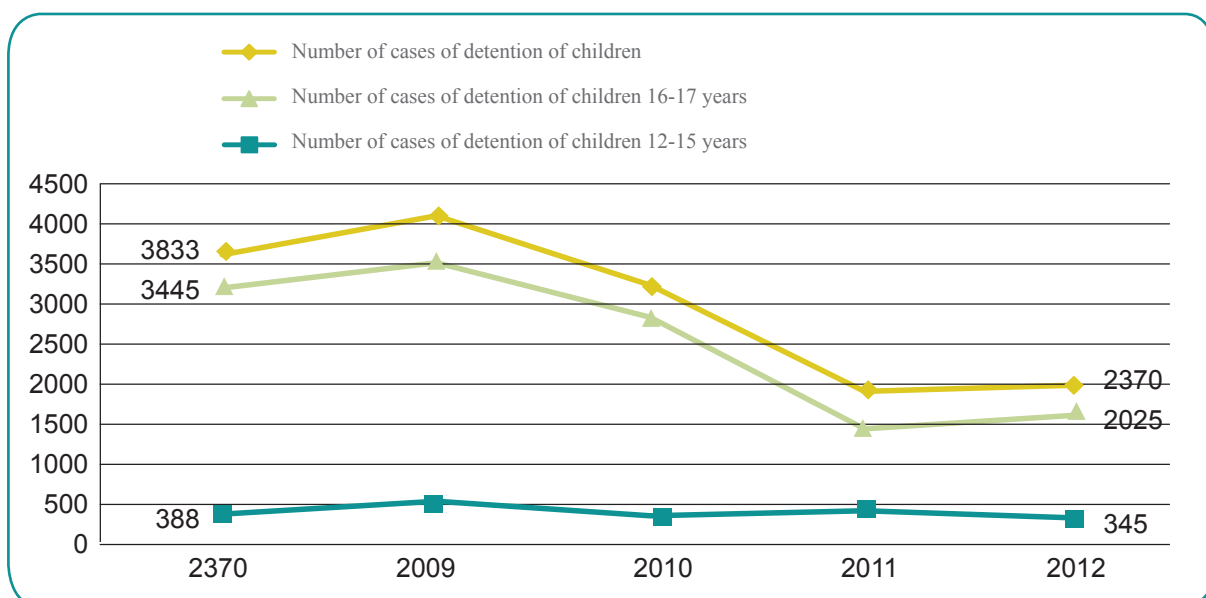
### 4.3.3 Child detainees<sup>[62]</sup>

Most of the children who have been arrested and charged have been in the 16-17 year age group. The figures below represent the total number of detention cases per month. The number of children arrested every month differs and there are cases of some having been released in one month and arrested again in another. It is therefore more accurate to use cases of arrest and not the number of children detained. Data from the Ministry of Detainees and Ex-detainees indicated that the Israeli occupation authorities were holding 198 children (13-18 years of age) as of 31 January 2013 under harsh conditions and in flagrant violation of their rights. Children represented 4.2% of the 4,750 detainees. The data in 2013 also revealed that among the detained children there were 25 children under the age of 16 years. Hundreds of detainees were arrested as children but reached the age of 18 years while still in detention.<sup>[63]</sup> In general, cases of administrative detention and the arrest of females are relatively low.

62 <http://arabic.dci-palestine.org/content/11/5/2013>

63 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. Child Report: issues and statistics 2013.

**Figure 33: Number of Cases of Detention of Children by Age Group and Year**



Source: Global Movement for the Defense of Children, 2013.

#### 4.3.4 The Recruitment and Use of Children as Informants or Human Shields

In general, the reports that are filed in this regard are insufficient to reflect the real situation on the ground. There is an urgent need to educate children who are being arrested and to debrief them in a child-friendly way to prevent them from being recruited as informants.

#### 4.4 Protection

##### 4.4.1 Child Labor and Economic Exploitation

Article 14 of the Palestinian Child Law and Article 93 of the Palestinian Labor Law ban the employment of children under the age of fifteen years. Children aged 15-17 years may work subject to certain conditions, including limited work hours, the provision of semi-annual medical examinations and being banned from dangerous jobs. The Child Law was amended to include children working with first-degree relatives as child labor. As amended, Article 14 of the Palestinian Child Law reads:<sup>[64]</sup>

1. Taking into account the standards and controls referred to in the Labor Law and the regulations issued there under, the employment of children before the age of fifteen years is banned.
2. The employment of children or using them or assigning any hazardous acts or occupations or other businesses and professions defined by the Ministry of Labor that would hinder their education or damage their safety or their physical or mental health, including work with first degree relatives, are prohibited.

64 This article was amended under Article 4 of the Decree Law No. ( ) of 2012 due to the amendment of the Palestinian Child Law No. 7 of 2004.



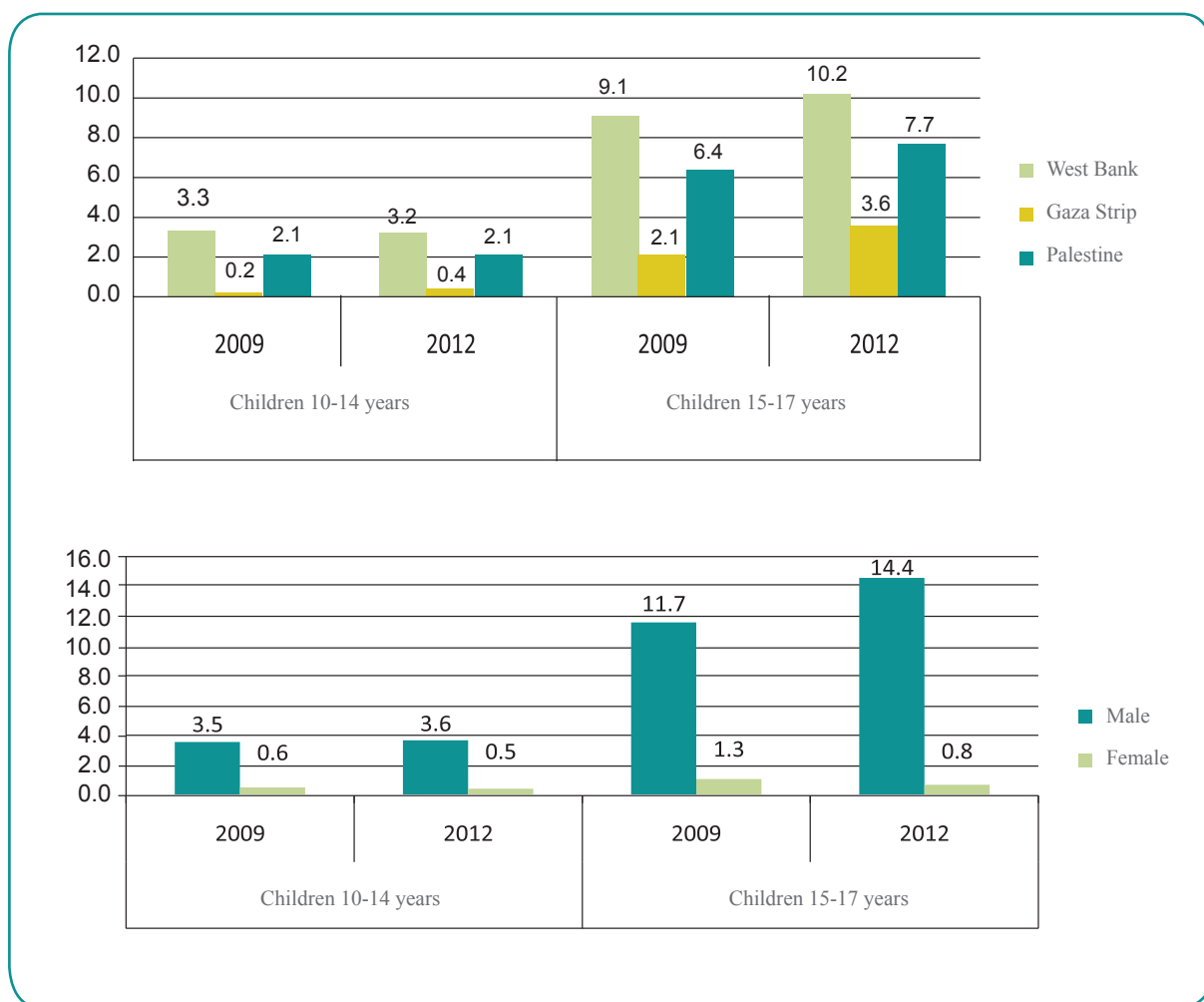
3. Punishable by a fine of not less than one thousand Jordanian dinars and not more than two thousands Jordanian dinars for anyone who violates the provisions of this article, and with multiple punishments as per the number of children employed, and to be doubled in the case of repetition of the violation. In addition, in the event of repeat violations and upon the recommendation of the Minister of Social Affairs, the Minister of Labor shall, close the establishment partially or completely.

In contrast, Article 37 of the Child Law states that every child has the right to educate through secondary school (18 years old) and that the government should take the necessary measures to prevent children from dropping out of school. However, many children, especially students with low academic performance, tend to drop out of school to work, especially if payment is relatively high as it is in Israel, in Israeli settlements or in Jerusalem. The Ministry of Social Affairs is pursuing this issue in relation to children under the age of fifteen years, while the Ministry of Labor monitors actions with regard to children over the age of fifteen. Data is not available for children who work as beggars, but this does not undermine the importance of the issue, and more attention is needed in this regard.

### **Working Child**

Data from the Ministry of Labor registers in 2009 indicated that 210 worker children (204 males and 6 females). The highest number was in Jenin. In 2012, there were 391 working children, of whom 272 were juveniles working on stalls and as street vendors (96), in trade (30), in industry (24), porters/ carriers (12), in construction (3), in mining (2) and in electricity (1). No information was available about the conditions of the work, the risks involved, or the number of working hours. Actual numbers can be expected to be considerably higher than those reported. Children working with their families during the holidays or for few hours after school do not qualify as child laborers and these figures includes only work that affect the health and education of the child. Some children are taken to Israel, Israeli settlements or Jerusalem for work, which is considered child trafficking and economic exploitation.

**Figure 34: Percentage of Working Children 10-17 Years by Region, Age and Sex 2009-2012**

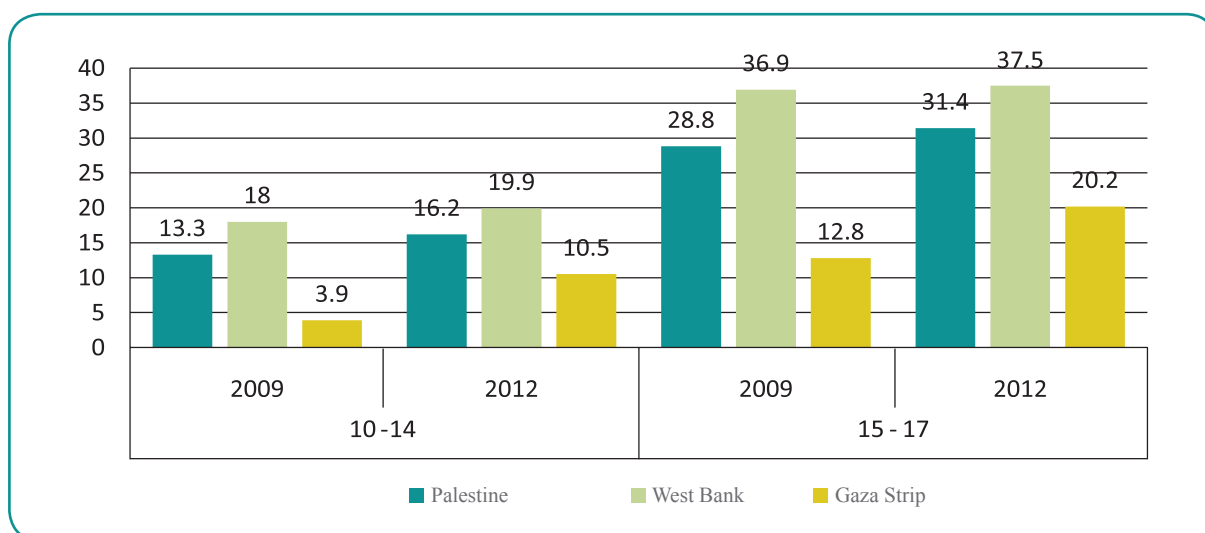


Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. Labor force survey data for 2009 and 2012.

The sectors in which children work include agriculture, fishing, trade, restaurants and hotels. The percentage of children aged 10-14 who worked did not change from 2009 to 2012, while the percentage in the 15-17 year age group increased from 6.4% to 7.7% over the same period of time. In 2012, the percentage in the West Bank was eight times higher for 10-14 year olds (3.2% and 0.4%) and nearly three times higher for 15-17 years old (10.2% and 3.6%) in Gaza Strip.<sup>[65]</sup> The percentage of working children who were not enrolled in school was 16.2% for the 10-14 age group and 31.4% for the 15-17 year old group respectively. The percentage of children who were attendance to school and working decreased to 1.8% for the 10-14 year age group while increased to 3.1% for the older group. although the slight increase in the percentage of working children in Palestine who are not attended to school, figures for Gaza Strip are worrying. The percentage tripled from 2009 to 2012 for the 10-17 years age group and increased from 13% to 20% for the 15-17 years old. This leads to the question of whether the overcrowded school environment in Gaza might influence children's decision to stay in schools.

65 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics 2013. Labor force survey 2009 and 2012.

**Figure 35: Percentage of Working Children 10-17 Years old who were not Attendance in Education by Region and Age in 2009-2012**



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. Labor force survey data for 2009 and 2012.

A recent survey by the Center for Democracy and Workers' Rights in the West Bank and Gaza showed that child labor is not associated with the loss of one or both parents, unemployment or lack of education on the part of the mother or father. Some children received assistance from the Ministry of Social Affairs, UNRWA or other institutions. Most working children owned a TV set in their homes and had satellite and basic electrical appliances; more than half had a cassette player and recorder and a computer. Most of them worked overtime on some days, and 30% did not get a break during working hours.

Some child laborers reported that they experienced verbal abuse from their employer. Most received payment for their work. Most working hours were after school or during the summer holidays. School performance was affected for half of the respondents but they were not considering leaving school. In almost one-third of cases the school was aware that the child worked and the school had been contacted the parents of about one third of these cases to determine the cause of absenteeism. However, in most cases, the parents were not called or provided with assistance, whether by a counselor (only in 14% of cases and upon insistence) or a labor inspector (8% of the cases and 13% of cases complied with children's rights as defined under the law). The study also showed that child labor<sup>[66]</sup> had a negative impact on children's mental health, resulting in anxiety, depression and stress. Some suffered from health problems resulting from their work, but most did not receive regular psychological or medical check-ups.

The main reasons given for children were the child's own desire to work coupled with poor academic performance, the desire to increase family income and the desire to purchase things for himself, especially in the older age groups.

66 Acts that may subject the child to danger or actions that adversely affect the child's health and education.

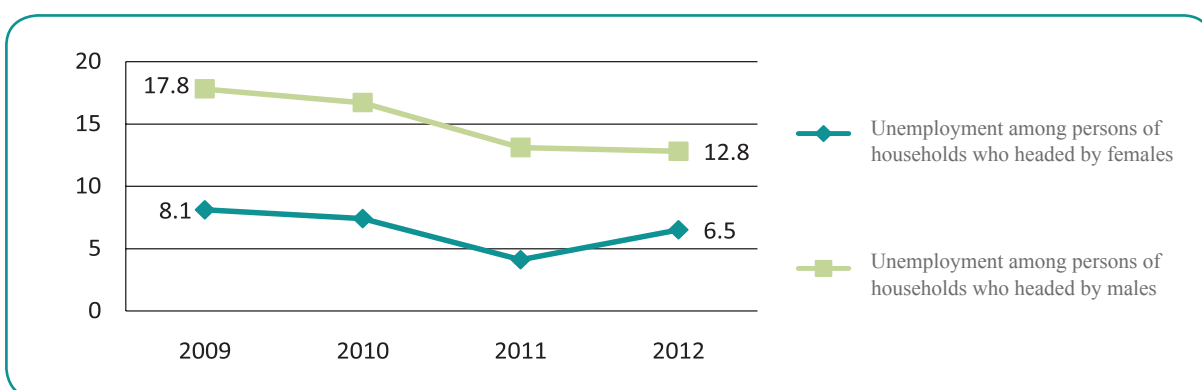
Experts have stated that the absence of a father over a long period of time can influence a child to take the decision to work. Some also indicated that some school principals encouraged children, with poor academic performance, whether directly or indirectly, to leave school in order to maintain a certain success rate at the school.

Given the fact that few schools have intervened or followed-up on the reasons for their students' absence, it is possible that child labor might be reduced by active regulation of compulsory education in accordance with the law and appropriate intervention when children drop out. In the case of Bedouin communities, a nomadic lifestyle results in irregular attendance of school with children sometimes preferring to work, most often within the family. There is a need to link child labor with the quality of education and discipline within the school and their impact on the students' academic performance. For further information, please see the study on child labor.

#### 4.4.2 Unemployment

The unemployment rate in Palestine rose from 20.9% in 2011 to 23.0% in 2012. There is still a significant difference in unemployment rates for men and women, with 32.9% of women and 20.5% of men unemployed in 2012. Conversely, the unemployment rate for women who head households was 6.5% in 2012, compared to 12.8% for men who head households. A high rate of unemployment is apparent in women with increased number of years of study, unlike among men. Data indicated that the participation of women in the labor force increased with increased years of schooling.<sup>[67]</sup> The number of women in the labor force with a university degree increased by 150% in 2011 comparing with 2000, leading to a rise in the overall participation of women in the labor force from 13% to 17%.<sup>[68]</sup> In general, the percentage of men in government and private jobs, especially in the higher echelons, is higher than the percentage of women.

**Figure 36: Unemployment Rate Among Persons Who Headed households bySex 2009-2012**



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2013. Labor force data, 2009 - 2012.

67 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. Women and men in Palestine: issues and statistics, 2012.

68 The Portland Trust. Palestinian Economic Bulletin. Issue 81. June 2013.

### 4.4.3 Poverty

Basic poverty and deep poverty thresholds are determined based on the consumption patterns of households. An assessment of basic poverty looks at basic needs (food, clothing and housing) as well as health care, education, transport and communications, personal care, furniture and other home accessories. Deep poverty looks at the basic needs only (food, clothing and housing). Poverty thresholds are calculated on the basis of family composition, family size and number of children. The reference household is one of five members (two adults and three children).<sup>[69]</sup>

In 2010-2011, PCBS invested substantially in reviewing its original (1998) poverty measurement and trends methodology to meet international best practice standards, which primarily involve the following: (a) adjusting for spatial price differences; (b) calculating poverty headcount at individual rather than household level; and (c) ensuring that poverty lines over time reflect the same purchasing power, which necessitates that the poverty line is adjusted for price inflation using official CPI.

In 2009 and 2010, there was a change in the composition of households in Palestinian society. To reflect this change, instead of a reference household of two adults and four children, the reference household became one with two adults and three children (the most common household composition). The 2007 census and other recent household surveys clearly reflect this change. Accordingly, 2010 was considered as a new base year for estimating poverty rates.

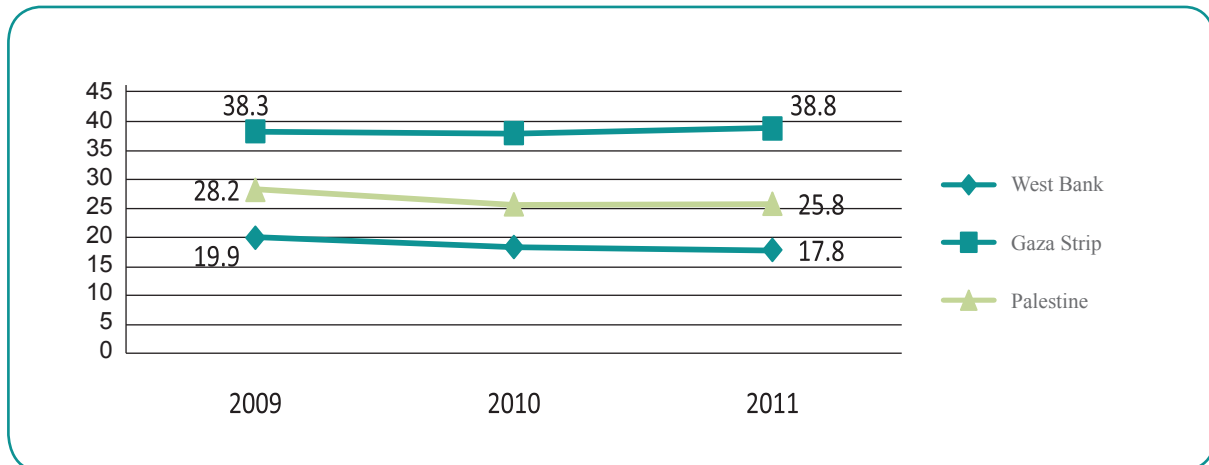
The results are presented for 2011 using available data from the twelve Palestinian Expenditure and Consumption Survey 2011. Given the day-to-day changes in the Palestinian political situation, both consumption and income data were used to analyze poverty rates and illustrate variations in standards of living due to fluctuations in income, remittances, loans and social aid on which households depend.

### Spread of poverty

The percentage of poverty among individuals during 2011 based on consumption patterns was 25.8% (17.8% in the West Bank and 38.8% in the Gaza Strip) compared to 25.7% in 2010 (18.3% in the West Bank and 38% in the Gaza Strip). This means that the poverty rate in Gaza is twice that of the West Bank, but has not changed significantly compared to 2009 and 2010. When making comparisons, one should take into account errors in marginal statistical surveys and studies. The decline or rise in the percentage was very minimal and was not considered a significant change.

69 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2011. Poverty in the Palestinian Territory .Main Findings Report, 2009-2010. Ramallah- Palestine

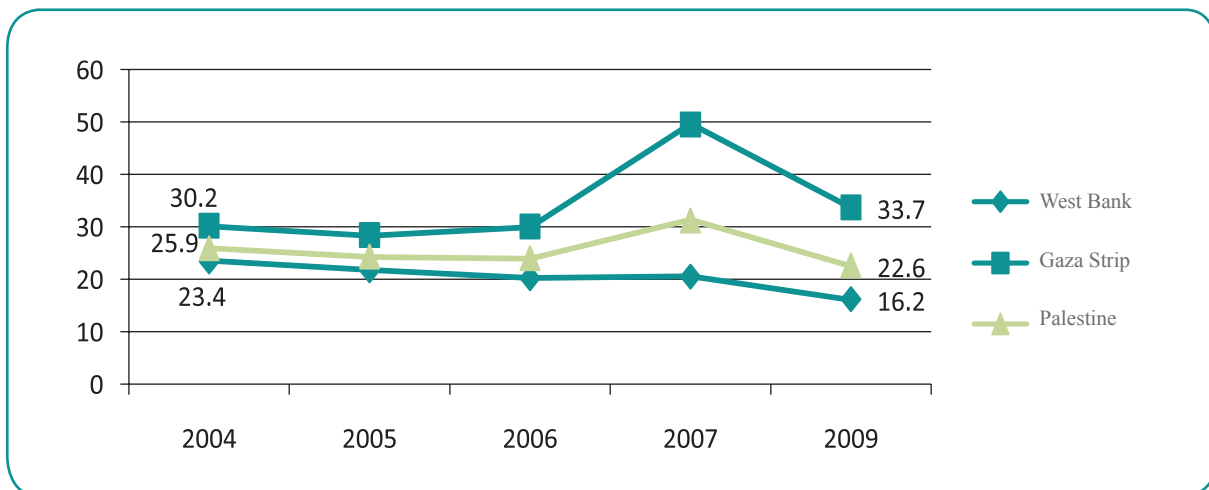
**Figure 37: Poverty Rate Among Individuals 2009-2011**



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2013. Expenditure and Consumption Survey 2009-2011.

The following figure represents poverty rates among individuals based on monthly household consumption patterns for 2004-2009 for the purpose of comparison.

**Figure 38: Poverty Rates Among Individuals According to Monthly Household Consumption Patterns for 2004-2009**



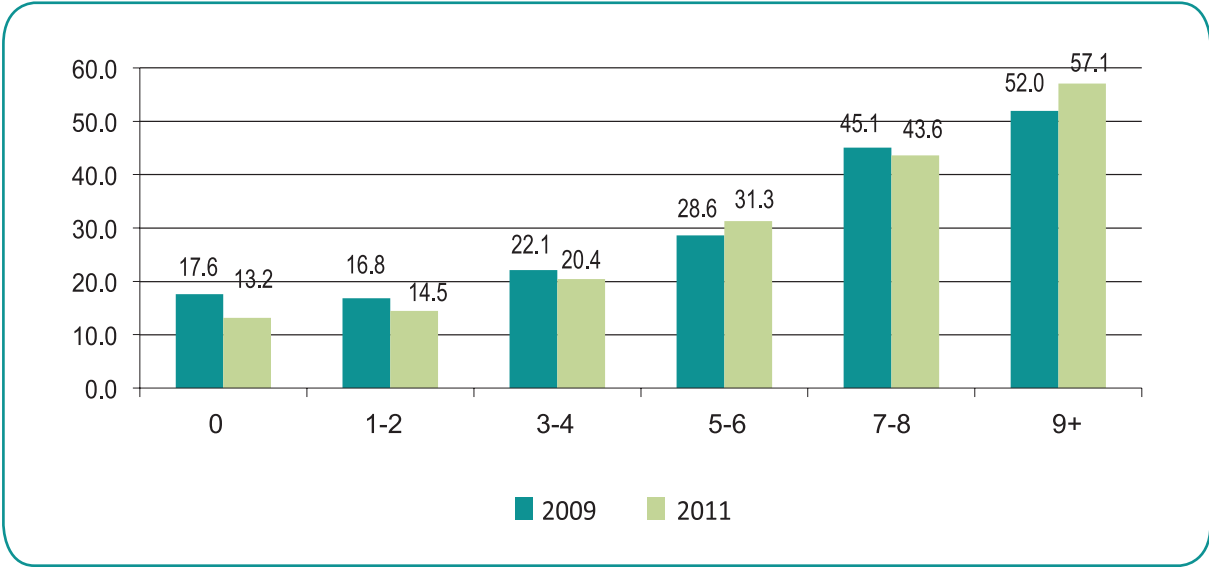
Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2013. Expenditure and Consumption Household Survey 2004-2009.

Poverty rates increased by household size and number of children. Poverty in households with children totaled 22.7% in 2011 compared to 13.2% in households with no children. One household in five with children suffers from poverty; the percentage is twice as high for the Gaza Strip as for the West Bank. The percentage of children living in poverty was 27.6% in 2009 (20% in the West Bank and 38.9% in the Gaza Strip) and 27.2% in 2011 (18.4% in the West Bank and 39.3% in Gaza). In 2011, 13.9% of children were living in deep poverty compared to 14.4% in 2009. Poverty was higher in some places of residence: individuals residing in refugee camps were the most vulnerable to poverty (32.4%), followed by urban areas (25.8%), with the

lowest percentages in rural areas (12.1%). Poverty was also higher in female-headed households in 2010 than in 2009 and in cases where the head of the household was not working. Source of income is also a factor: poverty was higher in households that relied on agriculture (32%), followed by households drawing an income from the private sector (31.1%), those relying on remittances and aid (30.4%) and those drawing an income from the public sector (19.2%).<sup>[70]</sup>

In general, the poverty rate varies by region and source of income and may be correlated to household size, type of community, number of children, the sex of the head of the household and the employment status of the head of the household.

**Figure 39: Poverty Rates among Households According to Monthly Consumption Patterns Depending on Number of Children in the Household 2009-2011**



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2013. Expenditure and Consumption Survey database 2011, (unpublished data.).

Data showed that consumption by the richest was more than five times the consumption of the poor, as evidenced by the high inequality indicator in 2010 compared to 2009, and in the West Bank compared to the Gaza Strip. The data showed that the poverty gap shrank by 40% upon receipt of aid and aid contributed to the reduction of poverty in the Gaza Strip by 21.2% and by 10.7% in the West Bank and refugee camps by more than other regions.<sup>[71]</sup>

70 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. Poverty in the Palestinian Territories 2009-2011.

71 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. Poverty in the Palestinian Territories 2009-2011.

## Poor children

The percentage of children living in poverty in 2011 was higher than in 2009, especially in the Gaza Strip.

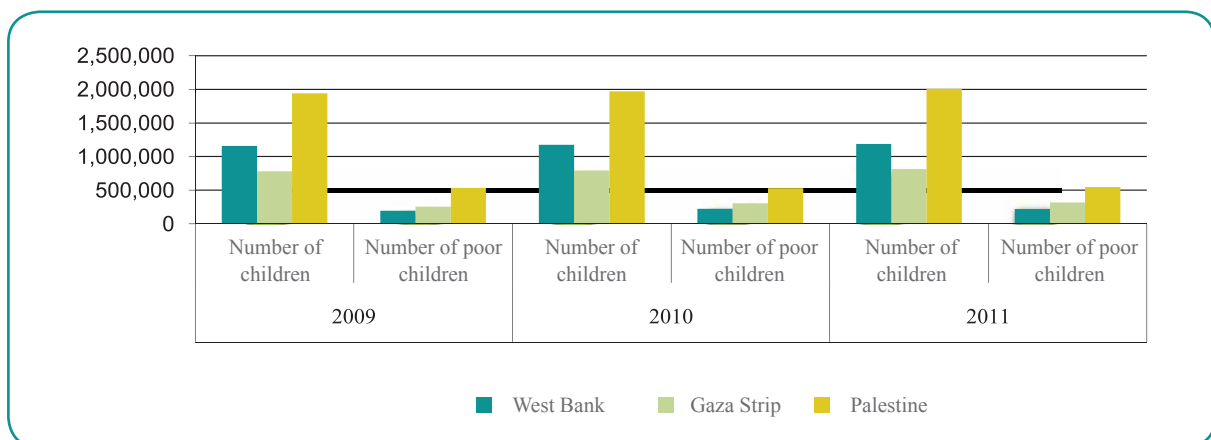
**Figure 40: Percentage of Poor Children by Region 2009-2011**



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2013. Expenditure and Consumption Survey database 2011, (unpublished data..)

The following figure refers to the number of poor children in the total population of children in Palestine and the gap between the number of poor children in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

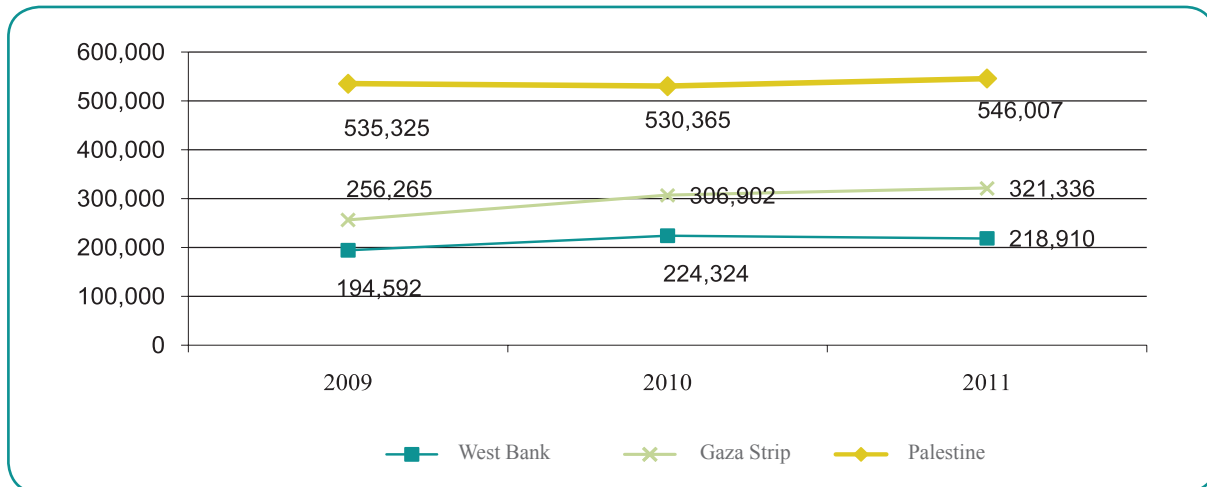
**Figure 41: Number of Children Living in Poverty Compared to the Number of Children by Region 2009-2011**



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2013. Expenditure and Consumption Survey database 2011, (unpublished data..)



**Figure 42: Number of Poor Children by Region 2009-2011**

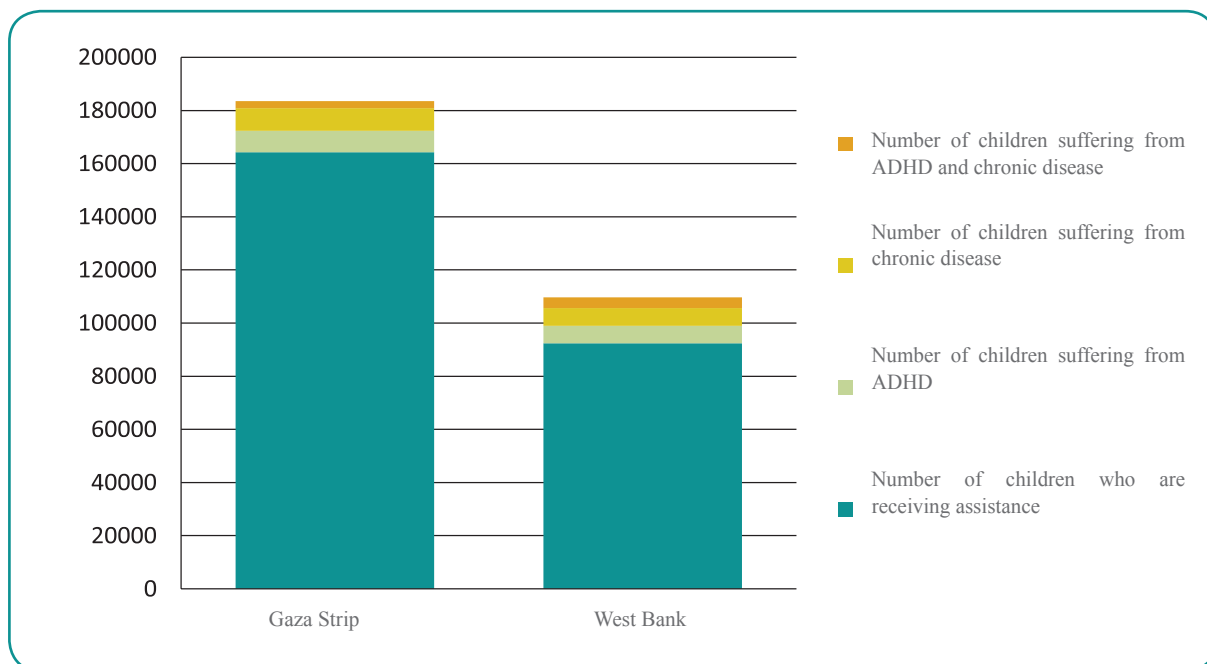


Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2013. Expenditure and Consumption Survey database 2011, (unpublished data.)

### **Social Monetary Assistance**

Databases of the Ministry of Social Affairs indicate that it provides 44,892 children in the West Bank with social assistance in cash in the. Of these, 11,768 children are suffering from either a chronic illness or disability: 6,461 have ADHD, 6,793 have a chronic disease and 4,030 have both. In the Gaza Strip, the Ministry of Social Affairs provides cash assistance to 164,317 children; 7,979 have ADHD, 8,544 have chronic illnesses, 2,712 have both and 13,811 suffer from either chronic illness or a disability. The Ministry of Social Affairs provides assistance in emergency cash for children and exemption from school fees. It also offers customs exemption to buy a car for a child with a disability and health insurance for the treatment of children and is working to provide in-kind assistance. Relief agencies also provide cash and food aid for children of refugees in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and the Ministry of Social Affairs provides monetary assistance to refugees in certain situations. Some institutions offer international food and humanitarian aid, but that is linked to the availability of support, as previously stated. There are also religious, charitable and social institutions, such as the Zakat Committee, which offer cash and in-kind assistance and food to needy families.

**Figure 43: Number of Children who are Receiving Social Assistance by Region and Health Status, 2012**



Source: Ministry of Social Affairs, 2013.

#### 4.4.4 Children in Conflict with the Law<sup>[72]</sup>

Children and juveniles form a fundamental part of the human resources of our people. In the context of the adverse changes and conditions experienced in Palestine, there is an urgent need to motivate juveniles to play a positive role in the building of the state. It is no exaggeration to say that the future of our people depends to a large extent on the investment made in children and juveniles in terms of cultural, educational, social, economic and psychological services. Numerous studies have indicated that juvenile delinquency as a social phenomenon is a growing problem in Palestine. Probation reports make clear that concerted efforts are required at national and local levels to reduce child delinquency.<sup>[73]</sup>

#### Number of Juvenile Offenders

Since 2009, children who are found guilty of offences have been referred for rehabilitation. The numbers of children charged with offenses increases with age and is higher for males than females. Offenses relate to theft, vandalism and assault and offenders most often come from families with poor economic circumstances, followed by families with a middle income and large families. The highest percentage of offenders was from Ramallah and Al-Bireh. The influence of other offenders and difficulties in the home situation contributed to delinquency: around half of offenders are school students. Not sure that all cases reach a verdict, but for those got a verdict, the sentences ranged from fines, to admission to a rehabilitation center or other supervised facility, to imprisonment. In some cases, an acquittal was issued or the charges

72 Ministry of Social Affairs - Department of Social Defense.

73 Ministry of Social Affairs - Annual Report of the Department of Social Defense in 2010.

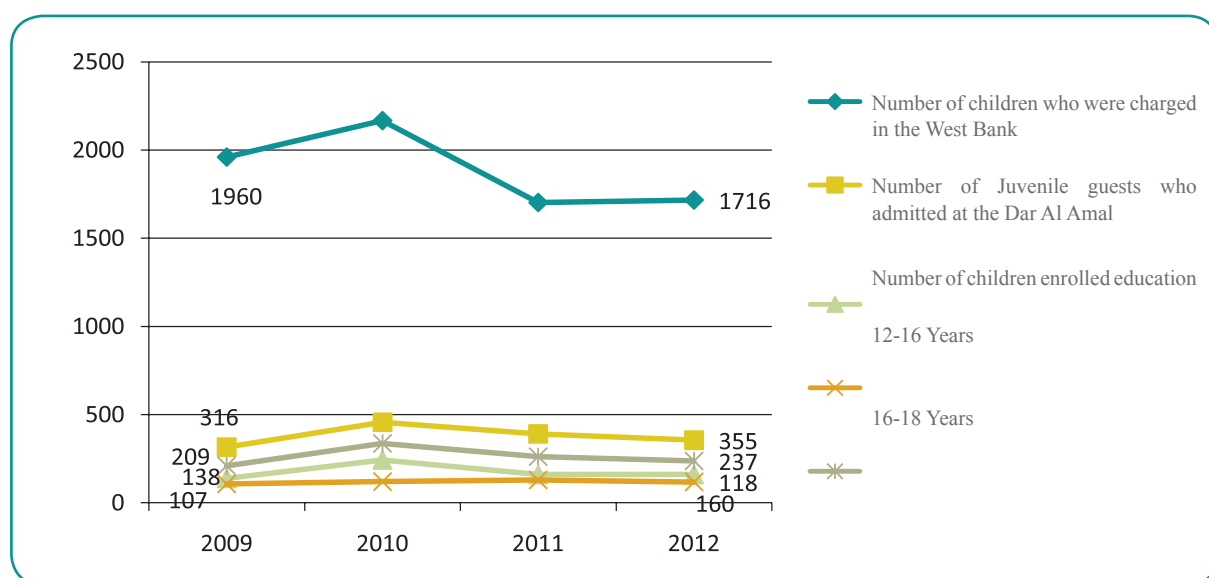
were dropped on a guarantee of good behavior. In most cases offenders were placed under supervision, with the imposition of fines or admission to a rehabilitation center less common outcomes.

Juvenile offenders can be stigmatized, resulting in difficulties reintegrating into school and the community. Although, these children got medical checks and medication, but this is not done on a regular basis and they are not followed up academically or receive regular education, it is required to rehabilitation and to be integrated in the community.

In 2011-2012, one fifth juveniles who were charged in the West Bank were transferred to rehabilitation center of Dar al Amal, a rehabilitation and correction center for observation and social welfare; nearly half of them were enrolled in schools. This indicates the importance of education for delinquent children and of maintaining their education despite being in conflict with the law.

Children who face charges remain in special rooms in their confinement center without any rehabilitation process before returning to their homes, leaving their issues to be addressed by the police or the prosecution. In other cases, a child is placed in a rehabilitation center while awaiting a verdict. Around one child in five who faces charges is confined in a correction center. A juvenile protection department was established recently in the police department and a draft law was handed to the President for approval.

**Figure 44: Number of Children Charged in the West Bank and Admitted to Dar Al Amal by Age and Enrollment in Education, 2012**



Source: Ministry of Social Affairs, 2013.

## Health Care and Social Services

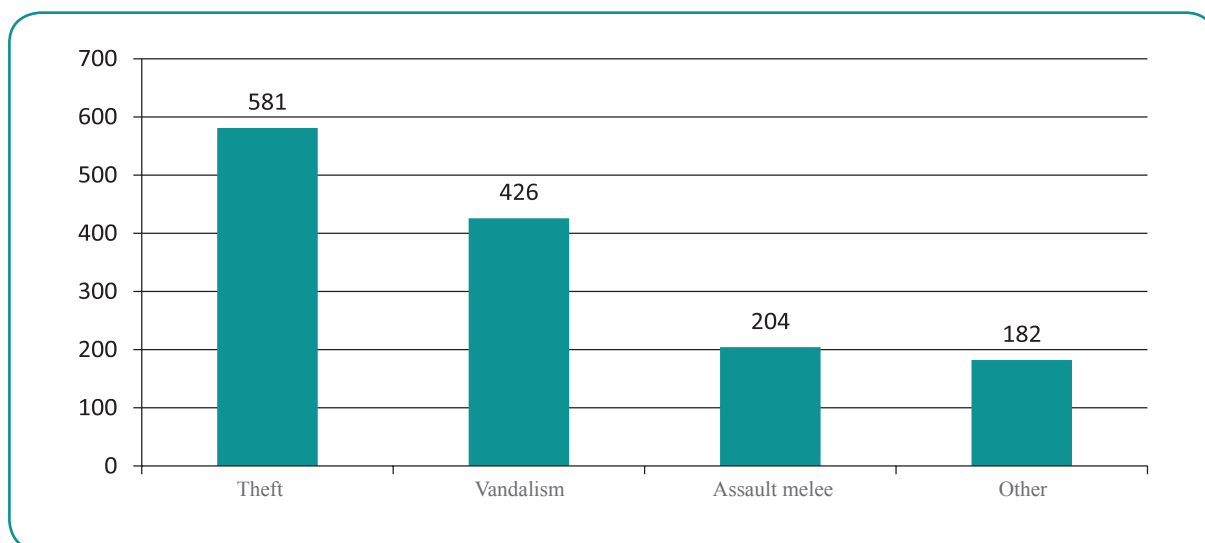
Children receive medical checkups in the child care centers and receive medicines in the form of social assistance depending on their needs, as reported by Dar Alamal for Social Care and Observation. All such assistance received by child care centers comprise mostly drugs.

## Number of Children, Geographical Distribution and Motives for Delinquency

Over the past four years, the majority of juvenile offenses (1,277 cases) were committed in Ramallah and Al-Bireh, followed by significantly lower numbers in Nablus (42) and Jericho (36). The offenders were in the 16-18 year age group and in all cases were male. The fact that Ramallah and Al-Bireh form a large city with a diverse population from different regions of the West Bank and Gaza may contribute to the significantly higher number of offenses that occur there. There may also be more intense policing in this urban area compared to other cities. In other cities, a child may be kept in custody for a short period in order to discipline him, but is not necessarily registered or referred to a rehabilitation center. Factors contributing to delinquency include poor education, peer influence and social problems within the family. Other reasons include the absence of the head of the family, poverty and unemployment, polygamy, marital disputes, divorce and, to a lesser extent, chronic illness.

Theft, vandalism and assault are the most common violations committed by delinquents. Other offenses include indecent assault, threats, sexual assault, acts against modesty, possession of stolen money, car accidents, murder, attempted murder, drug possession, defamation and contempt, arson, possession of counterfeit money, illegal driving and burglary.

**Figure 45: Number of Children in Conflict with the Law by Type of Offense 2009-2012**



Source: Ministry of Social Affairs, 2013.

### **Personnel Certified to Work with Children**

Currently none of the personnel working with children in conflict with the law are licensed or specialized in this field. In Palestine, there is no legislation governing the practice of this profession. There are fourteen counselors who observe, evaluate and monitor young offenders and ensure that they receive services, support and guidance. These observers also accompany juveniles to court during a trial.

#### **4.4.5 Violence, Abuse and Neglect<sup>[74]</sup>**

Information on the neglect, emotional or physical abuse or economic exploitation of children is limited to what is reported, but it can be assumed that hundreds of incidents occur which remain unreported.

Children with disabilities or who suffer from chronic illnesses are particularly vulnerable to emotional abuse or neglect. All reported cases are handled to provide protection either within the families or in a shelter home. Most cases are classified as neglect, abuse and economic exploitation; these issues are especially common in urban areas. Around 80% of cases involve the immediate family and 43% of these children are not enrolled in the educational system. Most protection measures are implemented within the family rather than in an institution.

The government and other parties have undertaken a number of initiatives to protect children. A family protection unit has been established within the police force and committees have been formed within the Ministry of Health. A national plan of action for the protection of children is being implemented and child protection networks put in place. In addition, standards are being set for the protection of children in day care centers and schools.

### **Child Protection Mechanisms in Palestine**

Child protection counselors study and evaluate the circumstances in which children live and evaluate threats in their environment. They draft an intervention plan for protecting the child which engages social, psychological, educational and legal services provided by relevant institutions. The General Administration for Family Affairs employs a corps of fifteen child protection counselors.

The 2013 action plan of the Ministry of Social Affairs put eight networks in operation to protect children in Jenin, Nablus, Ramallah, Salfit, Hebron, Qalqilya, Bethlehem and Jericho. The Ministry plans to create a national network to organize and integrate services and official strategies for the protection and care of children exposed to violence in all its forms and ensure optimal use of the available services by all partners and the local community in the child's best interests. Protection and care for children will be achieved through building a referral system and the provision of networking and supervision by the Ministry of Social Affairs. The Ministry plans to establish four additional protection networks for children in Jerusalem, Tulkarm, Tubas and Yatta. Subsequently, all governorates will be served by such networks and the national referral and monitoring system will be developed to comply with the Palestinian Child Law, as amended.

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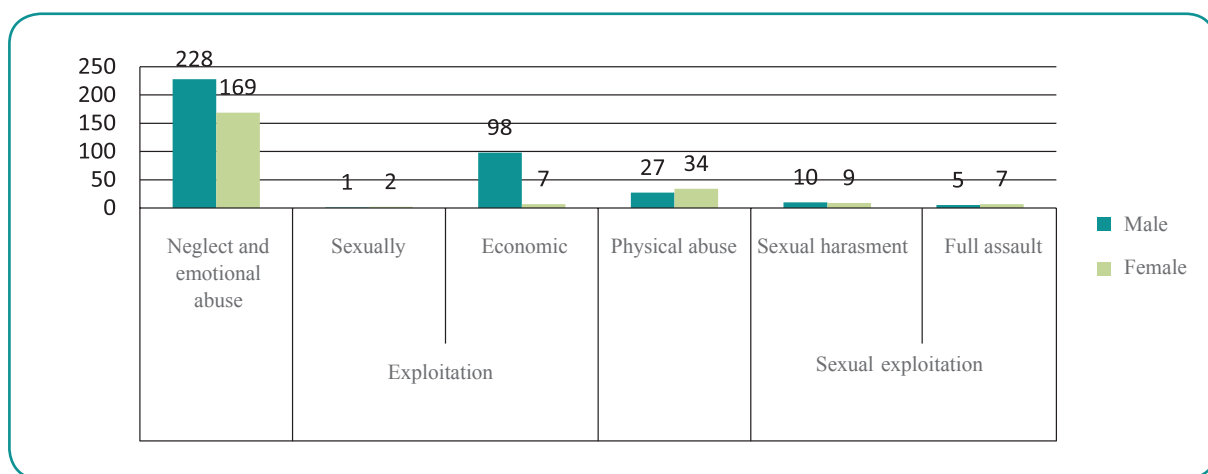
74 Ministry of Social Affairs, Directorate General for Family Affairs - Department of Child Protection - Statistics 2012.

## Child Protection Centers

The Ministry of Social Affairs operates two safe houses for children:

1. A center in Beitunia serves boys aged 5-18 who are referred by child protection counselors or the police and who require emergency and temporary protection. In 2012 the center received 67 children and had five employees.
2. A center in Bethlehem serves girls referred by child protection counselors or the police. In 2012, the center received 38 girls and had eleven employees.

**Figure 46: Number of Cases of Violence, Abuse and Negligence Against Children Reported by Type of Abuse and Gender, 2012**



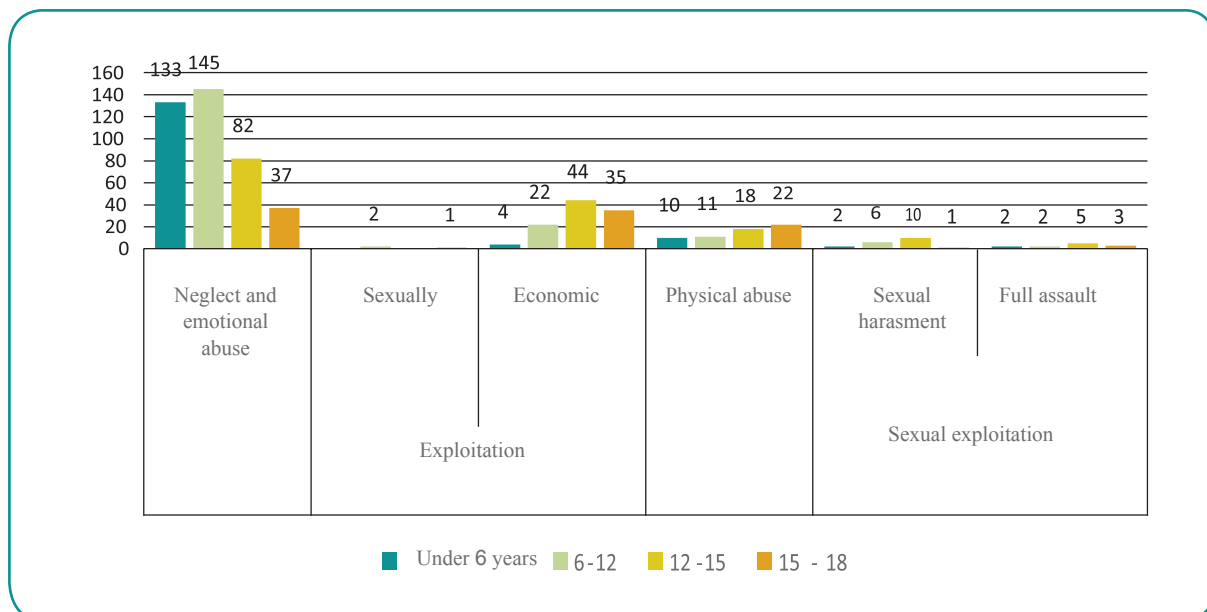
Source: Ministry of Social Affairs. Family Protection Department, 2013.

Most physical or psychological violence to children was from parents, teachers, by the father more than the mother, and among males more than females, and psychological abuse is more common than physical violence.<sup>[75]</sup> The figure below shows that economic exploitation rises at the age of 12 years and therefore parents and children under the age of twelve need to be educated about child labor.

In some cases children are sexually exploited for economic gain, which means they are sexually exploited; whereas sexual abuse, it involves harassment in addition to full assault against of the child will, which causes emotional, physical and psychological harm.

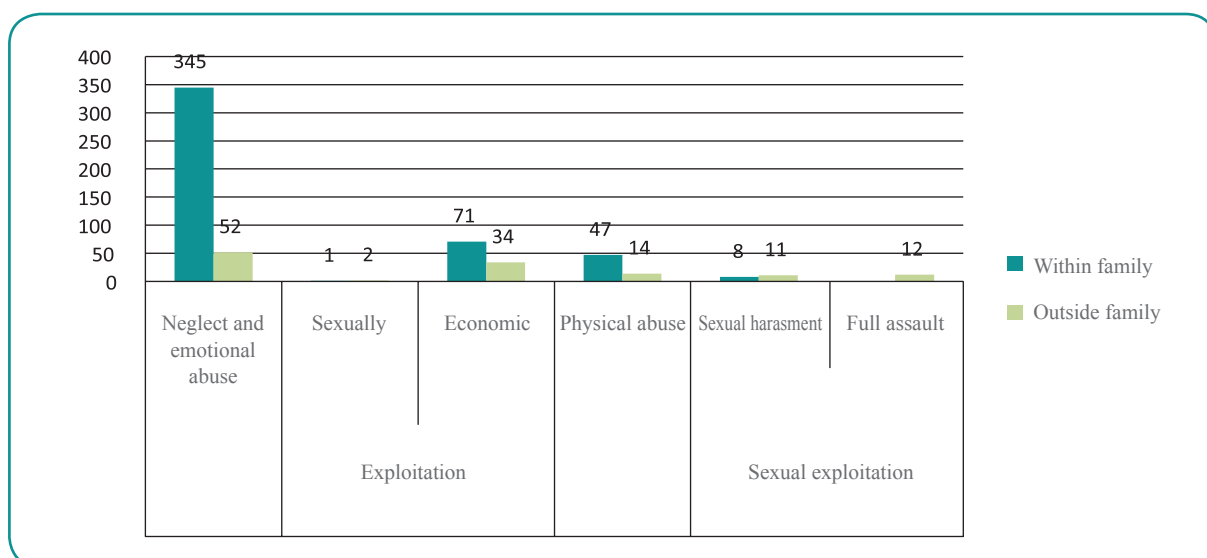
75 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. Survey of violence in Palestinian society, 2011. Report of main results.

**Figure 47: Number of Reported Cases of Violence, Abuse and Neglect Against Children by Type of Abuse and Age, 2012**



Source: Ministry of Social Affairs. Department of Family Protection 2012.

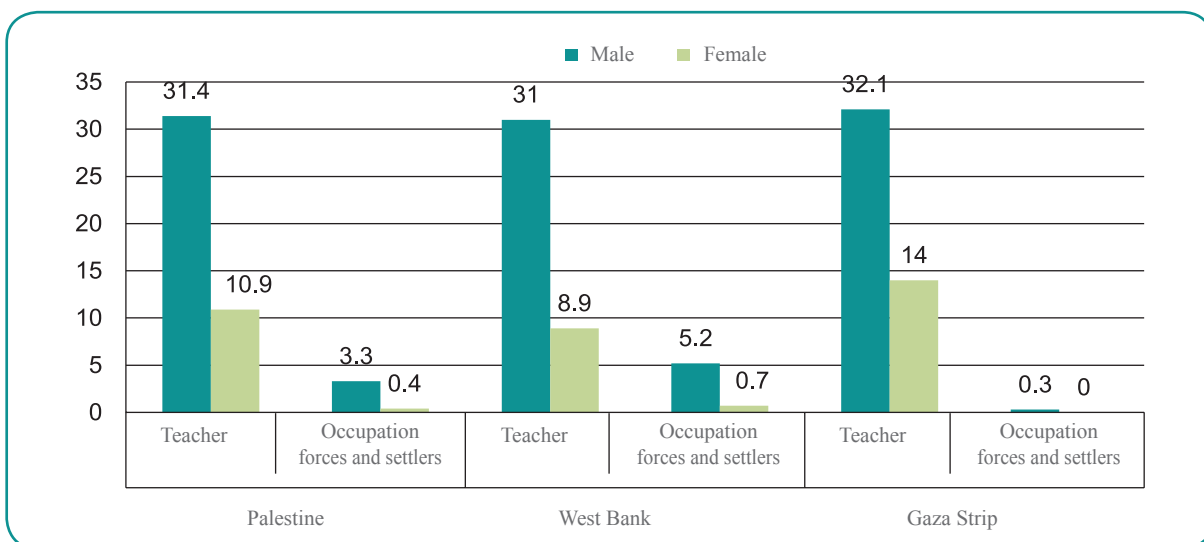
**Figure 48: Number of Cases of Violence, Abuse and Neglect of Children Reported by Type and Source of Abuse, 2012**



Source: Ministry of Social Affairs. Department of Family Protection 2012.

Most cases of violence against children are perpetrated by family members and are difficult to control as it is not easy to access the internal environment of the home. As most cases of neglect and emotional abuse occur among children below the age of 12 the role of teachers, counselors, doctors and health workers in hospitals, maternity and child centers is vital in terms of observing children and intervening when necessary to protect them by accessing national resources.

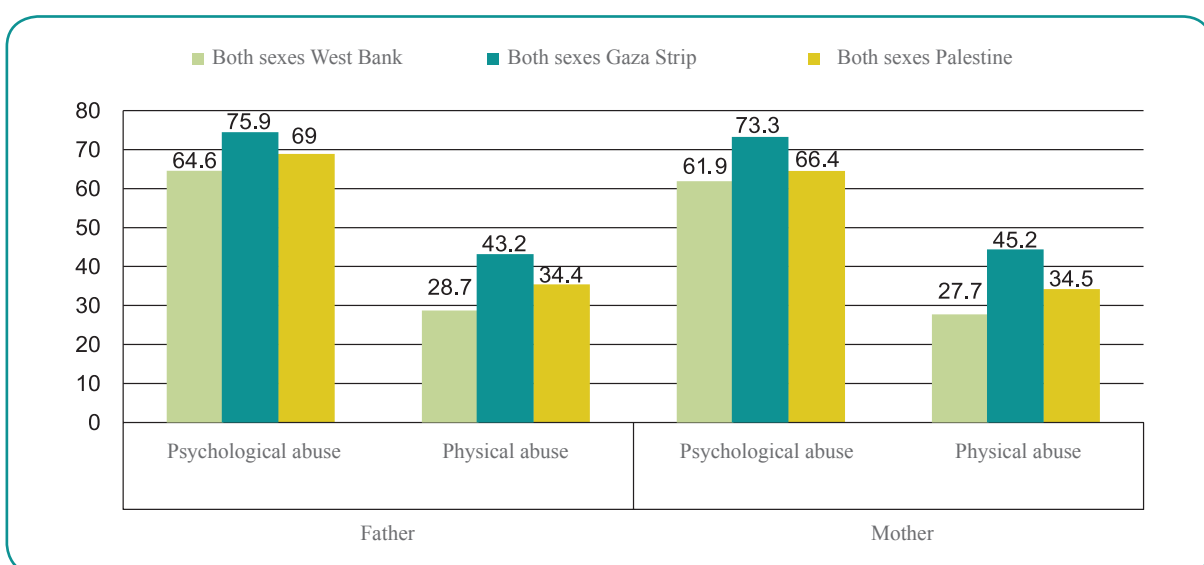
**Figure 49: Percentage of Children Aged 12-17 Years Exposed to Physical Violence During the Previous 12 Months Prior to the Survey by Region, Gender and Aggressor, 2011**



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2012. Violence Survey in Palestinian Society, 2011. Main Findings. Ramallah-Palestine

Almost one in every five children in Palestine has experienced violence at the hands of teachers and one in every fifty children had been experienced violence by Israeli occupation forces and settlers, while almost all children exposed to this type of violence. In addition, 17 out of every 25 children in Palestine have been subjected to psychological violence by a parent and 7 in every 20 children has been subjected to physical violence by a parent. These figures were higher in the Gaza Strip than in the West Bank and rates were higher for males than females. These results expose the importance of raising the awareness of parents of acceptable forms of discipline for children as well as the need for government intervention to improve the economic and social conditions which impact the psychological status of parents, children and teachers.

**Figure 50: Percentage of Children Aged 12-17 Years Subjected to Violence by a Parent by Type of Violence and Region, 2011**



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2012. Violence Survey in Palestinian Society, 2011. Main Findings. Ramallah-Palestine



#### 4.4.6 Statistical Indicators of Children in Foster Families and Children Receiving Inadequate Family Care<sup>176</sup>

1000 children who lost either one of their parents, mostly their mothers, do not live with the living parent, which is an indicator of the important role of mothers in the household. However, it is worrying that some families choose to place their children in orphanages because of their economic hardship. Assistance is provided to orphan children by the Ministry of Social Affairs. The number of served orphans until December 31st, 2012, was as follows:

**Table 7: Number of Orphaned Children Registered at the Ministry of Social Affairs, 2012**

	Both are deceased	Only father alive and living in the same dwelling	Only father alive and not living in the same dwelling	Only mother alive and living in the same dwelling	Only mother alive and not living in the same dwelling	Not specified/known
Total number of registered	345	1,479	233	14,412	750	196
Of which: beneficiaries	275	1,089	152	9,972	552	142
Number of registered Gaza strip	38	1,021	107	7,849	471	67
Of which: beneficiaries	213	917	95	7,189	412	60
Number of registered West Bank	107	458	126	6,563	279	129
Of which: beneficiaries	62	172	57	2,783	140	82

Source: Ministry of Social Affairs. Department of Family Protection 2012.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) branch of the Red Crescent provided US \$1,955,531 to sponsor orphaned children in 2012. There were 3,247 children (1,621 males and 1,626 females) in foster care in the West Bank, with the highest number in Hebron.

Number of children sponsored by the UAE Red Crescent by governorate			
Governorate	Number	Governorate	Number
Nablus	289	Jericho	143
Yatta	242	Hebron	1151
Salfit	33	Jerusalem	211
Tubas	70	Bethlehem	442
Tulkarm	247	Jenin	203
Qalqilya	47	Ramallah	169

During 2012, 955 children (198 females and 755 males) were registered by social welfare institutions as belonging to associations for orphans or being children from broken families.

The highest number of children who were fostered was seven in 2010 compared to 4 children in 2009 and 2011, and one child in 2012.

76 Ministry of Social Affairs-Department of Family Protection.

In 2012 there were two cases of births with neither parent identified and eight with no father identified; seven of these children were male and three were female. Two had health problems and one died at the beginning of 2013. These children were born in Bethlehem and Hebron. These cases draw attention to the importance of raising community awareness and developing mechanisms for reporting and protection. The Ministry of Social Affairs should provide protection and care for children through placement in care institutions, in partnership with the Ministry of Interior, the public prosecution, the police and the Ministry of Health. Children should be registered in the civil registry in order to issue birth certificates to children of unknown parentage or from an illegitimate pregnancy. There are four institutions for children of unknown parentage or from an illegitimate pregnancy.

#### **4.4.7 Children with Disabilities**

Palestinian laws and the Palestinian constitution emphasize the principle of non-discrimination and address the subject of disability. The Palestinian Ministry of Health provides the same health services to children with disabilities as to other children and provides medical checkups and preventive tests prior to marriage and for the child after birth, including thyroid gland tests and PKU, and follows up on children whose test results are problematic. It does not provide rehabilitation services for children with disabilities, although it sometimes provides support through the school health program with assistive devices for children with disabilities. Further amendments are required to the Public Health Law to specify children with disabilities and to include more preventive examinations within the health system. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education intends to promote inclusive education that would integrate children with disabilities (motor, hearing/auditory, visual and simple and moderate mental disabilities), where possible into the regular education system, with adaptations to the school environment as needed and the provision of some assistive devices. The Ministry of Social Affairs is also willing to provide social services (in-kind and cash, assistance, assistive devices, and some physical rehabilitation of homes, etc.) for people with disabilities, including children. It is also developing a disability card system and a case management system for children with disabilities.

The 2011 survey on individuals with disabilities indicated that 1.5% of children aged 0-17 years were disabled, with a higher incidence among males (1.8%) than females (1.3%).<sup>[77]</sup> The most common disabilities were physical/ motor, followed by slow learning, memory and concentration. The survey indicated that 37.6% of children with disabilities aged 15 years and over had never enrolled in education; 53.1% were illiterate and 33.8% had dropped out of school. This indicates that at least 40% of children who suffer from disabilities were not enrolled in the education system, and there is a need to address this issue and provide the necessary services to facilitate their inclusion within the educational system. In general there has been an increase in the number of students with disabilities enrolled in the formal education system over recent years, which may be due to an increase in awareness among both service providers and society. There were no specific procedures or mechanisms for the diagnosis of children who suffer from

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77 Males are genetically more vulnerable to disability and morbidity of diseases.

mild mental disabilities or learning difficulties.<sup>[78]</sup> It is possible that the number of children enrolled in the formal education system who suffer from total audio or visual disabilities is relatively low due to the availability of specialized centers and schools for these students.

### **Children with Disabilities in Ministry of Social Affairs Centers and Licensed Community Centers**

The Ministry of Social Affairs has dedicated considerable effort to support children with disabilities through the development of programs, policies and regulations such as the Disability Law, the amended Palestinian Child Law, the disability card and the ministerial policy paper for the case management of children with disabilities. To operate this system, the current reality should be analyzed to determine the number of qualified staff required and to develop an action plan to develop and maintain human resources and capacities in this area. Currently, there are nine programs targeting children with disabilities within the Ministry, and nine policies and legislative documents.

The Ministry of Social Affairs centers provide services to 136 children (112 males and 24 females) supervised by 107 employees in the northern and southern West Bank; specifically in Nablus, Bethlehem, Hebron and Salfit. The centers provide services for mental and visual impairments and some physical/ motor disabilities. There are also approximately 2,096 students enrolled in centers run by civil society or private institutions (serving 1,267 males (60%) and 829 females (40%)). The Ministry of Education collects data on children with disabilities in licensed community centers as shown in the following table:

**Table 8: Number of Children with Disabilities in Community Centers Licensed by the Ministry of Education 2012**

Gender	Visual disability		Hearing disability	Mental disability	Total
	partial	Total			
Male	83	41	295	848	1267
Female	77	43	269	440	829
Total	160	84	564	1288	2096

Source: General Administration for educational counseling - Inclusive Education Department, July 2013.

### **Distribution of Disabilities in West Bank and Gaza Strip Governorates During the 2011/2012 School Year**

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education established the Department of Special Education and Inclusive Education in 1997 to serve the needs of children with disabilities. However, the education system is not yet equipped to receive children with severe mental disabilities. The disability survey indicated that 23,825 children in the 6-17 age group had disabilities (15,780 children in the West Bank). Of these, 5,019 (32%) were enrolled in schools in public schools in the West Bank, 2,096 in private schools and 163 attended centers run by the Ministry of Social Affairs. In the Gaza Strip, there were 8,045 children with disabilities who fell within the ages for

78 Adjustments in education and evaluation of students with special needs - January 2009, Ministry of Education.

compulsory education; 3,013 (37%) were enrolled in public schools. There is no unified national system for monitoring children in all other private and civil sector institutions.

The number of children with disabilities enrolled in private institutions needs to be quantified, together with the type of disability and the reasons for non-inclusion in the educational system. This will aid the identification of children with disabilities who are prevented from accessing specialized services in all sectors.

**Table 9: Percentage Distribution of Children Aged 6-17 Years with Disabilities by Region and Gender, 2011**

Indicator	Gender		Region		Palestine
	Male	Female	West Bank	Gaza Strip	
Percentage of children with disabilities (6-17 years)	59.1	40.9	66.2	33.8	100
Number of children with disabilities (6-17 years)	14,072	9,753	15,780	8,045	23,825

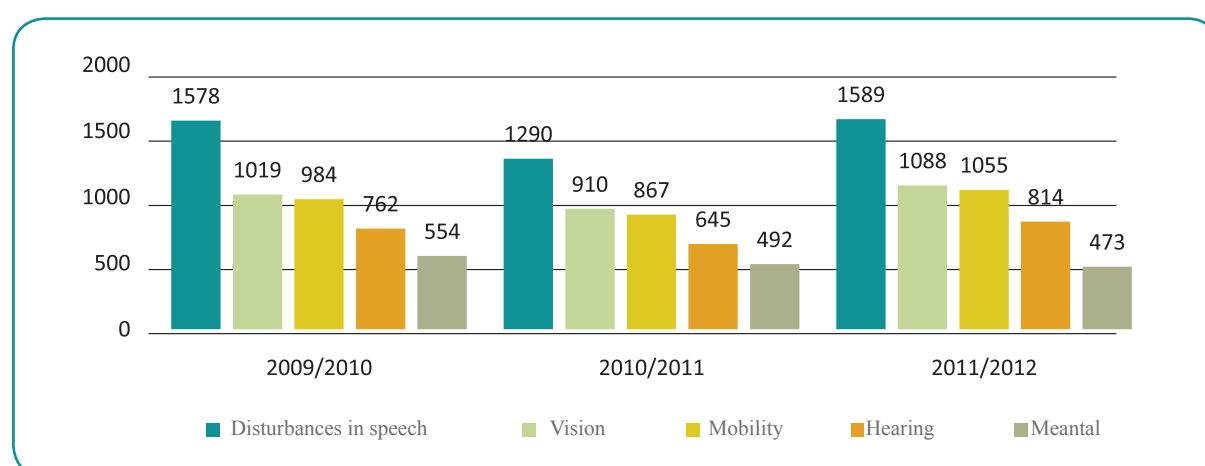
Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. Database of Disabled Individuals Survey, 2011, (unpublished data). Ramallah - Palestine.

**Table 9A: Percentage of Children 6-17 Years with Disabilities who are Integrated into Formal Education by Region, 2011**

Indicator	Region		Palestine
	West Bank	Gaza Strip	
Percentage of children with disabilities who are integrated within formal education of the total number of school age children with disabilities	32.0	37.0	34.0
Number of children who are integrated in formal education	5,019	3,013	8,032

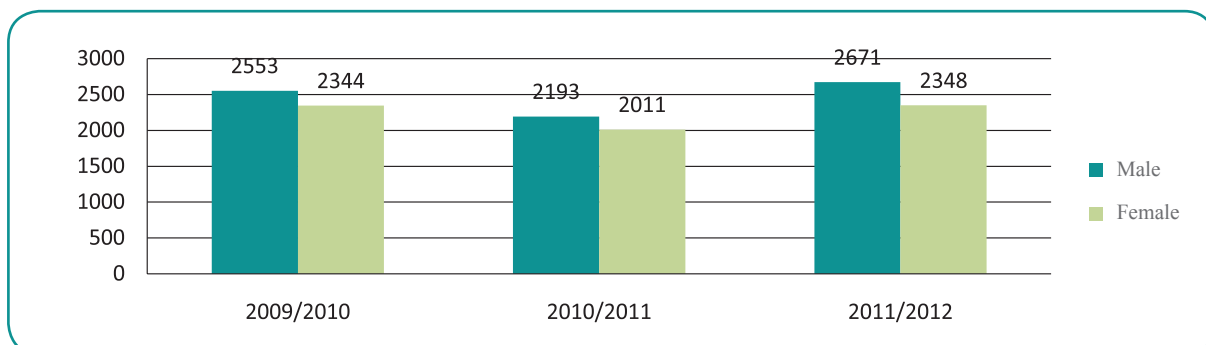
Source: Ministry of Education, 2012. Statistical Yearbook of the West Bank and Gaza.

**Figure 51: Distribution of Children with Disabilities in Educational Directorates in the West Bank by Type of Disability and Year**



Source: Databases of students with disabilities. General Administration of Planning - Ministry of Education, 2013.

**Figure 52: Number of Students with Disabilities Integrated in West Bank Directorates by Gender and Year**

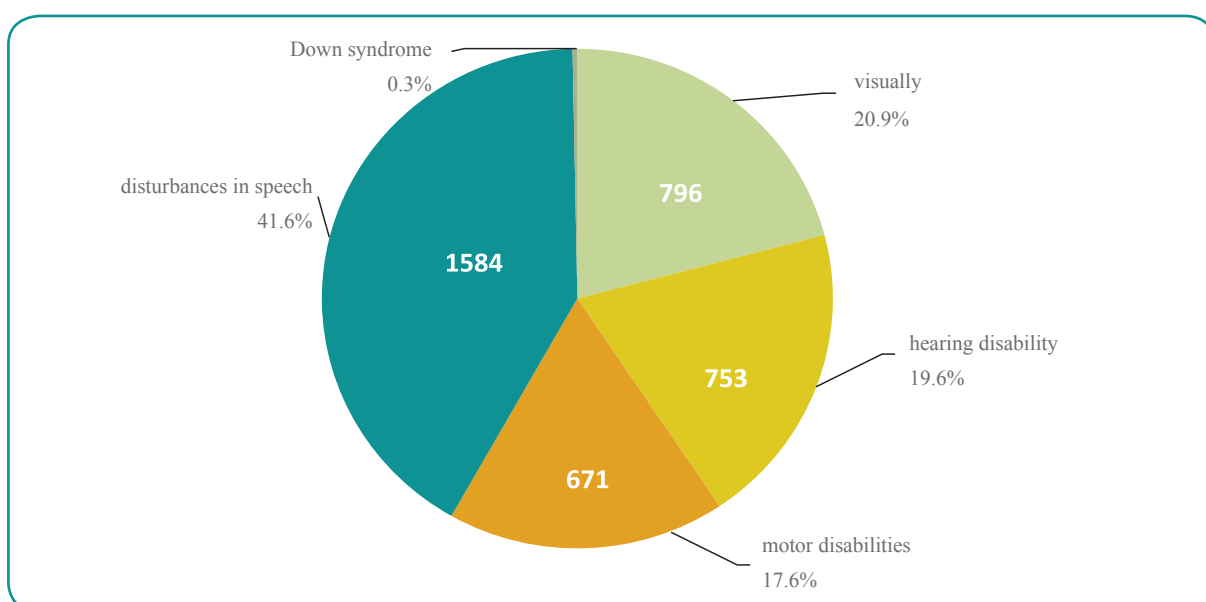


Source: Databases of students with disabilities. General Administration of Planning - Ministry of Education, 2013.

The rate of enrollment of students with disabilities in education in the West Bank has remained relatively stable over the past three years (4,897 in 2009 to 5,019 in 2011). As children with severe mental disabilities are not integrated into the educational system and educational resource rooms serve students only until fourth grade, children who suffer from moderate to severe mental disability are effectively excluded from the educational system due to lack of capacity and the financial and specialized human resources required to deal with them.

In the Gaza Strip, 3,816 students with disabilities were integrated into public schools in 2012/2013. Disabilities were most frequently speech impediments (41.6%), followed by visual impairments (20.9%), hearing loss (19.6%), physical/motor disabilities (17.6%), and Down's Syndrome (0.3%).<sup>[79]</sup>

**Figure 53: Number of Students with Disabilities Integrated Into Government Schools in Gaza by Type of Disability 2012**



Source: Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Statistical Yearbook. General Administration for Educational Planning. Gaza 2012-2013.

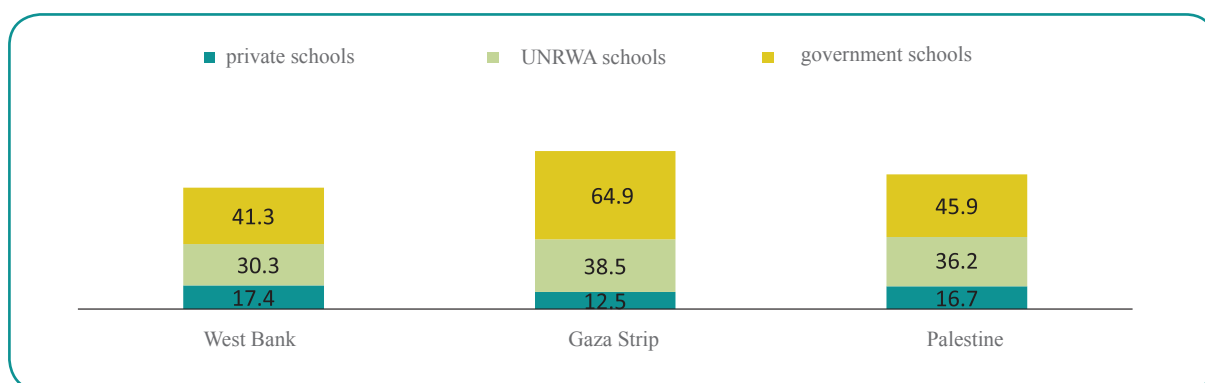
79 Statistical Yearbook. General Administration for Educational Planning. Ministry of Education and Higher Education. Gaza 2012-2013

The number of students with disabilities integrated into public education in Gaza doubled from 1,694 students in 2007 to 3,816 students in 2012. There are 89 special education employees.

### Accessibility and Adaptations for Children with Disabilities in Schools

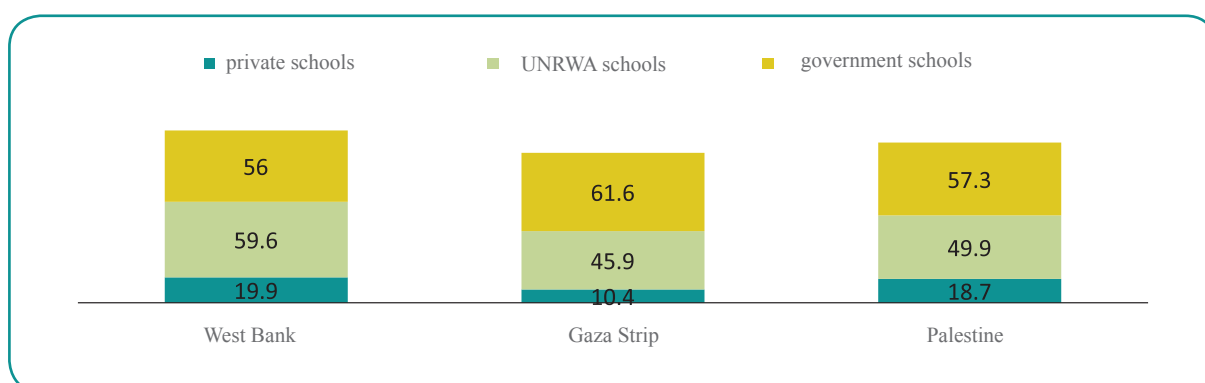
Around 50% of schools in the West Bank and Gaza have adaptations for students with disabilities in terms of appropriate toilets and ramps. More public and UNRWA schools than private schools have these adaptations. Although half of schools have appropriate toilets and ramps for children with motor disabilities, there are other types of disabilities that require special adaptations that are not available in schools, such as special transportation and classroom accessibility. The disability survey indicated that transportation is a major challenge for children with disabilities (10-17 years) enrolled in education, especially those with visual, motor, memory and recall disabilities or impairments, in addition to adaptations required to school buildings and classrooms.

**Figure 54: Percentage of Schools in which Ramps are Available 2011/2012**



Source: Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Statistical Yearbook. General Administration for Educational Planning. Gaza 2012-2013.

**Figure 55: Percentage of Schools where Accessible Toilets are Available for Children with Disabilities 2011/2012**



Source: Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Statistical Yearbook. General Administration for Educational Planning. Gaza 2012-2013.

While the Ministry of Education has been committed for several years to ensuring that all new schools are accessible to children with disabilities, and while there has been a supportive

legal framework and competent specialized management of inclusive education since 1997, there is still a need to better serve children with mental disabilities. In addition, a national strategy for inclusive education is needed that includes children with disabilities who are not enrolled in any formal education system or in a private rehabilitation institution.

Specialized resource rooms in the West Bank and Jerusalem: There are 82 rooms equipped with educational tools and professional teachers. There are 45 resource rooms in the West Bank and Jerusalem, but they do not have any staff. There are 40 resource rooms in Gaza Strip: 10 rooms equipped with specialized professionals and 30 equipped with resources and equipment but without any teachers.

**There are 22 integrated compacted rooms.**

There are 32 specialist professional staff at the Ministry of Education in the West Bank, including 3 supervisors who oversee 16 directorates.<sup>[80]</sup>

In the West Bank, there are 6,461 children with disabilities who receive cash assistance; 4,030 suffer from a chronic illness as well as a disability. In the Gaza Strip, 7,979 children receive cash assistance; 2,712 suffer from both a chronic illness and a disability.

Gains are being made in the provision of an enabling environment for children with disabilities and in terms of increased awareness of the rights of children with disabilities. The efforts of Palestinian institutions deserve appreciation in light of the existing political conditions and the scarcity of resources. Nevertheless, further efforts are needed in order to both protect children with disabilities and allow them greater independence so that they have the opportunity to maximize their potential. Staffing can be a problem, as social workers are sometimes appointed and then reassigned. There are also difficulties with the classification of disabilities. Some institutions use the international classifications, while others use an outdated system from 1958. Most Palestinian governmental institutions do not allocate an item in the budget to provide assistive devices for people with disabilities. As a result, access to such devices usually depends on the availability of funding, which may be conditional. This issue also impacts on the sustainability of resource rooms, some of which have been closed due to the lack of financial and human resources. Despite serious attempts to integrate children with disabilities, the issue is more complex than simply adding ramps or some adaptations. Specialized professional personnel and equipment are urgently required, and some of the obstacles in terms of government regulations and systems need to be addressed. For example, if an overcrowded classroom is a problem to a student without any impairment, it will be a bigger problem to a student with a disability, especially in the absence of an assistant teacher in the classroom. The curriculum is often inappropriate to the situation of the student, especially in the absence of qualified professional teachers and specialists. The government should work with Palestinian universities to provide

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80 Baseline survey for support to the quality education project in the OPT. Save the Children, 2013.

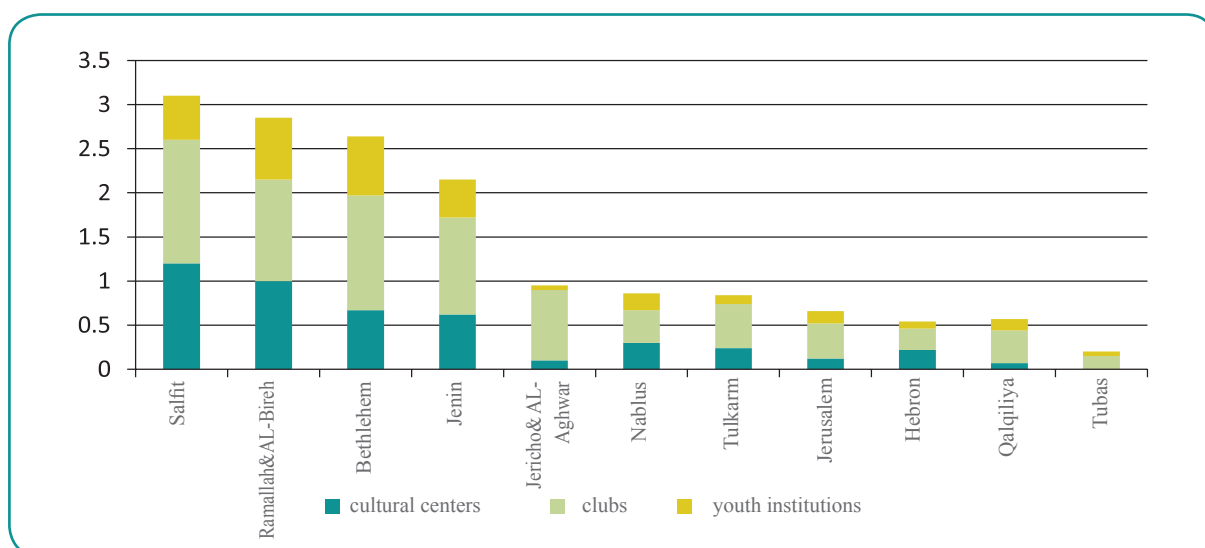
appropriate specializations and add social work in schools to university programs, especially in the schools which have children with disabilities, in order to support and assist teachers and students.

## 4.5 Culture and Entertainment

### Youth Clubs and Cultural Institutions

Data was not available from the Higher Council for Youth and Sports on the number of institutions, clubs and cultural centers serving the population of each governorate, but it is evident that cultural and sports centers tend to be concentrated in city centers and are more common in Ramallah and Nablus than in other cities.

**Figure 56: Number of Cultural, Clubs and Youth Institutions per 1,000 Inhabitants in West Bank by Governorate, 2012**



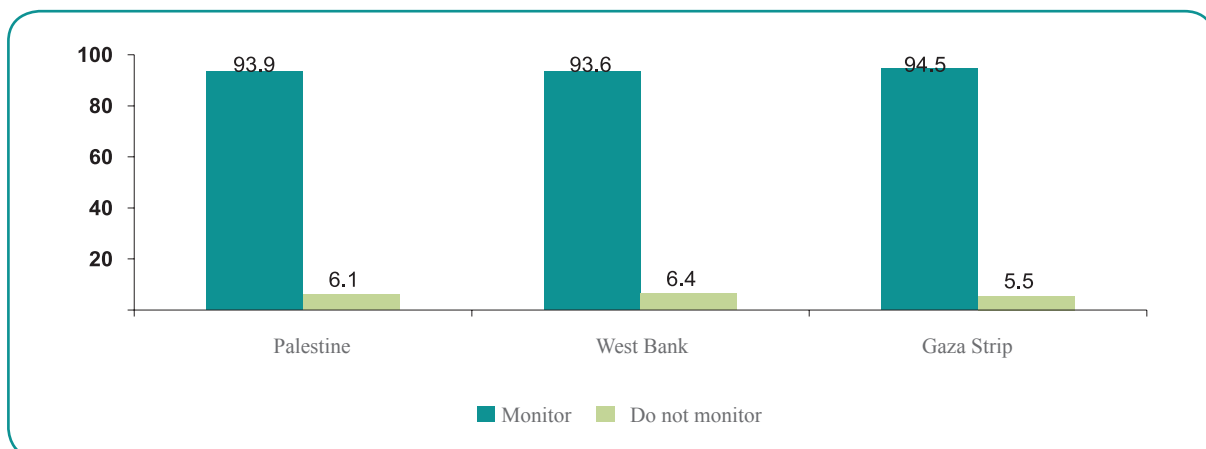
Source: Database of Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, 2013.

An adequate number of youth clubs and centers is not the only concern, however; they need also to be assessed in terms of access for girls and children with disabilities. In addition, it would be valuable to identify institutions led by youth groups or councils.

The PCBS preliminary Household Cultural Survey in 2009 showed that most households monitor the broadcasts their children (aging 5 – 17 years) watch on TV in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (almost 94%). The lowest level of monitoring was observed in Hebron. Households monitor less the time children spend watching TV. One of four families in the West Bank do not observe the number of hours their children watch TV, especially in rural areas and in refugee camps, being lowest in Jenin, Ramallah and Albiereh, Hebron, Khan Younis and Rafah.

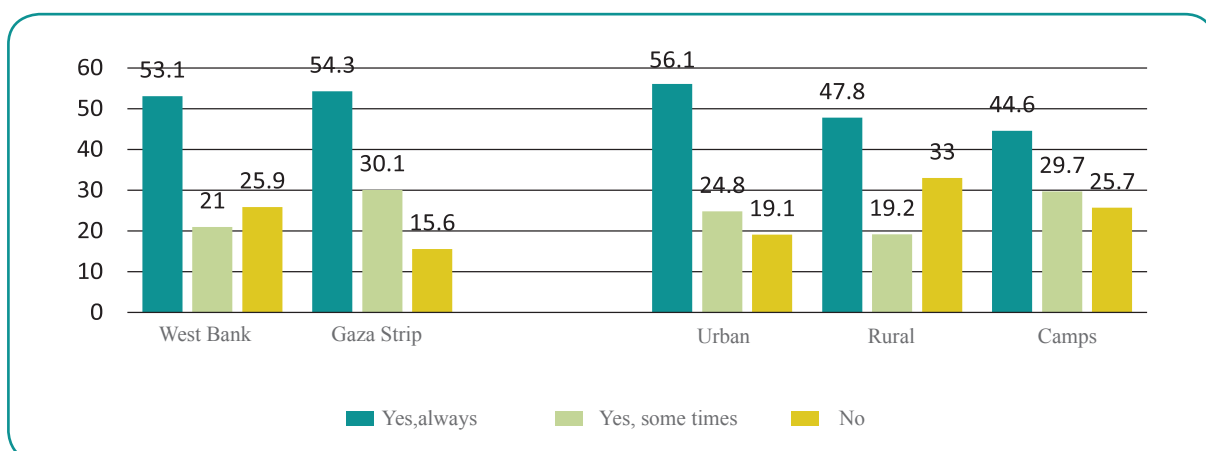


**Figure 57: Distribution of Households Monitoring the Type of Programs Watched by Children Aged 5-17 Years and Region, 2009**



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2009. Household Culture Survey 2009, Main Finding Report. Ramallah – Palestine.

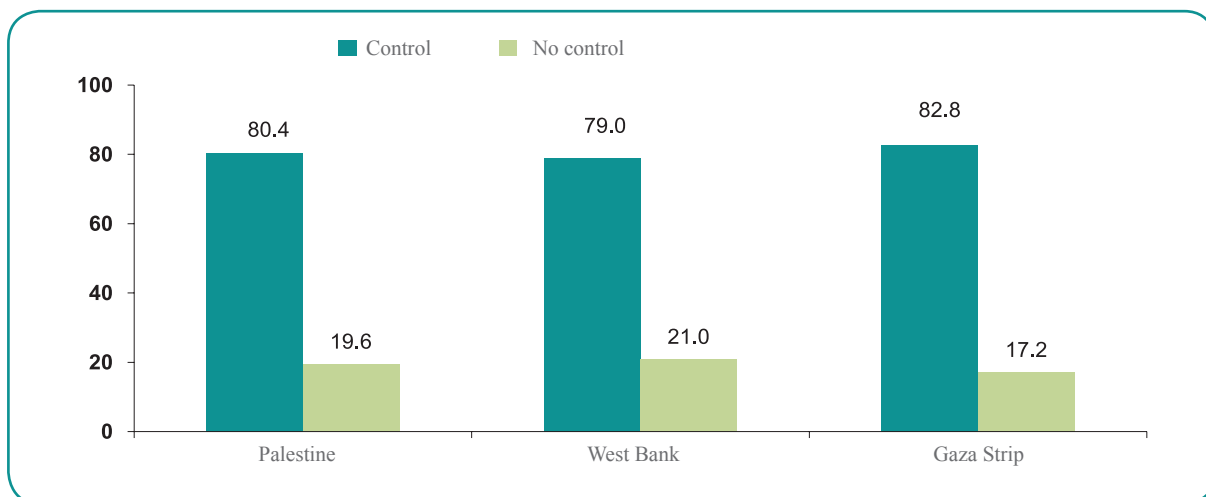
**Figure 58: Distribution of Households by Monitoring the Number of Daily Hours of Watching Television by Children Aged 5-17 Years, Region and Type of Locality, 2009**



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2009. Household Culture Survey 2009, Main Finding Report. Ramallah – Palestine.

Computer usage by the same age group was more strictly monitored by households in the West Bank than in Gaza, but the percentage was still relatively low (70% across Palestine), although given that almost 70% of children in Palestine use a computer, with the highest numbers in refugee camps and in Jenin and Tulkarm, this is understandable. Approximately 60% of children were found to not have access to the internet. One in five households did not regulate the number of hours of internet use, with figures highest in Jenin.

**Figure 59: Distribution of Households by Monitoring the Number of Daily Hours of Internet Usage for Children Aged 5-17 Years by Region, 2009**



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2009. Household Culture Survey 2009, Main Finding Report. Ramallah – Palestine.

Those who did have access to the internet used it primarily for recreation and to access information. Nearly half of children used internet services for correspondence and communication. Most households know their children’s friends adequately: strangely, the rate is lower in rural areas than in camps and urban areas.

Guidelines for appropriate daily time limits on usage of the TV, computer and the internet could be beneficial. In addition, the survey found that while most parents had a general sense of what their children watched, content was not routinely monitored.

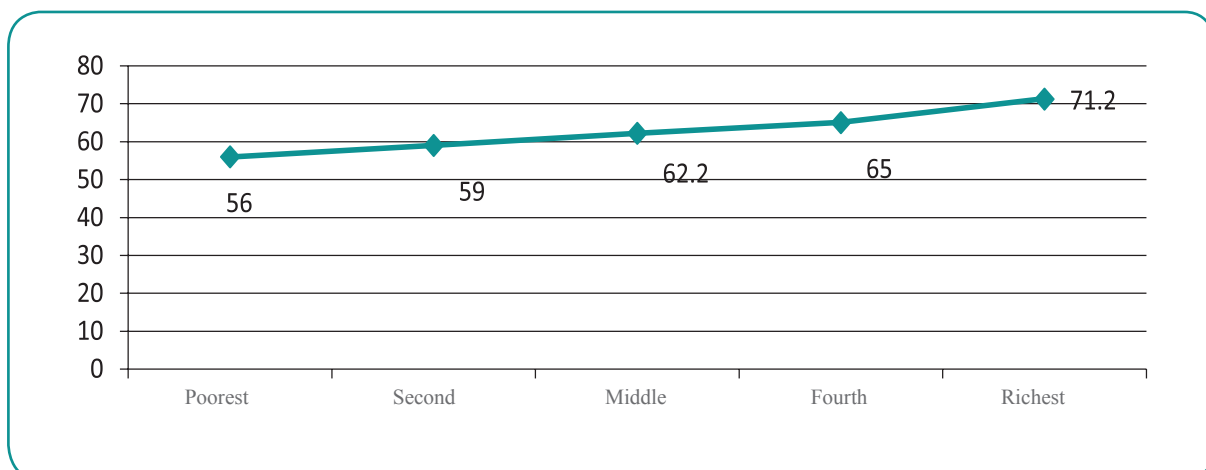
## 4.6 Childhood Development

### 4.6.1 Early Childhood Development Indicators

During the first few years of life, children progress through predictable stages of development during which motor, cognitive, speech, emotional and social milestones are reached. Physical development, literacy and numeracy and social and emotional development, along with an eagerness to learn, are vital to the healthy development of a child and form the basis of all human development. An early childhood development index was produced by UNESCO 2010 to enrich public policy information on the status of the development of children in Palestinian communities in with regard to literacy/numeracy, physical development, social/emotional development and learning. The indicators provided in this manual show the percentages of children who are on track developmentally in at least three of these four areas.

Eighty-three percent of Palestinian children were on track in the physical field compared to 80% in the field of learning, including 18% in literacy-numeracy and 62% in the social/emotional field. Figures were found to be higher in richest areas, for children who had attended pre-school, for older children and for males.

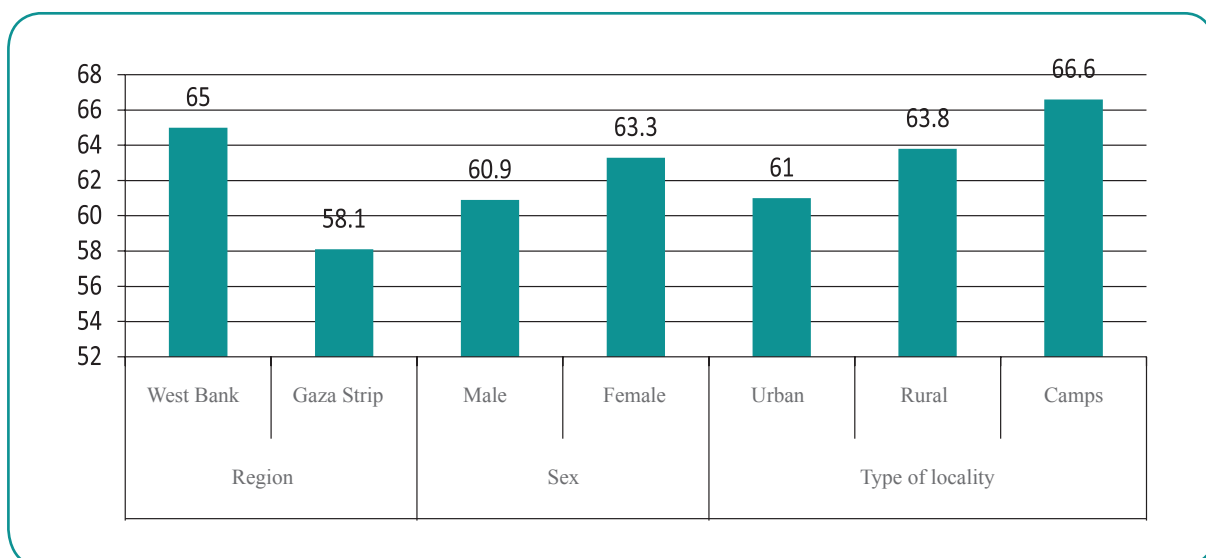
**Figure 60: Indicator of Early Childhood Development by Wealth Indicator, 2010**



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. Palestinian Family Survey, 2010. Main Report. Ramallah-Palestine

The following figures indicate the percentages of children aged 36-59 months who were on track with their development in terms of literacy and numeracy and their social, emotional, physical and educational development. The indicators for early childhood development are shown for 2010 by region, gender, type of locality, maternal education, wealth index, age, and early enrollment in pre-school education.

**Figure 61: Indicator of Early Childhood Development by Type of Locality, Gender and Region, 2010**

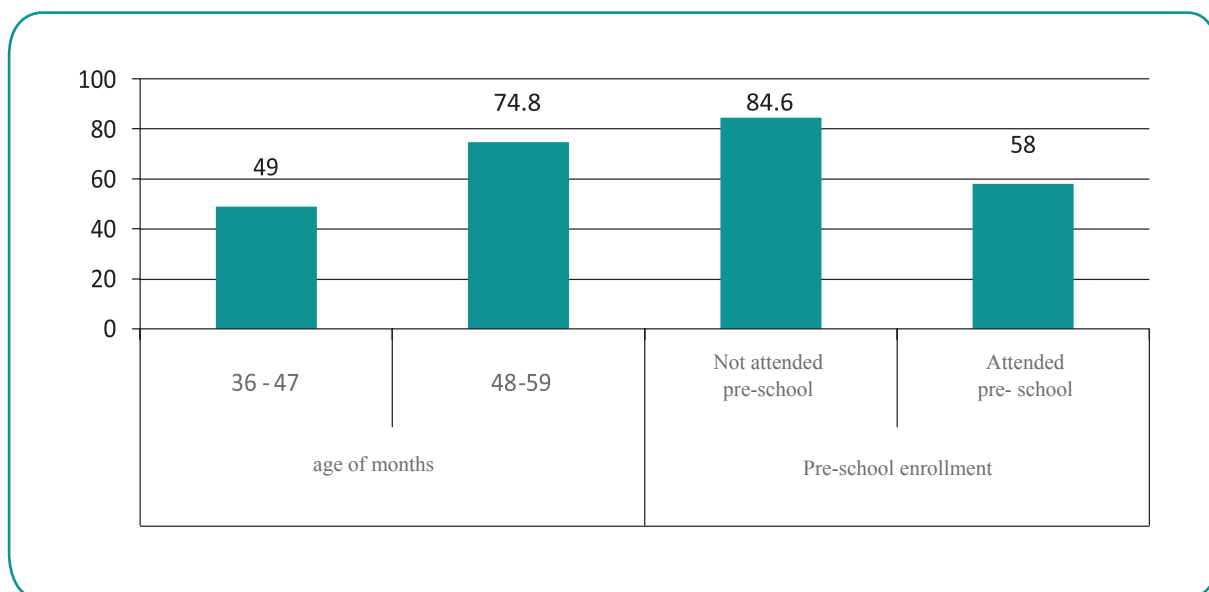


Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. Palestinian Family Survey, 2010. Main Report. Ramallah-Palestine

Around 62% of children aged 36-59 months were on track developmentally (63.3% of females and 60.9% of males). Figures were higher for children from the West Bank (65.0%) than children from the Gaza Strip (58.1%). Children from refugee camps performed better (66.6%)

than children in urban (61.0%) and rural areas (63.8%). There were clear differences between governorates, with the lowest figures reported in the governorates of Rafah (54% and Hebron (56%) and the highest in Qalqilya (76%) and Salfit (74%).

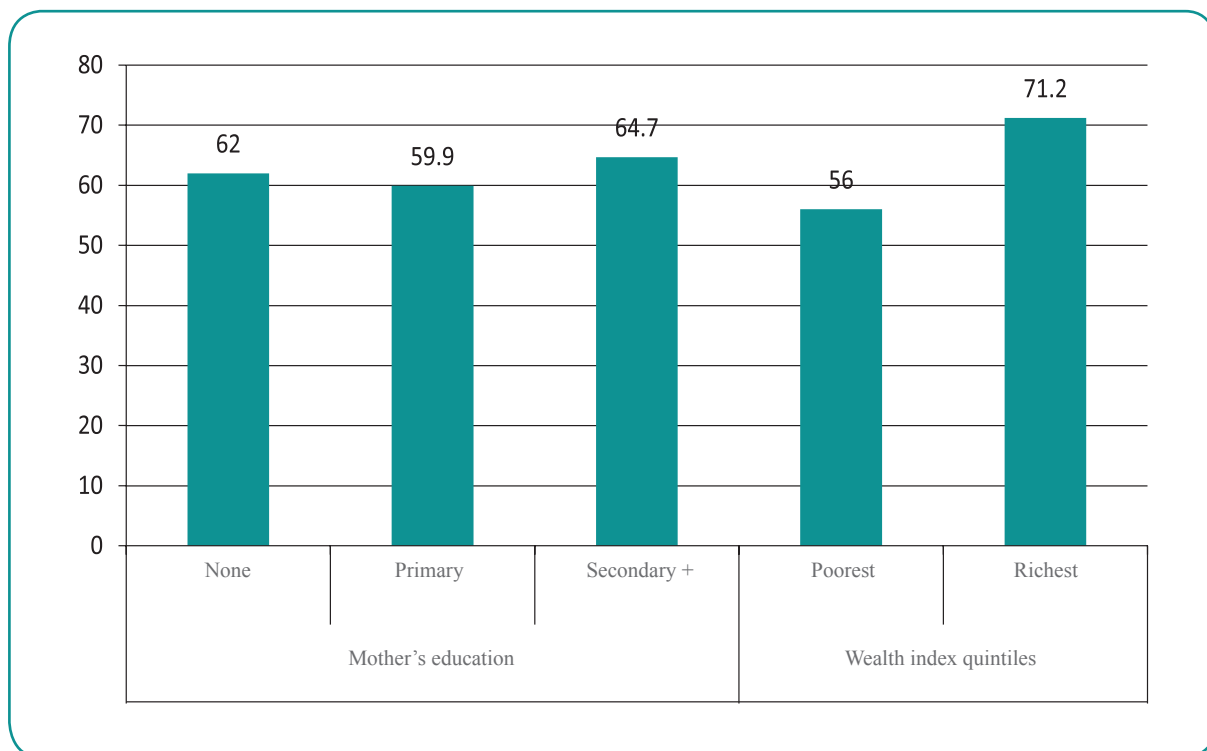
**Figure 62: Indicator of Early Childhood Development by Pre-School Enrollment and Age, 2010**



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. Palestinian Family Survey, 2010. Main Report. Ramallah-Palestine

As expected, early childhood development indicators were much higher for children in the 48-59 age group (74.8%) than for children in the 36-47 month age group (49.0%) as children acquire more skills over time. Figures were also higher for children who attended preschool (84.6%) than for those who did not (58.0%).

**Figure 63: Indicator of Early Childhood Development by Wealth Indicator and Maternal Education, 2010**



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. Palestinian Family Survey, 2010. Main Report. Ramallah-Palestine

Fewer children among the poorest households demonstrated age-appropriate development (56.0%) than those from the richest households (71.2%). There was a strong correlation between competency in literacy and numeracy and levels of maternal education.

#### 4.6.2 Support Children for Learning

It has been well-established that rapid brain development takes place within the first 3-4 years of a child's life and that quality of home care is a crucial factor in a child's development. As a result, the availability of books in homes, the engagement of adults in activities with children, and the conditions of care are important indicators of the quality of the home environment. Physical and mental health and emotional security are important prerequisites to a child being ready for social interaction and intellectual stimulation. Information was collected on a number of activities that support early learning as part of the Palestinian Household Survey in 2010. This included information on adults interacting with children in the following activities: reading books or comics together, storytelling, singing songs, accompanying children outside of the home, playing with children and doing other activities together such as crafts or counting.

Six out of every ten children under the age of five (about 58% of the children) had participated with one adult in more than four such activities that received help with activities from an adult member of the household and engaged with them in more than four activities that develop learning and readiness for school during the three days preceding the survey. Data revealed

variations on the basis of geographical regions (West Bank 65.3%, Gaza Strip 47.3%), the child's age and the socio-economic status of the household. Figures were higher for children in rural areas (63.6%) than urban areas (56.6%) and refugee camps (56.0%). Social and economic status had an impact and figures were higher for children from richest households than for children from poorer households. The results also varied across the different governorates.

**Table 10: Percentage of Children Aged 36-59 Months who Participated with one Adult Member of their Household in Activities that Stimulate Learning and Readiness for School, 2010**

General selected characteristics	Average number of activities				Children who are not living with their biological parents
	Children participated with adult members of their household in four activities or more	Children whose parents participated in one activity or more	Children who participated with any adult individual in the household	Children whose fathers participated with them in activities	
<b>Region</b>					
West Bank	65.3	82.6	3.8	2.9	1.7
Gaza Strip	47.3	68.9	3.0	2.1	2.6
<b>Sex</b>					
Male	58.2	77.0	3.5	2.6	2.1
Female	57.3	76.7	3.4	2.6	1.9
<b>Type of Locality</b>					
Urban	56.6	76.5	3.4	2.6	2.1
Rural	63.6	79.6	3.7	2.8	1.8
Camp	56.0	74.4	3.4	2.4	2.1
<b>Age in months</b>					
36-47	47.6	64.9	2.9	2.2	1.8
48- 59	67.6	88.4	4.0	3.0	2.3
<b>Mother's education</b>					
None	49.3	70.5	3.2	2.0	7.3
Basic/Elementary	56.7	76.4	3.4	2.5	1.8
Secondary and above	60.4	78.4	3.5	2.8	1.5
<b>Father's education</b>					
None	53.7	76.7	3.4	2.3	.0
Basic/Elementary	57.7	78.1	3.5	2.6	.0
Secondary and above	58.9	75.6	3.5	2.6	.0
<b>Wealth indicator</b>					
Poorest	49.1	71.5	3.1	2.2	2.5
Second	51.7	72.1	3.2	2.3	1.8
Middle	59.3	80.4	3.6	2.7	2.5
Fourth	63.9	79.9	3.7	2.8	1.7
Richest	69.1	83.0	4.0	3.2	1.3
<b>Palestine</b>	<b>57.7</b>	<b>76.9</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>2.0</b>

Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. Palestinian Family Survey, 2010. Main Report. Ramallah-Palestine

Adults engaged with children in an average of four activities. Fathers in one or more activities with their children in 77% of cases; only 2% of children live without their fathers. Differences were apparent by region, age of the child and social and economic status of the households. Parents of about 83% of children in the West Bank were involved with their children in activities compared with about 69% of children in the Gaza Strip. The involvement of fathers increased in correlation with the child's age: about 65% of children aged 36-47 months compared with about 88% children in the age group of 48-59 months. There were also differences depending on the governorate.

#### **4.6.3 Educational Materials**

Children's exposure to printed material in their early years does not involve a high level of understanding, but it may give the child opportunities to watch others reading, such as watching older siblings doing their homework. Books are important for school performance in later life and exposure to books may positively impact IQ levels. Mothers caring for children under the age of five (who participated in this survey) were asked about the number of children's books or comics available to their child, the number of household or items, that homemade or manufactured toys available in the home.

Only 11.7% of children under 59 months lived in households that possessed at least three children's books. About 3% of children lived in household which had 10 or more children's books. While clear differences were not observed between the genders, children in richest families had greater access to children's books than their peers in poor households. The percentage of children under five years of age who had 3 or more children's books was about 4% among children in the poorest households compared to about 30% among children in the richest households. The presence of children's books within households had a positive correlation with the age of the child. In homes with children in the age group 24-59 months, 16.9% had 3 children's books or more; while for the 0-23 months age group only 3.2% of households did.



**Table 11: Percentage of Children in Palestine Under the Age of 5 years with Children's Books and Toys at Home, 2010**

General selected characteristics	Child plays with					Two toys or more
	Three children's books or more	10 children's books or more	Homemade toys	Bought toys from shops	Household objects/ objects found outside	
<b>Region</b>						
West Bank	15.1	3.3	20.2	88.8	67.6	70.3
Gaza Strip	7.0	1.7	15.5	79.7	56.0	54.5
<b>Sex</b>						
Male	11.5	2.8	17.6	84.8	62.4	62.8
Female	11.9	2.4	18.9	85.2	63.1	64.5
<b>Type of Locality</b>						
Urban	11.8	2.7	17.7	84.8	61.9	62.6
Rural	11.2	2.0	23.8	86.6	68.4	71.3
Camp	11.5	2.9	13.1	83.3	59.4	58.0
<b>Age in months</b>						
0 - 23	3.2	1.0	14.5	72.6	51.2	51.1
24- 59	16.9	3.6	20.5	92.5	69.8	71.2
<b>Mother's education</b>						
Without	4.1	.6	23.4	76.6	64.0	60.7
Basic/Elementary	8.3	1.4	19.1	83.7	64.1	36.4
Secondary and above	16.7	4.4	16.5	87.6	60.9	63.2
<b>Wealth indicator</b>						
Poorest	4.3	.5	22.1	72.6	62.6	58.2
Second	5.2	.9	16.9	84.4	62.4	62.3
Middle	10.1	1.8	18.5	88.7	62.2	66.0
Fourth	15.3	3.5	16.8	91.2	64.7	67.8
Richest	30.2	8.3	16.0	91.3	61.7	65.2
<b>Palestine</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>18.2</b>	<b>85.0</b>	<b>62.7</b>	<b>63.6</b>

Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. Palestinian Family Survey, 2010. Main Report. Ramallah-Palestine

Around 64% of children in the age group from birth to 59 months had two or more toys to play with at home. A distinction was made between homemade toys (such as dolls, cars or other toys made at home), manufactured toys that had been purchased and household objects which could be used for play (such as pots and bowls or objects and materials found outside the home like sticks, stones, shells, animals or leaves). It is interesting to note that 85% of children played with toys that had been bought while homemade toys represented 18% of their toys. Seventy percent of children in the West Bank and 55% of children in the Gaza Strip had at least two toys. No differences were observed in terms of the educational level of the mother, but there were clear differences in terms of the wealth indicator; 58% of the children from the poorest households had two or more things to play with.

#### **4.6.4 Adequate care**

Leaving children alone or in the presence of other young children is a factor that increases the risk of accidents. The PCBS Household Survey included two questions asking if children from birth to 59 months of age had been left alone during the week preceding the survey and whether the child had been left in the care of other children under 10 years of age.

About 12% of children under the age of 5 had been left in the care of other children and 3.0% had been left alone during the week preceding the survey. By combining these two care indicators, 13.4% of children were left without adequate care during the week preceding the survey, either by being left alone or in the care of other children. This was less prevalent among children in the Gaza Strip (9.7%) than in the West Bank (16.1%). There were clear differences between governorates: the percentage was lower in Deir al-Balah (3.4%) and Khan Younis (6.2%) while the highest percentages were in Salfit (30.1%) and Jericho and the Jordan Valley (22.6%). The percentage of children aged 24-59 months left in inadequate care was about 16% and was about 9% among children in the age group from birth to 23 months. Differences were also apparent with regard to social status and the current economic and living conditions of households.

**Table 12: Percentage of Children Aged 0-59 Months Left Alone or in the Care of Children Under the Age of 10 Years During the Week Preceding the Survey by Background Characteristics, 2010**

Background characteristics	Percentage of children aged 0-59 months		Left in inadequate care during the previous week
	Left alone during previous week	Left in the care of children under the age of 10 years during previous week	
<b>Region</b>			
Palestine	3.0	11.8	13.4
West Bank	4.4	13.8	16.1
Gaza Strip	1.1	9.0	9.7
<b>Type of Locality</b>			
Urban	2.6	11.6	12.9
Rural	4.7	12.5	15.3
Refugee camps	3.5	12.4	13.9
<b>Age in months</b>			
0-23	2.4	7.2	8.7
24-59	3.4	14.6	16.3
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	2.9	11.6	13.1
Female	3.1	12.0	13.6

Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. Palestinian Family Survey, 2010. Main Report. Ramallah-Palestine

## Recommendations

- The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) is developing national indicators. Public awareness must be raised of the importance of these indicators and of the data collected by PCBS from government, private, civil sectors and UN institutions. The definitions and methodologies used by PCBS should be applied as approved by the Council of Ministers.
- It is essential that institutions that supply data from their administrative records are consistent in their methodology. Staff capacity in terms of the skills required to collect and process data and to monitor evaluate and report on issues related to children must be developed and the necessary resources provided in order to ensure that data is reliable, comparable and detailed enough to reflect the true status of different groups of children, especially the marginalized. This will improve the quality of information provided.
- Computerization and optimal use of information, mainly for planning purposes, via the provision of reliable and detailed data by upgrading the staff capacities to collect, introduce, monitor, assess data and prepare reports, mainly about children and violations against them. This is important because children cannot on their own report violations at central or local levels.
- Local and international institutions document Israeli violations against Palestinian children. And to avoid any conflict of information produced by such institutions, it is necessary to coordinate their roles and agree on a consistent documentation mechanism.
- Clear differences were found between children in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem resulting from variable economic, social and family circumstances. Data indicated that changes in poverty and unemployment rates may have an impact on the children within the family. It is necessary, therefore, to develop mechanisms to track and monitor the status of affected children in order to address their living conditions and protect their rights. The effectiveness of these interventions can be monitored through regular data collection in the form of surveys conducted for marginalized groups.

