



The Voice of Children

Student Well-Being and the School Environment



Middle East Pilot
Preliminary Survey Results:
Palestine, Jordan and Lebanon

Fall 2007
Ramallah, Palestine

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UEF is very grateful to Cisco Systems, Inc. for its generous contribution to the implementation of the surveys in Jordan and Lebanon.

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The Voice of Children

Student Well-Being and the School Environment



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Contents

List of Figures.....	iv
Preface	v
Acknowledgments.....	vi
Executive Summary	vii
Context and Background.....	vii
Major Findings.....	ix
Conclusion	xv
I. Introduction.....	1
Universal Education Foundation— “Education by All for the Well-Being of Children”	1
<i>Voice of Children</i> Component	5
II. Framework for Well-Being and Learning Environments.....	7
Definition	7
Relationship of School Learning Environment to Well-Being.....	11
Emerging Framework	16
III. Process for Developing the Survey Instrument (<i>VoC1</i>).....	17
IV. Features of the <i>Voice of Children</i> Survey	19
V. Methods and Administration.....	21
VI. Findings	23
Overall Health Status and Well-Being.....	23
Mental Ability and Academic Achievement.....	32
School’s Role in Teaching about and Motivating Healthy Lifestyles.....	34
Relationships with Teachers, Peers and Family	37
Safety and Security	47
Teaching and Learning Methods.....	56
VII. Conclusion	65
VIII. References	67
Appendix A: List of Abbreviations	76
Appendix B: Contributors to the Design and Development of <i>Voice of Children 1</i> Survey.....	77
Appendix C: <i>Voice of Children 1</i> Survey	80
Appendix D: Survey Questions Grouped by Elements of Subjective Well-Being and Conditions of the School Learning Environment.....	90
Appendix E: Detailed Methodology	96
Appendix F: <i>Voice of Children 1</i> Survey Tables (electronic version only: www.uef-eba.org/activities/VOC/background.php)	

List of Figures

Figure 1. Universal Education Foundation Programs	4
Figure 2. Key Elements of Subjective Well-Being.....	11
Figure 3. General Elements of the School Learning Environment that Affect Well-Being.....	12
Figure 4. Research Highlights: How the School Learning Environment Affects Well-Being.....	14
Figure 5. Emerging Framework of Well-Being and Learning.....	16

Preface

The vision of the Universal Education Foundation (UEF)* is to achieve “Education by All for the Well-Being of Children.” UEF’s purpose is to inspire people to listen more to children and young people and to take more initiative for their well-being. UEF’s goals and hoped-for outcomes are as follows:

- The voices of boys and girls are increasingly and more effectively being heard, and boys and girls actively participate in shaping their learning environments.
- The well-being of children and young people is a central goal of the education and health systems in more and more countries.
- Information and communications technology and media contribute in unprecedented ways to reshaping the learning environment and promoting well-being among children.
- School systems are transformed in more and more countries to become more conducive to the well-being of children.

As a result, children and young people in more and more countries will experience improved well-being in their learning environments.

To achieve these goals, UEF has launched the *Voice of Children* component of its program, which uses both quantitative and qualitative research instruments to capture young people’s perceptions of the ways in which a given learning environment, in this case the school, affects their well-being. Using the results, UEF then engages young people in advocacy activities and dialogue with education planners and decision makers in order to effectively and systematically consider ways to reshape their learning environments to be more conducive to young people’s well-being.

The first major pilot of the *Voice of Children* for “Education by All for the Well-Being of Children” took place in Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine between April and June 2006. This report describes the process of instrument development and methods of administering the surveys to approximately 1,500 students ages 15–16 in each of the three countries, and it also presents the major findings.

Based on this experience, a team of professionals from different relevant disciplines was brought together by UEF in 2007 to undertake a revision of the first *Voice of Children* (VoC1) to refine the hypotheses and tools. The refined version, *Voice of Children 2* (VoC2), will be used in the “Education by All for the Well-Being of Children” initiative in Wales (U.K.) in 2008.

* See **appendix A** for a list of abbreviations.

Acknowledgments

The Universal Education Foundation acknowledges, with appreciation and gratitude, the valuable contribution of many individuals and organizations to the design, implementation and analysis of the three-country surveys. Special thanks go to the students, teachers and parents who participated in the focus group meetings that were organized in Palestine in the context of an extensive participatory process toward the development of the survey and indicators.

We wish also to acknowledge the generous contributions of our partners to the design of the instruments and to this report: the Ministries of Education in Jordan and Palestine, the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology in Jordan and Cisco Systems, Inc. Thanks also to our primary partners: Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC) and the European Institute of Education and Social Policy. Partner Organizations are listed in **figure 1**. See **appendix B** for a full list of people who contributed to the design of the *Voice of Children 1* survey and overall concept development of “Education by All for the Well-Being of Children.”

UEF is very grateful to Cisco Systems, Inc. for its generous contribution to the implementation of the surveys in Jordan and Lebanon.

The surveys were implemented by:

- Alpha International (Palestine)
- Center for Strategic Studies (Jordan)
- Statistics Lebanon Ltd. (Lebanon)

We thank the implementing organizations for their adherence to our data quality assurance protocols and for their timely implementation of the surveys.

Executive Summary

Context and Background

The Universal Education Foundation is a partnership initiative dedicated to creating a global movement toward “Education by All for the Well-Being of Children.” UEF’s vision, improving learning environments to nurture well-being, derives from several guiding principles. The first is that the education of children and young people does not happen merely within the school setting. Rather, learning and development take place in all aspects of a child’s and a young person’s life. Systems of education, health, information and communications technologies (ICT) and media, as well as society at large, need to foster the unique and holistic development of every girl and boy, while supporting their desire for joy in learning. Thus, the well-being of children and young people as well as their communities should be a central and shared goal of the education and health systems.

The UEF program has three major, interrelated components. *The Voice of Children (VoC)* uses a survey and qualitative methods to capture and share young people’s views on how various learning environments affect their well-being. *VoC* also brings young people to the table with policymakers in the role of change agents, using the data to advocate for reforms. The *Elham Inspirational* program identifies, celebrates and brings together inspiring initiatives, people and strategies that nurture well-being in selected learning environments in order to learn from each other. Finally, the *Universal Education Forums: Learning for Well-Being* are events that provide open spaces for mutual learning and multi-sectoral dialogue involving education, health, ICT and media. At each event, there will be a discussion of the challenges of and opportunities for transforming learning environments so they become more conducive to well-being.

Drawing on the World Health Organization’s (WHO) work, UEF’s current working definition of well-being is *the realization of one’s physical, emotional, social, mental and spiritual potential*. The *VoC* survey is designed to assess young people’s subjective perceptions of these aspects of well-being, as well as their views of the effect on their well-being of external factors in the school environment such as the curriculum, pedagogy, school psychosocial climate, health programs and services. A preliminary framework that relates subjective well-being to objective conditions in the school learning environment is presented in section II.

The focus of this report is to share the process of designing the *Voice of Children* component and the results of the first pilot undertaken in the Middle East.

In Palestine only, UEF conducted a dozen focus groups with approximately 100 boys and girls, ages 15–16, who also expressed their views through drawings. UEF chose this age group for the pilot because of their literacy skills. In Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine country-level social science research organizations administered the *VoC* survey to a representative sample of approximately 1,500 students in each country. Major trends and basic frequencies from the data are reported, along with gender differences. Highlights from the Palestinian qualitative data are used to elaborate some of the findings in this Executive Summary.

Additional work has since taken place to create *VoC2*, which will be administered in Wales in 2008. More work on the psychometric properties of the instrument will be done at that time and the well-being framework improved as UEF engages more countries in this exciting movement. New measures to assess the influence of ICT and media on well-being are in development. This report presents highlights of findings from *VoC1* in Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine. Some of the results are further illustrated by extracts from the qualitative survey undertaken in Palestine. No cross-country analyses are intended due to the unique conditions in each country.



Youth involved in *Voice of Children* discuss the influence of the school learning environment on their well-being.

Major Findings

Overall Health Status and Well-Being

1. In general, both boys and girls report high levels of satisfaction with their overall health status (95 percent or more in all three countries rated it as very good or good), as well as physical health and general appearance (roughly 95 percent said very satisfied or satisfied). The high levels of satisfaction are illustrated by the following quotes from the focus group discussions organized for the qualitative survey in Palestine. As one student said “They call me big ears, but I don’t care because I am satisfied with myself.” And another observed, “I was stuttering and children were making fun of me, but I am satisfied and everything is okay now.” However, given the importance of physical activity to well-being, it is important to note that approximately 40 percent of Palestinian and Jordanian students and 31 percent of Lebanese students report that they are dissatisfied with the sports activities in their school. In both Jordan and Palestine a higher percentage of girls than boys report that they are dissatisfied with school sports activities (roughly 50 percent versus 30 percent in both countries).
2. Only 14 to 27 percent of students chose the highest possible rating when asked if they were happy; in contrast, 47 to 53 percent chose the highest possible rating for their physical health. While many students report feeling *always* or *sometimes* happy—85 percent or more in all three countries—this leaves up to 15 percent of students reporting that they *rarely* or *never* feel happy. However, they do predominantly express feeling *always* or *sometimes* optimistic and hopeful, in control and able to deal with life’s challenges (more than 80 percent in all three countries).
3. When asked about their psychological condition, more than 50 percent of students report that they feel frustrated *always* or *sometimes*, with a higher percentage of girls than boys (on average, a difference of 6 percentage points) in all three countries reporting feelings of frustration *always* or *sometimes*. A large percentage of students in all three countries report feeling detached from their surroundings, either *always* or *sometimes*, ranging from 35 to 42 percent; 6–10 percent of students *always* feel detached from their surroundings.

Mental Ability and Academic Achievement

4. In all three countries, at least 90 percent of students report feeling *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with their mental ability. Yet satisfaction with their academic achievement was notably lower, ranging from 67 to 75 percent in the categories of *very satisfied* and *satisfied*. In Palestine, for example, the focus groups revealed that this satisfaction with academic achievement can be affected by the rules and regulations of schools, the berating from teachers, the irrelevant nature of some curricula and rote methods for learning. One student said, “School has no role in developing our talents.” Another commented, “A lot of children are gifted, but school cannot discover them, despite the fact they spend 12 years there.”
5. Although most students (at least 80 percent) in all three countries report *very high* or *high* levels of comfort in expressing themselves through talking, this is less the case for girls than boys. In Palestine and Jordan, there is a difference of 5 and 8 percentage points, respectively. A Palestinian girl in one of the focus groups said, “Girls are not like boys. Boys can speak more freely inside school than girls, but girls will be viewed as impolite when they speak.” A significant percentage of youth do not feel comfortable using other modes of communication, such as writing, drawing, music and body language (29, 47, 49 and 64 percent on average, respectively). Between a third and nearly a half of students in the three countries report that they are dissatisfied with the cultural and art activities at school. In Palestine, a student shared, “My friend has a touching voice, but our music teacher refused to let her sing.” Another commented, “I wrote a poem and wanted to read it in front of the class, but my teacher refused and asked me to read it only to her.”



Students express ideas and perspectives on well-being through drawings.

School's Role in Teaching About and Motivating Healthy Lifestyles

6. Student responses indicate that while roughly 86 percent of students in all three countries report that their schools successfully motivate them to take care of their personal hygiene, 40–60 percent of students report that they *disagree* or *strongly disagree* with the statement “my school educates me to adopt a healthy lifestyle.”
7. Slightly over 40 percent of students in all countries report that they either *always* or *sometimes* do not get along well with others. The mixed views on friendships at school are illustrated in the focus groups: the majority of the students expressed their love for school because it provides them with the chance to make new friends and meet old friends. Yet a contrasting view was, “We are not supposed to trust anybody in this day and age. We all make mistakes.”

Relationships with Teachers, Peers and Families

8. Almost 40 percent of the students in Palestine report that only *a few* or *none* of their teachers provide good role models. This is the case for 30 percent in Jordan and 21 percent in Lebanon. On the other hand, half of the students in Jordan and Palestine and 70 percent in Lebanon think that *all* or *most* of their teachers love their jobs. The primary image students have of teachers is that of a coach (65 to 83 percentage), followed by parent (38 to 44 percentage) or friend (51 to 61 percent). A higher percentage of boys than girls in both Jordan and Palestine see their teacher as a friend (65 percent of boys versus roughly 42 percent of girls).
9. While students report *high* or *very high* levels of comfort when they talk with their teachers, between 20 and 30 percent said that only *some*, *a few* or *none* of their teachers treat them with respect. Students are split in their perceptions about whether their teachers care about them. In Palestine, for example, nearly a quarter report that *a few* or *none* of their teachers make them feel secure. A large proportion of students are afraid of being humiliated by their teachers (roughly 50 percent across all countries), and in all countries there is a higher percentage of girls than boys expressing this view with a difference of 14 and 10 percentage points in Palestine and Jordan, respectively.
10. In all the countries, over 90 percent of the students view their peers as friends (always or sometimes) and are satisfied with their relations with them, but express greater comfort in relationships with the same, rather than opposite, sex (94 percent compared with 50 to 85 percent). However, nearly a quarter in Jordan and Palestine and a fifth in Lebanon *rarely*



Palestinian youth spend time with friends during recess.

or *very rarely* see their classmates as trustworthy, though boys generally view their peers more favorably than girls. Almost two-thirds in Jordan and Palestine and just under a half in Lebanon view their classmates as competitors.

11. Relationships with their families are reported positively and students have the highest feelings of safety and security at home (94 percent on average) compared with in their neighborhood (83 percent on average) or in school (86 percent on average).
12. Thirty-eight percent of students in Palestine, 32 percent in Jordan and 8 percent in Lebanon report having experienced some form of physical abuse, such as being hit, slapped or pushed, during the current school year. A much higher percentage of boys than girls reported physical abuse with the percentage of boys being roughly three times that of girls. Of those who had been abused, students report that much of the abuse took place in the school, most commonly by teachers (40 to 62 percent) and school administrators (30 to 53 percent). In a focus group in Palestine, one student commented, “There is physical security at school, but sometimes the teacher hits a student on the head with no reason.” Another student said “Sometimes we are beaten for silly causes.”

13. Two thirds of students in Palestine, half in Jordan, and a quarter in Lebanon reported that they had been psychologically abused during the current school year by being yelled at, humiliated, isolated, threatened, or other means. Again, a higher percentage of boys than girls had been abused in this way, but the difference was much smaller (3 to 10 percentage points, depending on country) than in the case of physical abuse. Similar to trends reported in physical abuse, a large percentage of the abusers were reported to be teachers; in Jordan and Palestine, over 70 percent of those who had been abused had experienced this mistreatment at the hands of their teachers.
14. Nevertheless, 53 percent of students in Jordan, 48 percent in Palestine and 43 percent in Lebanon report *always* feeling a sense of belonging at school. Fewer in all the countries (between one-fifth and one-quarter) report *always* feeling happy and comfortable in school. Very high percentages report that they *always* feel self-confident (60 to 70 percent) and respected (roughly 60 percent) at school. Three-quarters rarely feel alienated or isolated (about three-quarters in the three countries). However, a good number of students (40 percent in Palestine, 33 percent in Jordan and 29 percent in Lebanon) are *always* or *sometimes* fearful of being mocked by their peers.

Learning and Teaching Methods

15. Satisfaction with their school's teaching methods was not particularly high (13 to 22 percent say only *a few* or *none*), nor was students' regard for teachers as role models (between 21 and 38 percent of students reporting only *a few* or *none*) or as being honest and sincere (13 to 22 percent say only *a few* or *none*). In Palestine, students shared that "One of my teachers can only teach through shouting" and "Teachers focus on clever students and forget the rest." Other students in the focus groups commented that classrooms are very overcrowded, which hinders student learning. "We have 56 students in class; if each wants to ask a question the period is over." When asked in the focus groups what they would do to improve the situation, some students said they would "increase the number of laboratories and equipment, the number of computers" while others said, "I would widen the classroom space, add classrooms, reconstruct playgrounds," and "I want to change unqualified teachers."
16. In both Lebanon and Palestine a higher percentage of girls than boys (a difference of 7 to 10 percentage points) report that they are not allowed to express their opinion freely at school. In all three countries were divided on how many of their teachers are accepting of new or unusual ideas.

In a number of areas, about a third of the students across the countries agreed strongly or reported high levels of satisfaction. These areas are that teachers support their curiosity, nurture their ability to think and desire to learn and encourage participation and questions. In Jordan and Palestine, roughly 40 percent report that *all* or *most* teachers follow a rote learning approach; twenty-eight percent report this in Lebanon. Nonetheless, almost half of students in Jordan and Palestine find their teachers' style of teaching to be fun, as do 53 percent in Lebanon.

17. In all countries, a significant number of students are dissatisfied (ranging from 25 to 40 percent) with student participation and engagement in the school community, and with their school's relationships with their parents and local community.
18. In all countries, family ranks as the source of greatest influence on students' ideas and beliefs and also for the environment that most influences their lifestyle when compared with television, the Internet and school. The Internet and television also play a major role in influencing students' beliefs, lifestyle and way of thinking in all countries, in some cases even more so than school.



Students brainstorm the influences of ICT and media on youth well-being.

Conclusion

The piloting of *VoCI* in Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine has provided valuable information from young people about how they view their well-being—the physical, mental, social, emotional and spiritual dimensions—and whether or not they find school conducive to their well-being. This presentation of findings presents broad trends and descriptive information; more data analysis is required to examine the relationships among variables as well as to understand the psychometric properties of the survey.

At this stage in the analysis, some of these findings may appear contradictory, mostly in the areas of relationships with teachers and peers, but they may not be contradictory in the context of culture. For example, students report rather high levels of physical and verbal abuse from teachers, yet a high percentage also report that their teachers treat them with respect. Students may view such behavior from teachers as sanctioned by society, as it is sanctioned by parents. Therefore, students may see it as acceptable and not a sign of disrespect or not relevant to the notion of disrespect.

In peer relations, while a high percentage of students reports that they feel very satisfied with their relationships with friends, high percentages still do not trust their friends or see them as sources of support. Again, this may be another indication of how perceptions of interpersonal relationship are shaped and modified by context and culture. Friendships in the region have developed historically among families of the same clan; yet with growing urbanization, students are becoming classmates and friends with students from many different backgrounds.

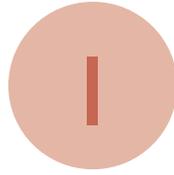
In any case, the findings clearly suggest areas that schools or education systems may want to study further or act upon to make improvements that are more conducive to well-being. Those which stand out are as follows:

- Physical and verbal abuse by teachers and peers.
- The need for schools to do more to foster healthy lifestyles.
- Conditions of class size and the physical learning environment.
- Student dissatisfaction with the development of their mental ability and with the learning and teaching approaches (especially rote learning).
- Differences in class participation and treatment of female students.
- The growing influence of television and Internet on students' way of thinking.

In Palestine, for example, very exciting change is beginning to take place on the ground since *VoC1* was administered. The Universal Education Foundation has actively engaged young people with senior education and health leaders in Palestine, using the results to discuss and begin planning changes. In November 2006, Palestinian youth met with the UEF board, Palestinian government officials and representatives from media and ICT to share their stories, opinions and hopes about their school environment. In November 2007, UEF signed cooperative agreements to advance efforts with the Palestinian Ministry of Health, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency and the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education. Also in the fall of 2007, UEF played a significant role in the two-day international, scientific conference *The Welfare and the Well-being of the Palestinian Children*, held at Al-Quds University in Jerusalem.

Beyond this first pilot, the instrument has undergone significant revision and hypotheses have been developed. Wales is the next country poised to customize and use the survey for a similar purpose. Also in development is a comparable instrument to assess the influence of information and communications technologies and media on the well-being of children and young people.

It is UEF's hope that the *VoC* surveys will offer a unique contribution in providing a credible framework to examine the well-being of children and young people in different learning environments, instruments to assess the conduciveness of those learning environments to well-being, and advocacy strategies that place young people at the table with policy makers as agents of change. The involvement of young people themselves—their direct engagement—includes them as key players in UEF's overall movement of "Education by All for the Well-Being of Children."



Introduction

Universal Education Foundation— “Education by All for the Well-Being of Children”

The Universal Education Foundation is a partnership initiative dedicated to creating a global movement toward “Education by All for the Well-Being of Children.” UEF’s vision derives from two guiding principles. The first is that the education of children and young people does not happen only inside school or within the school day. Rather, it happens in every aspect of children’s lives especially through family and peers, information and communications technologies (ICTs) and media. So the education of children is the responsibility of society as a whole and thus should be undertaken with greater responsibility and awareness by society as a whole.

The second is that the well-being of children and young people, as well as that of their communities, should become the central goal of the education and health systems. Fully aware of the subtleties in any definition of well-being, UEF’s provisional definition of well-being follows:

Well-being is the realization of one’s physical, emotional, mental, social and spiritual potential.

UEF’s approach of seeing education and health as having a common goal is consistent with WHO’s view of health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”¹ and UNESCO’s view of education: “Education should contribute to every person’s complete development—mind and body, intelligence, sensitivity, aesthetic appreciation and spirituality” and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s (UNESCO) definition of the four pillars of education as “learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be.”²

...the well-being of children and young people, as well as that of their communities, should become the central goal of the education and health systems.



UEF considers that reorienting educational endeavors toward nurturing the well-being of children implies a radical reform of various aspects of the learning environment, including the following:

- The content and style of teaching and learning.
- The prevalent attitudes and feelings involved.
- The quality of the relationships involved.
- The physical environment and manner in which the bodies and minds of teachers and students are engaged in the learning process.
- The intention and spirit of the educational endeavor.

UEF will contribute to achieving its vision of “Education by All for the Well-Being of Children” by implementing three linked core components:

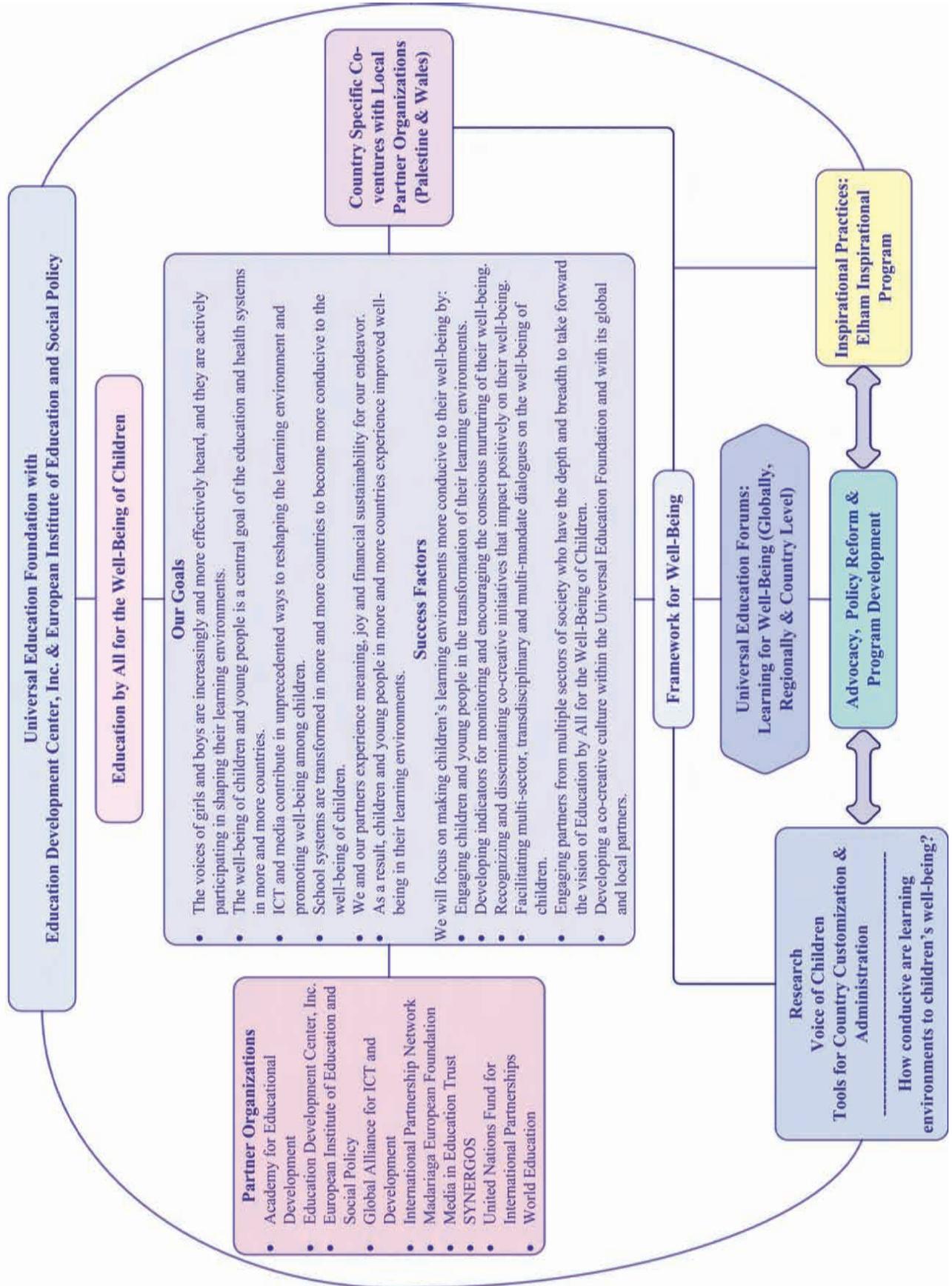
1. The ***Voice of Children*** inspires and encourages decision makers to monitor and nurture the well-being of children and young people as they perceive it. It is a set of survey, focus group and artistic qualitative and quantitative instruments designed to capture their views and for them to share their own sense of self—the feelings, attitudes, ways of thinking and behaviors that come into play during their daily encounters with peers and adults in their learning environments (education, health, ICT and media) and the effect of these environments on them. Using the data, UEF is developing indicators and indices of children’s well-being.
2. The ***Elham Inspirational Program*** is designed to raise the awareness and active engagement of all of society in consciously nurturing the well-being of children and young people. It will recognize and support individuals, groups and organizations that have contributed significantly toward making learning environments more conducive to their well-being, and it will feature their work as inspiration to motivate others. It will focus particularly on people and initiatives from education, community-based organizations, health, ICT and media. Nominees, recognized for their contribution as agents of change, can opt to become Elham Ambassadors. Children and young people will play an equivalent role to adults in the selection process (see the Elham process currently underway in Palestine at www.elham.ps).

3. The *Universal Education Forums: Learning for Well-Being* will be high-profile conferences to inspire the global movement of “Education by All for the Well-Being of Children.” Each forum will bring together local and global actors from education, health, ICT and media, working in government, business, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and foundations. The forums will provide opportunities to listen to children’s voices, showcase Elham Ambassadors’ initiatives and present the *Voice of Children* survey results and the well-being indices for each learning environment. The forums aim to inspire new cross-sector initiatives through an open space approach. At the global level, UEF will organize the Learning for Well-Being forums in cooperation with its partners. Country-level forums will be organized jointly by UEF and the local “Education by All for the Well-Being of Children” partners.

A schematic description of UEF’s program is presented in **figure 1** below.

The original “Education by All for the Well-Being of Children” movement, including development of the concept and program components, took place in the Middle East because the visionaries and founders are located in and dedicated to improving the well-being of the young people in this region. Understanding how young people perceive their schools as effective environments for learning and well-being is an important way to begin a process of change in the region.

Figure 1. Universal Education Foundation Programs



Voice of Children Component

Goals and Objectives of the Voice of Children Component

The goal of the *Voice of Children* component is that the voices of girls and boys be increasingly and more effectively heard and that the girls and boys actively participate in shaping their learning environment so that it becomes more conducive to their well-being.

The *Voice of Children* initiative uses survey and qualitative techniques that capture the voices and opinions of young people about their perceptions of their well-being and how various learning environments affect it. UEF nurtures and supports the active participation of young people in dialogue with policy makers about the findings, and in actions to reshape their learning environments so that they are more conducive to their holistic personal development and well-being, as well as to the needs of their families and communities. In particular, the school, media and ICT learning environments play a formative role in harnessing or stifling children's well-being.

Within the *Voice of Children* component, UEF will eventually examine the influence of all four types of learning environments: schools, information and communication technology, media and health care systems for different age groups, from very young children to the age of 18. The survey results indicate young people's perceptions of those features of the above learning environments that have the most positive and negative effect on their well-being. Data are analyzed for prevalent trends and relationship to such background variables as socioeconomic status, type of school, gender, type of residence and so forth. With young people at the center, UEF presents these findings to key stakeholders and decision makers in the education, health, ICT and media sectors. This report concentrates on preliminary findings from the pilot *Voice of Children 1* quantitative survey administered in schools in 2006 in three countries: Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine.

The insights provided by the surveys constitute a significant contribution to the current intense debate on the mission and purpose of education, reasons and ways to reform education systems and to the design of new interventions by governments, civil society or business organizations. Bringing the voices of the new generation to the educational reform agenda and placing well-being at the core of the education sector's mission are consistent with the global movement toward widening and deepening citizens' participation and youth empowerment.

Objectives of the VoC Component

The specific objectives of the VoC component are as follows:

- Develop, deploy and mainstream a credible framework for children's subjective well-being.
- Develop well-being-based research instruments that measure the conduciveness to well-being of a given learning environment.
- Monitor students' perspectives on their school environment periodically and provide significant input to the policy and planning levels of the education system for the following purposes:
 - The well-being of students gains more and more recognition by students, teachers, and other stakeholders as the central purpose of the education system.
 - UEF's well-being indicators are used as benchmarks for quality improvement of the education system.
 - Students experience a greater sense of well-being by being more engaged and having their voices heard and recognized.
 - *Voice of Children* findings in various countries are presented in the Universal Education Forum and are a basis for identifying priority areas of intervention at the school level worldwide.
 - Media is deeply involved in showcasing the *Voice of Children* findings and promotes associated advocacy and awareness messages.
 - The well-being of children in their school environment is integrated more and more into the programs and activities of leading civil society and community based organizations in education, youth, health, ICT and media.

Framework for Well-Being and Learning Environments

The highest function of education is to bring about an integrated individual who is capable of dealing with life as a whole.

—*Jiddu Krishnamurti, Education and the Significance of Life*

Definition

UEF and its partners undertook considerable research and consultations with young people and with researchers, policy makers and practitioners working across disciplines and sectors to arrive at a preliminary framework of well-being. UEF begins with its definition of well-being and reviews examples of the ways in which the school as a learning environment is conducive to well-being. This preliminary framework served as a guide to construct the *Voice of Children* instruments (*VoC1*): the quantitative and qualitative measures. For more information about UEF's preliminary work to define well-being, please see *Reflections on Well-Being for Education*.³

UEF recognizes the challenges in defining the concept of well-being. It is important that the definition be specific enough to provide a common understanding in the work of UEF yet also broad enough to take into account subjective context-based elements such as culture, age, gender and resources. It should also be flexible enough to allow for its evolution with deepening understanding of the concept, and it should be easy to communicate to diverse audiences.

Research suggests that children who experience a greater sense of holistic well-being are more able to learn and assimilate information in effective ways; more likely to engage in healthy and fulfilling social behaviours; and more likely to invest in their own and others' well being and in the sustainability of the planet as they take up their social, professional and leadership roles in adulthood.⁴

To integrate well-being into education systems, working definitions of the term must be articulated, implemented and measured.

In moving toward the *definition of well-being as the realization of one's physical, emotional, mental, social and spiritual potential*, UEF examined fundamental, international declarations and definitions by United Nations organisations concerning children, health and education. For example, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), WHO, and UNESCO are increasingly framing their goals in terms of the overall well-being of children through the Child Friendly School, Health Promoting School, and Education for All initiatives. The second principle of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child states: "The child shall enjoy special protection, and shall be given opportunities and facilities, by law and by other means, to enable him to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity."⁵ WHO's constitution asserts that "health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."⁶ The UNESCO report of 1996 on education for the 21st century, *Learning: The Treasure Within*, defines the four pillars of education as "learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be."⁷

The focus of UEF is primarily on the inner and subjective experience—the individual's own view or experience of his or her well-being, which necessarily takes into account the person's perceptions of how such objective conditions as the school, ICT and media as learning environments affect his or her well-being. Surveys and educational approaches need to take into account the different needs of different populations. The focus of promoting well-being in one community may be essentially very different from what is required in another community.

To integrate well-being into education systems, working definitions of the term must be articulated, implemented and measured. Much of the research on well-being has tended to focus on external or objective factors that have an effect on well-being, including family structure, economic security, access to health care, substance abuse, and so forth. Well-being is influenced by external circumstances and life events. However, the experience of well-being is ultimately a subjective one and depends largely on a person's internal state of body, mind, emotions and spirit, which determines how he or she engages with and responds to external circumstances. Within any given context, whether it be abject poverty or profound affluence, war stricken environments or privileged peaceful ones, there exists a wide spectrum of subjective experiences of well-being and ways in which people make meaning of the conditions in which they live. The many possible spheres of influence on well-being beyond self can include family, peers, school, media and conditions in the community and larger world.

In general, well-being can be seen as an optimal state of body, mind, emotions and spirit—a relatively pervasive sense of physical, emotional, social, mental and spiritual wellness, optimism, and meaningful and fulfilling engagement with life. Developing well-being is thus about developing the internal sense of a child’s capacity to grow and to develop her or his gifts, to manage life’s challenges, to care and be cared for, and to influence her or his surroundings in ways that enhance life for all. Well-being is about the capacity to find meaning and hope within one’s context. It is about the desire and capacity to make the most of what is, and to transform that which can be transformed, while contributing to one’s own wellness as well as that of the human and nonhuman environment as one evolves on one’s life path.

UEF’s overall definition of well-being is the realization of one’s physical, emotional, mental, social and spiritual potential. In terms of the integrated components of well-being, UEF defines *physical* as those aspects of life related to the physical senses and to sensory experience, to the body and its physiological processes, and to the material and natural environments. The actions and functions of doing, building, taking apart, producing, acting and making practical are included.

Mental well-being relates to that part of life that is primarily about cognition and the processes of both the left and right hemispheres, for example, language, logical and sequential thinking, planning, structuring, understanding specific purposes, objectivity, focusing, envisioning, intuitive imagination, seeing the overview or gaining a perspective, creating or deriving values or principles, reflection, evaluation and so forth. Consistent with WHO’s definition, mental health is also related to one’s ability to cope with the normal stresses of life, to be able to work productively and fruitfully, and to make contributions to the community.⁸

The term *emotional/social* links the emotional and social aspects of well-being. In combination, they are referring to that part of life primarily related to the inner feeling aspects of life, including the relationship to oneself and to others. Some of the areas this description includes are the awareness and processing of feelings, subjectivity, relationships, the feeling dimension of communication, creative imagination and self-expression. “Emotional” primarily means that aspect of life that relates to our **intra**personal functioning; “social” means those aspects of life that concern **inter**personal relationships and interactions, but these terms are inextricably linked and this link is reflected in the proposed framework.

The term *spiritual* refers to the sense of connection with one's unique gifts and life path on the one hand and the sense of interconnectedness with and desire to contribute to the larger environment on the other. It includes the expression of meaning and life purpose, engagement in personal growth, inspiration, peaceful presence, empathy, appreciation of diversity and a sense of connection to the whole.

Though these aspects each play a role, well-being represents a dynamic balance, harmony and interplay among these facets of well-being.

Enfolded into UEF's definition of well-being in its "Education by All for the Well-Being of Children" movement are several principles that have informed UEF's methods to assess and nurture the well-being of children in educational environments:

- Each individual expresses all five aspects—physical, emotional, social, mental and spiritual—within a dynamic whole system.
- While each individual represents a unique interplay and dynamic balance of mental, emotional, social, physical and spiritual life, there are various strengths and patterns that are dominant in different people.
- These different patterns appear to be stable over time and represent legitimate and distinct internal needs of the individual.
- The dynamic balance of individuals is influenced by relationships with the many external environments they inhabit, as well as their internal processes of actualization, growth and development.
- Diversity of learning processes—which results in the generation of new ideas, new forms, new potential and optimized choices—is an outgrowth of the interactions of uniquely functioning and interdependent individuals within the larger contexts and learning environments of which they are part.

The approach to well-being outlined here thus takes a systemic view of the individual within his or her environment and looks to understand the systemic processes at different levels that contribute to or detract from well-being.

In establishing a working definition for the pilots, the *VoC* research has gone through two phases. First, a small group of partners from the Middle East, North America and Europe came together to develop the survey for the first pilot in the Middle East in 2006. This group included educators, policy ana-

lysts, education decision makers and researchers and consultants in education, human development, ICT, media, learning sciences, statistics and social science research. Based on their research and experience, a first set of indicators of well-being was proposed and used as the basis for developing the survey for *VoC1*. **Figure 2** summarises the elements of “subjective” well-being, which informed development of *VoC1*.

Figure 2. Key Elements of Subjective Well-Being⁹

1. Coherence between the way one’s life is and the way one would like it to be.
2. A pervasive sense of physical health and vitality.
3. A confidence in one’s ability to manage challenging situations and ambiguity with competence, choice and flexibility.
4. A satisfying sense of self-awareness, self-expression and self-actualization and meaningful and rewarding engagement in relationships, learning, work, creativity, leisure and play.
5. A pervasive sense of self-esteem, joy, curiosity, awe, wonder and gratitude with the capacity to navigate and cope with a full spectrum of emotions.
6. A deep sense of being safe and supported by one’s environment or one’s spiritual belief system.
7. A sense of belonging, interdependence and pleasure in contributing to one’s communities and human and nonhuman environment.
8. A prevalent sense of acceptance, optimism, resourcefulness, resilience and capacity for growth and healing in the face of life’s challenges.

UEF has outlined, based on current research, several objective conditions or features of the school learning environment that influence well-being.

Relationship of School Learning Environment to Well-Being

With these working definitions of the subjective elements of well-being, UEF has outlined, based on current research, several objective conditions or features of the school learning environment that influence well-being. In a whole school approach to well-being, broadly it is the school’s mission and policies, the curriculum’s content and pedagogy, the physical and psycho-

social environment and the availability of health, mental health and nutrition services. Teacher, student, parent and community participation in shaping learning environments is in itself an important factor in well-being. **Figure 3** illustrates these generic aspects of the school as a learning environment that affect well-being, which are also shaped by national education policy and strategies.

Figure 3. General Elements of the School Learning Environment That Affect Well-Being



Based on research over the past decade, **figure 4** highlights many current findings of the relationship between specific features of the school learning environment and well-being, which were used in developing its hypotheses and indicators for the *Voice of Children* research. To begin outlining a framework for deepening understanding of well-being and further articulating these markers, sometimes there are artificial distinctions made between the physical, emotional, social, mental and spiritual dimensions. In reality, of course, there are many overlaps.

UEF advocates the importance of a strong partnership between the education and health sectors in view of the strong interdependence demonstrated between the two. Educated and literate people are likely to be healthier, and limited access to education is linked to poor health.¹⁰ Furthermore, much literature supports the hypothesis that interconnection is a strong contributor to perceived well-being. Students' reports of feeling meaning and purpose in their lives correlate with positive feelings, happiness and overall life satisfaction. Feelings of gratitude and inspiration are also positively correlated with overall life satisfaction.¹¹ Hope and optimism have been linked to competence, a sense of control, self-worth and higher scores on achievement tests.¹²



Students at a United Nations Relief and Works Agency school in Palestine perform a dance for their classmates.

Figure 4. Research Highlights: How the School Learning Environment Affects Well-Being

Physical Health

- More physically active students have been shown to demonstrate a “higher self-perceived health, lower levels of depressive symptoms and higher levels of life satisfaction.”¹³
- Students with better diets score higher on cognitive tests.¹⁴
- Schools that offer intense physical activity programs see positive effects on academic achievement, including increased concentration, improved mathematics, reading and writing scores.¹⁵

Mental Health

- Much literature has demonstrated a link between school-based mental health services and higher academic achievement, reduced absenteeism and improved learning skills.¹⁶

Spirituality and Inner Peace

- A sense of inner peace has been found to contribute to overall well-being¹⁷ and playfulness has an indirect effect on well-being through its association with more positive attitudes towards school.¹⁸
- Zest is robustly linked to greater life satisfaction, including strong associations with happiness and positive social relationships.¹⁹

Social and Emotional Factors

- Social and emotional skills are critical factors in motivating students to achieve and in improving academic learning.²⁰
- Student social and emotional well-being is improved in an environment where bullying, harassment, violence and physical punishment are discouraged.²¹
- A quantitative review of 43 Social and Emotional Learning programs found that they significantly decreased suspensions and expulsions while improving school attendance, students’ attitudes toward school, students’ grades, and performance on achievement tests.²²
- A positive psychosocial environment include a warm and friendly atmosphere that rewards learning, the promotion of cooperation, open and supportive communications and equal opportunities for all students.²³
- Students who feel connected to their school perform better academically.²⁴
- Teacher support has a profound effect on students’ well-being, and is determined by such factors as whether or not students believe teachers treat them fairly, how caring students perceive teachers to be, and teachers’ availability to help with school work.²⁵

- Having at least one intimate friend is strongly correlated with positive well-being,²⁶ and positive relations with peers in general is also a protective factor of well-being.²⁷
- The quality of relationships within the school environment (teacher-student; student-student) correlates with students' well-being and the capacity to learn effectively.²⁸
- Certain levels of fear or stress inhibit or stifle students' learning capacity.²⁹

Teaching and Learning Methods and Environment

- Giving students autonomy, trust and adequate space to explore, design, plan, implement and experiment positively affects their ability to learn and to grow in a healthy manner.³⁰
- Students' meaningful involvement in the school environment positively affects their well-being and their motivation to learn.³¹
- A stimulating, engaging classroom environment enhances students' capacity to learn and certain aspects of their well-being.³²
- Classroom rowdiness strongly correlates with students' psychosomatic symptoms and depression.³³
- When schools encourage and support student learning, provide extra help if needed, make expectations for assignments clear, and give students a voice in shaping the learning environment, students report a more positive view of their well-being. Studies have also shown that if schools provide students with opportunities to select the most appropriate learning strategy for a given task, students are more likely to succeed academically.³⁴
- The ability of students to use a range of learning strategies conducive to their particular strengths can result in pleasure in learning³⁵ and student motivation.³⁶

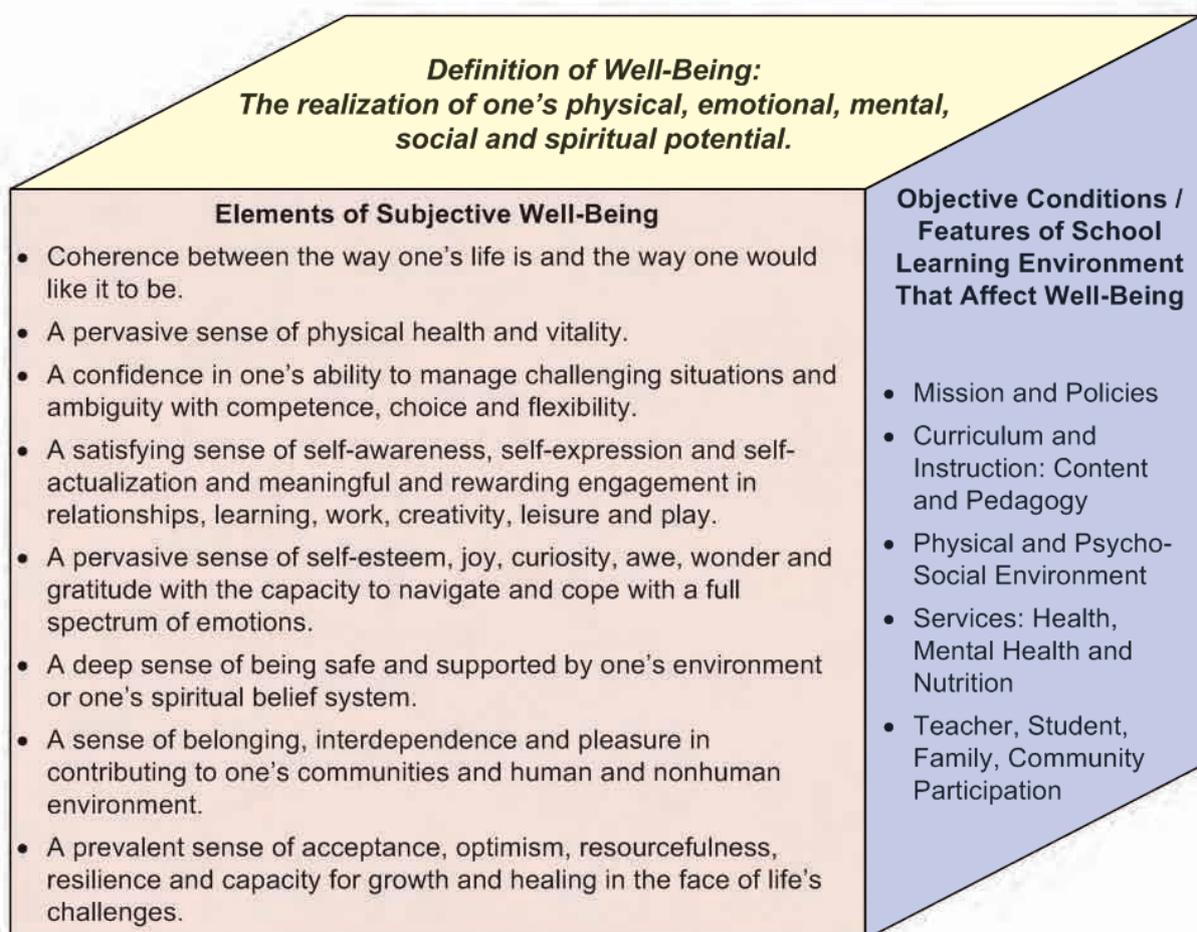
Learning about Health

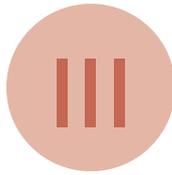
- Learning skills that lead to choosing healthy lifestyles can promote well-being.³⁷
- An Australian study demonstrated that relaxation training not only decreased anxiety but also improved cognitive abilities, including working memory, processing speed, letter-number sequencing and coding.³⁸
- Schools can provide nutrition and health training, for example, to teach children about proper food storage, hand washing and how to choose healthy foods to eat.³⁹ As cited above, children enjoy better mental health and can learn better when they are physically healthy.
- Prevention strategies such as Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), which emphasizes a systems approach to establishing behavioral supports for a positive school environment, have been shown to reduce behaviors that are dangerous or highly disruptive in a school setting.⁴⁰
- A two-year longitudinal study of children receiving a substance use intervention curriculum found that participants had higher overall academic achievement scores on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills than their national peers.⁴¹

Emerging Framework

Figure 5 brings together the various elements of the framework: UEF's definition of well-being, the young person's internal or subjective factors of well-being and his or her view of the objective conditions, such as the features of the school learning environment that have an effect on well-being.

Figure 5. Emerging Framework of Well-Being and Learning⁴²





Process for Developing the Survey Instrument (VoC1)

The overarching hypothesis of UEF is that learning environments and facets of schooling affect young people's perception of their well-being, both overall and in its various domains as described above. The primary purpose of the VoC survey is to capture and measure children's perceptions of the ways in which the policies or rules, the curriculum content, learning processes, teacher and student relationships, and the physical environment and overall ethos in turn affect their perceptions of their well-being. With this background, development of the pilot survey for the Middle East began.

To gain perspectives of well-being and the various approaches and limitations to developing a well-being measurement system, UEF brought together a multi-disciplinary group of experts in Paris in July 2005. A meeting of the UEF's partners followed in August 2005, also in Paris. At that meeting, the team made a final decision to adopt the *Voice of Children* component of "Education by All for the Well-Being of Children" and to pilot test it in the Middle East region. An international research team composed of UEF staff and consultants carried out the work.

A consultative pre-launch meeting was organized in Amman, Jordan, in February 2006 with representatives of partner organizations and a number of regional stakeholders from government, business and civil society. In this meeting, participants agreed to the final specifications of the research design for both the quantitative and qualitative elements and a detailed implementation roadmap. The implementing organizations for each of the three countries also participated in the meeting.

UEF adopted a participatory approach to creating the instruments, involving a wide spectrum of stakeholders, including students, teachers, parents, experts and practitioners, in addition to UEF's partners. In Palestine only, twelve focus groups of girls and boys from all over the country were convened to capture their thoughts and opinions about well-being and the influence of school on well-being, including through drawings, which informed the design of the qualitative survey.

... learning environments and facets of schooling affect young people's perception of their well-being.



During spring 2006, quantitative and qualitative surveys were administered to 15–16 year olds (grade 10) in Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine about their perception of the effect of school on their well-being. Besides the publication of this report and an analytic report for each country, findings are used for awareness and advocacy purposes. A series of policy roundtables have been organized, involving students, parents, teachers, education officials, civil society activists and community organizations. During these meetings, key issues and prevalent trends identified by the survey findings are diagnosed, analyzed and discussed in the context of finding ways and means of rectifying these problems and implications on priority interventions and policy changes. Following the survey, partnership agreements have been signed in Palestine with the Ministries of Education and Health and with the health and education departments of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency to steer this process.



A Palestinian *Voice of Children* youth delegation serves on a panel at the United Nations Global Alliance for ICT and Development conference.

IV

Features of the Voice of Children Survey

The quantitative survey piloted in Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine contained approximately 135 closed-item questions grouped into 25 clusters. It was anonymous and the students completed a paper and pencil version, which was administered by trained survey staff, during class time. The questionnaire included standard control variables needed for survey management and background variables, including questions on place of residence, gender, as well as social and economic status of the family, and the questions themselves. Based on the Emerging Framework illustrated in **figure 5**, UEF clustered the items to assess the following major issues:

- Overall Health Status and Subjective Views of Well-Being
- Mental Ability and Academic Achievement
- School's Role in Teaching about and Motivating Healthy Lifestyles
- Relationships with Teachers, Peers and Family
- Safety and Security
- Teaching and Learning Methods, including Testing
- Participation and Agency
- Influences on Learning and Values

The final survey appears in **appendix C** together with a matrix in **appendix D**, which groups the questions by areas of subjective well-being and conditions of the school learning environment.

The quantitative survey piloted in Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine contained approximately 135 closed-item questions grouped into 25 clusters.





Palestinian students look on as classmates play basketball during recess.



Students in their classroom at a secondary school in Palestine.

V

Methods and Administration

In Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine, the survey was conducted by a country-level social science research organization with considerable experience in carrying out national surveys with representative samples to a high degree of exactitude. The organizations were Center for Strategic Studies (Jordan), Statistics Lebanon Ltd. and Alpha International (Palestine), which coordinated the work of the three countries. **Appendix E** provides details of the methods used for sample design, training of field workers, data collection and analysis in each country. Data results summarized in this report do not reflect an analytical comparison among the three countries. Each country has unique context and conditions despite their close proximity.

In Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine, the survey was conducted by social science research organizations with considerable experience in carrying out national surveys...



Palestinian youth participate in a *Voice of Children* focus group.



A Palestinian girl waves goodbye as she leaves school for the day.



Palestinian youth chat with friends during recess.



VI

Findings

This section presents a summary of the major findings of the survey for all of the questions for each of the three countries. The charts contained in this section present the results for each country. Data for all survey questions analyzed by country and gender are presented in **appendix F**.

Readers should bear in mind that these are the results of a pilot survey and they are being used for two distinct purposes: for advocacy in the countries about the conduciveness of the school learning environment to the well-being of students and also to review and refine the instrument for the second pilot in Wales in 2008. This first level of analysis intends to make available the basic frequencies. The second level of careful detailed interpretation focused on the specific context of each country will address the apparent inconsistencies that appear between answers to different questions.

Overall Health Status and Well-Being

Data from a national longitudinal study of adolescent health in the United States found that being at risk for academic failure was associated with every health risk studied, including mental health.⁴³ Further, research has demonstrated that physical health affects mental health and vice versa.⁴⁴ Consistent with UEF's overall definition of health as the realization of one's physical, emotional, mental, social and spiritual potential, the *Voice of Children* survey asks young people their perceptions of their overall health status and its various components.

Almost all students across the three countries report their overall health status to be very good or good. In Jordan, 61 percent believe their health is *very good* and 37 percent responded *good*. In Lebanon, 47 percent answer that their health is *very good* and 50 percent report it to be *good*. In Palestine, 62.5 percent say their overall health is *very good* and 35 percent rate it as *good*.

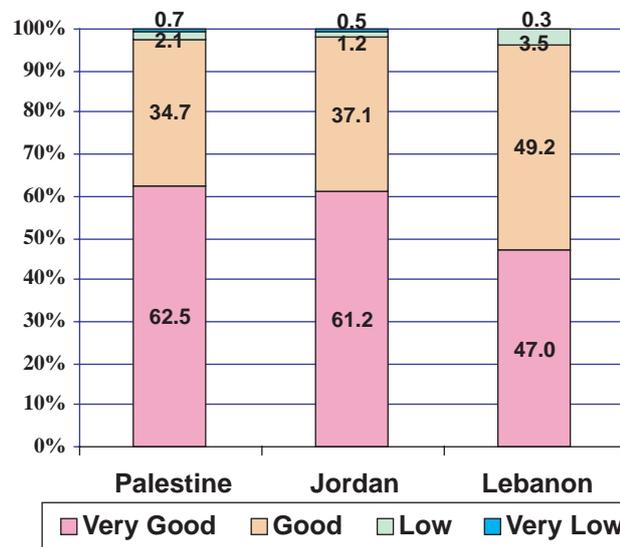
Almost all students across the three countries report their overall health status to be *very good* or *good*.



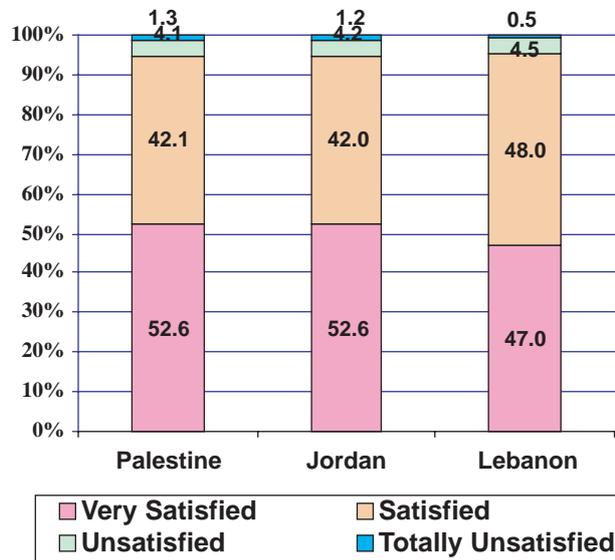
Physical Health and Appearance

Significant evidence demonstrates a relationship between physical well-being and learning. Students with better nutrition, for example, score higher on cognitive tests.⁴⁵ Increased physical activity has a positive effect on students' body image⁴⁶ and is associated with higher self-perceived health and lower levels of depressive symptoms.⁴⁷ Almost half of the students report that they are *very satisfied* with their physical health and general appearance, again with a lower percentage reporting in Lebanon very satisfied (41 percent) than in Palestine (52 percent) or Jordan (58 percent). About half of the students in Jordan and Palestine, however, report that they *always or sometimes* feel ashamed of their bodies. These perceptions of physical health and the body hold true for both boys and girls, except that girls in Jordan and Palestine report significantly higher overall satisfaction with health status than do boys. In terms of their satisfaction with sports activities at school, slightly more than 40 percent of students in Jordan and Palestine and 30 percent in Lebanon are dissatisfied with this aspect of their school environment. In both Jordan and Palestine, a significantly higher percentage of girls than boys report that they are dissatisfied with school sports activities.

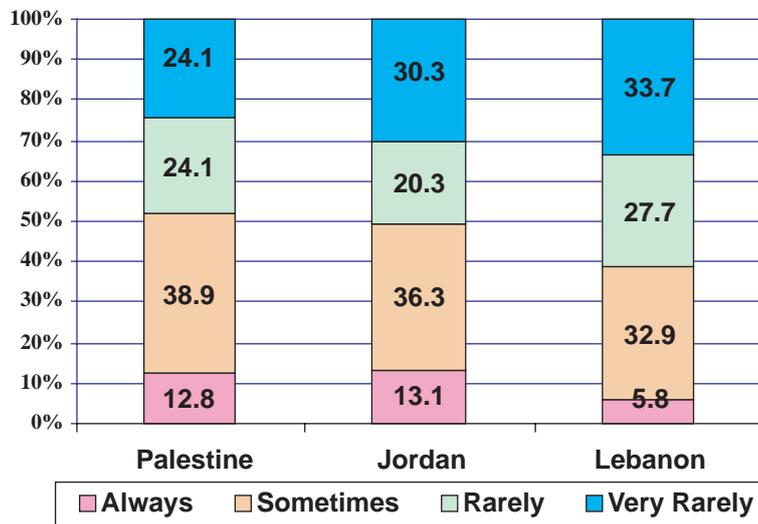
Q0: In general, how do you evaluate your health status?



Q1_1: Rate your satisfaction with your physical health.



Q6_2: How do you feel towards your body? I feel ashamed.



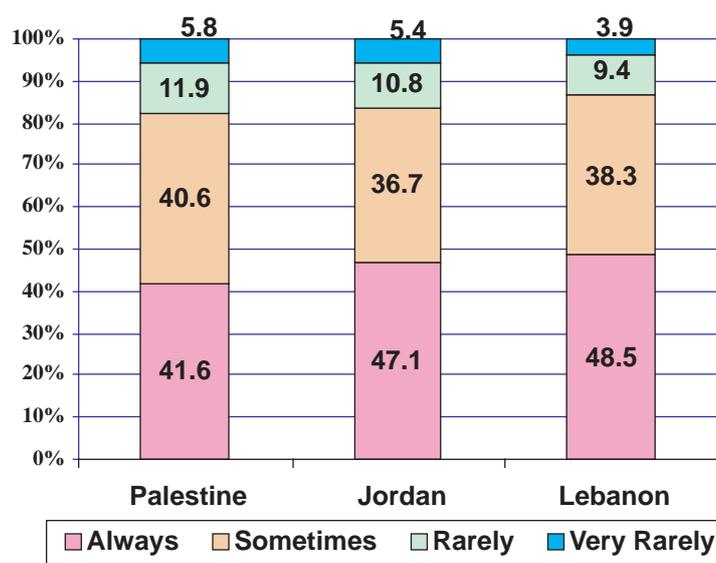
Psychological Health: Social and Emotional Well-Being

Many international research findings report that social and emotional skills promote positive development, reduce problem behaviors, and improve children’s academic performance and health-related behaviors.⁴⁸ Much research has shown a strong association between depressive and anxious symptoms and low academic performance.⁴⁹

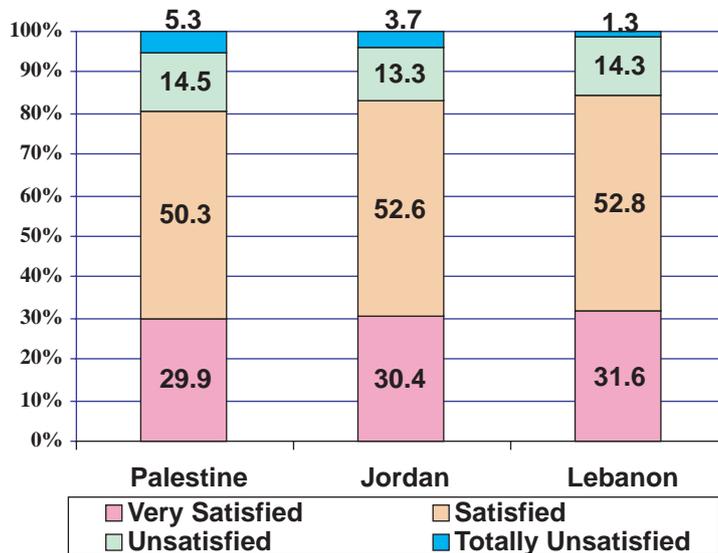
VoCI revealed that, in contrast to the highest rating of satisfaction (*very satisfied*) for physical health, which ranges from 47 to 53 percent, depending on the country, fewer students report the highest rating for feeling happy (14–27 percent). In Jordan and Palestine, 15 percent of students indicate that they *rarely* or *very rarely* feel happy. The majority of students indicate that they are *sometimes* happy (71 percent, 66 percent and 64 percent respectively). In Jordan, significantly more boys than girls report that they *always* feel happy.

Students predominantly feel *always* or *sometimes* “optimistic and hopeful,” “in control” and able to “deal with different life challenges,” with over 80 percent of students reporting this level across all three countries. This leaves an important 5 to 15 percent of students who *rarely* or *very rarely* feel this way. Approximately 10 percent fewer students report that they are *very satisfied* with their ability to deal with life’s different challenges than feel in control or optimistic.

Q4_7: How do you describe your current psychological condition? I feel optimistic and hopeful.

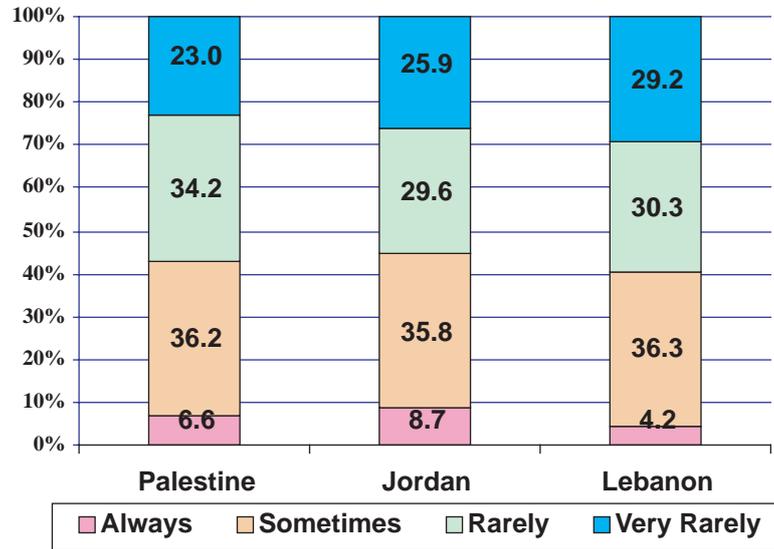


Q1_8: Rate your satisfaction with your ability to deal with different life challenges.

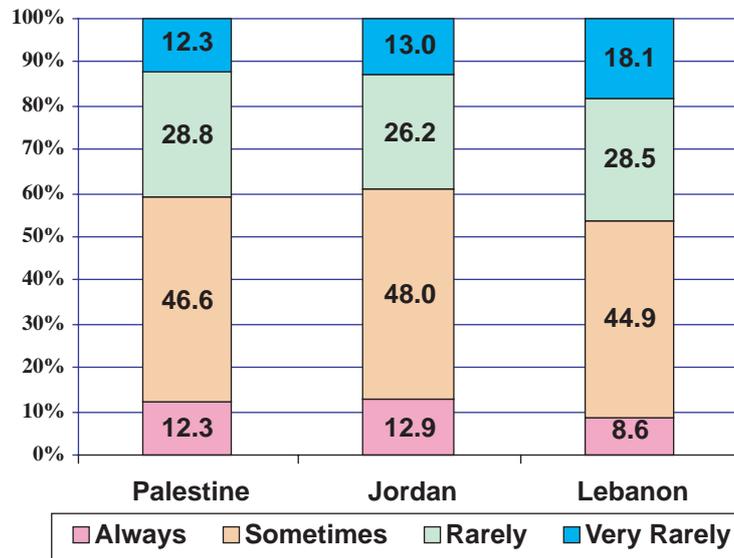


In terms of social health or relationships with peers, close to 40 percent of students across all three countries report that they *always* or *sometimes* “don’t get along with others” (Palestine, 43 percent, Jordan, 45 percent and Lebanon, 41 percent). From 50 to 60 percent of students in all countries say they *always* or *sometimes* feel frustrated and a large percentage (35–42 percent) report feeling *always* or *sometimes* “detached from my surroundings.”

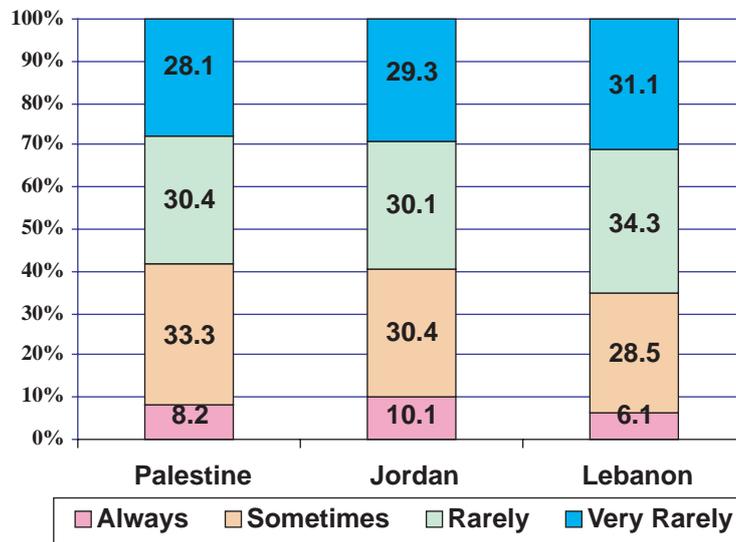
**Q4_4: How do you describe your current psychological condition?
I don't get along with others.**



**Q4_6: How do you describe your current psychological condition?
I feel frustrated.**



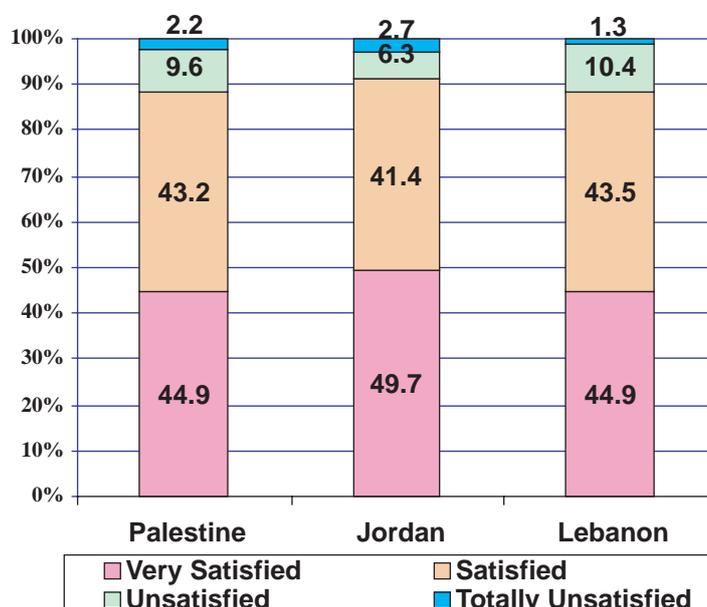
Q4_3: How do you describe your current psychological condition? I feel detached from my surroundings.



Spiritual Well-Being

The literature documents several key components of inner strength and spirit. A sense of flow—the immersion in the here and now—enhances one’s ability to cope flexibly and creatively with life’s challenges,⁵⁰ and inner peace has been found to contribute to overall well-being.⁵¹ Large percentages of students across the countries report being *very* satisfied (Palestine 45 percent, Jordan 50 percent and Lebanon 45 percent) or *satisfied* (Palestine 43 percent, Jordan 41 percent and Lebanon 44 percent) with their sense of inner peace.

Q1_7: Rate your satisfaction with your sense of inner peace.



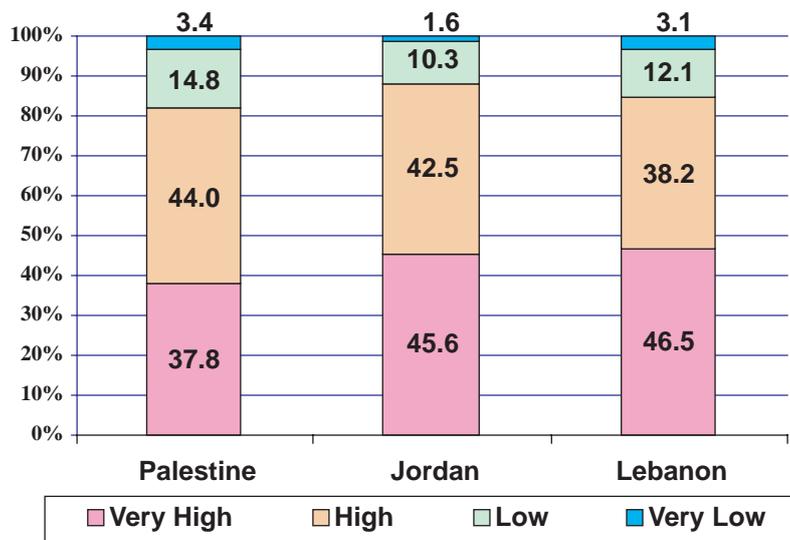
Comfort with Expression

The ability to express one’s feelings and to communicate effectively with others is an important dimension of human development and well-being.⁵² Questions on *VoCI* asked about oral and written communication and the use of body language, drawing or music. More students report *very high* or *high* levels of comfort using oral communication (roughly 80 percent) than for the other modes. A significant percentage of youth do not feel comfortable using written communication, drawing, music or body language. For example, between roughly a quarter and a third of students report either low or very low levels of comfort in communicating through writing.

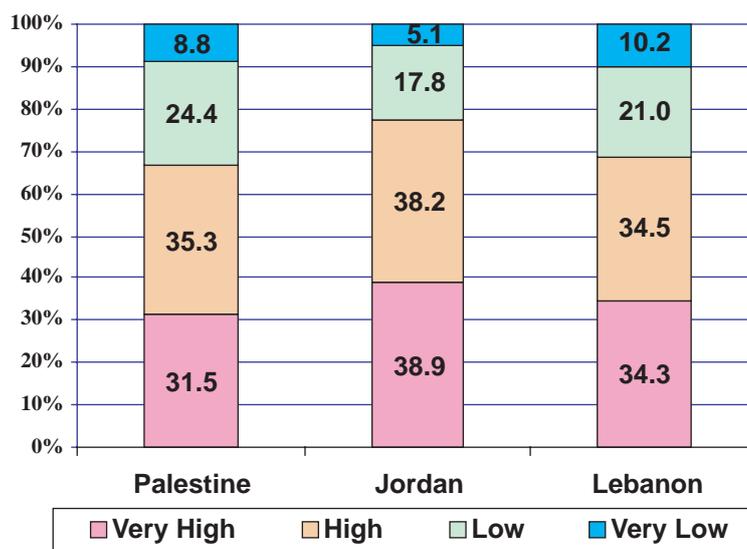
The lowest percentage of comfort was reported for “drawing,” with 20 percent or less reporting a very high level. Close to 30 percent of students report that they feel very high comfort expressing themselves through music, and it is even higher in Lebanon (34 percent). Fewer are comfortable expressing themselves through body language. Significantly fewer girls than boys in Jordan and Palestine are comfortable talking. Girls also report being less comfortable using body language to communicate. However, girls’ responses in Lebanon and Palestine suggest that they are significantly more comfortable than boys are in expressing themselves through writing, through music in all the coun-

tries and through drawing in Jordan and Lebanon. Between a third and nearly a half of students in the three countries report feeling dissatisfied with the cultural and art activities at their school.

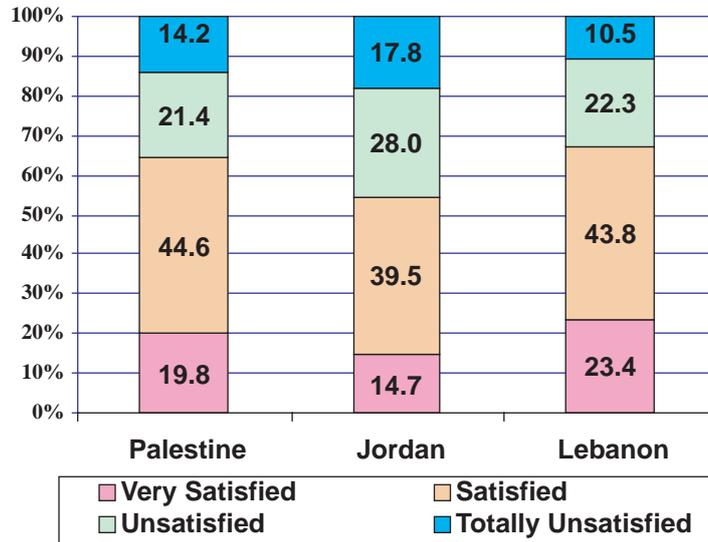
Q7_1: How do you rate your comfort in using the following means of communication? Talking.



Q7_2: How do you rate your comfort in using the following means of communication? Writing.



Q25_2: How satisfied are you with the cultural and art activities in your school environment?

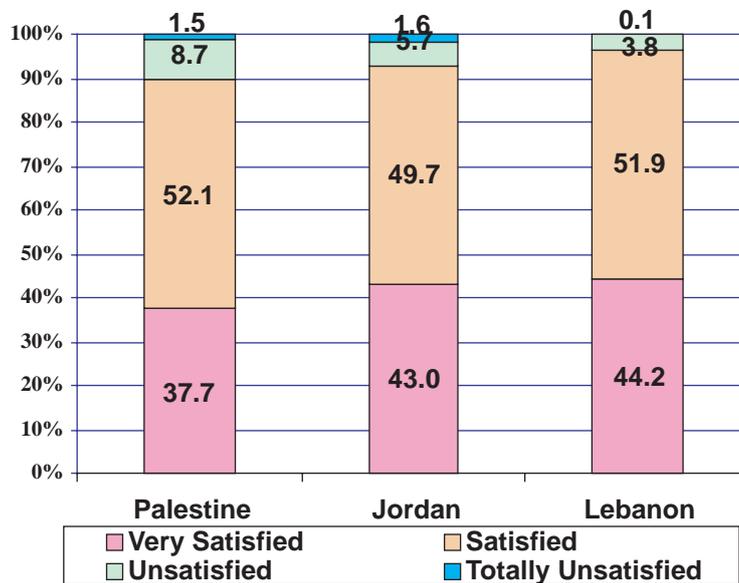


Mental Ability and Academic Achievement

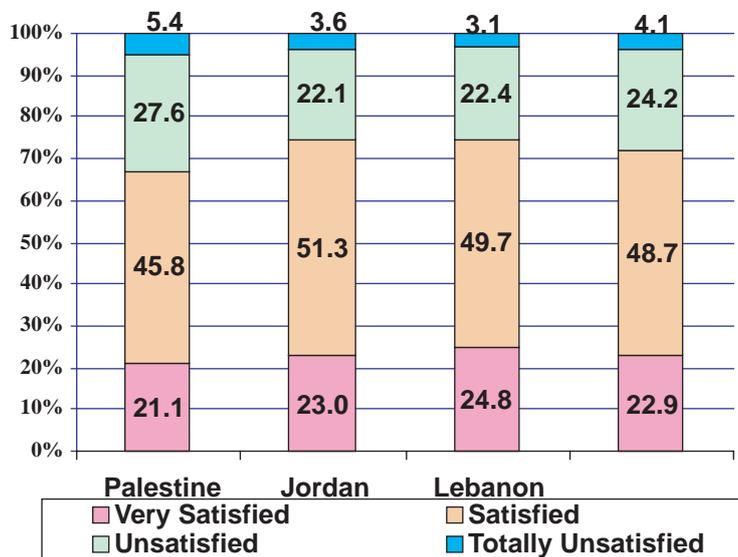
Belief in one’s ability to handle difficult tasks affects learning and well-being.⁵³ Further, students’ ability to select learning strategies to pursue and achieve their goals contribute to their confidence and well-being.⁵⁴

In all countries, at least 90 percent of students report that they feel *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with their mental ability. Thirty-eight percent of students in Palestine are *very satisfied*, as are 43 percent in Jordan and 44 percent in Lebanon. With regard to academic achievement, however, levels of satisfaction are notably lower. A third of students in Palestine and a quarter in Jordan and Lebanon report that they are *unsatisfied* or *totally unsatisfied* with their academic achievement.

Q1_4: Rate your satisfaction with your mental ability:



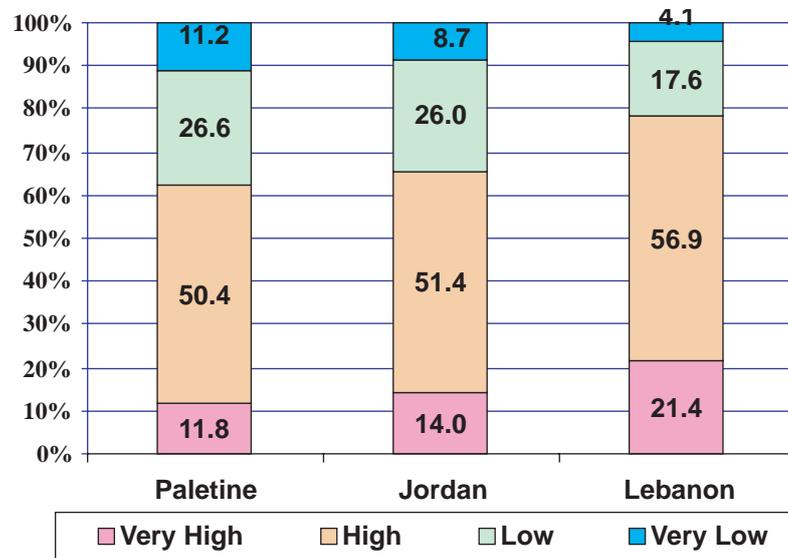
Q1_3: Rate your satisfaction with the your academic achievement:



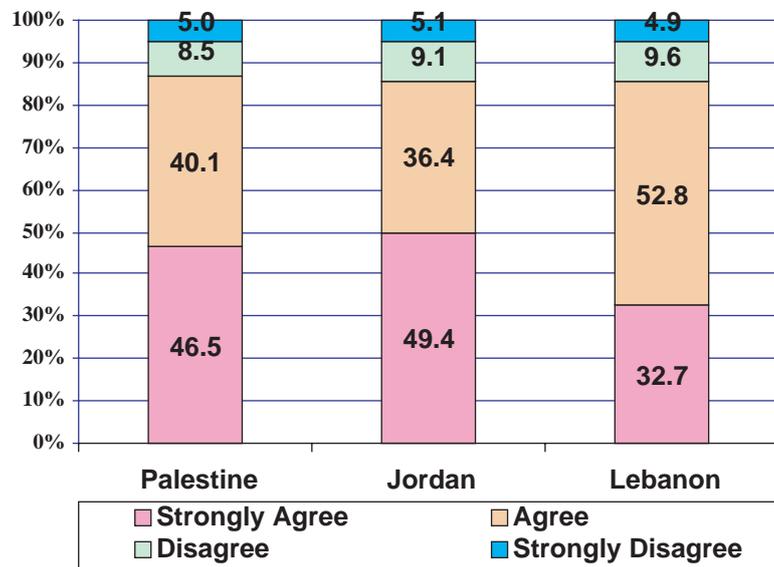
School's Role in Teaching about and Motivating Healthy Lifestyles

When asked about their satisfaction with their school in developing healthy behaviors, only 12 to 21 percent of students *strongly agree* that the school does so (12 percent Palestine, 14 percent Jordan and 21 percent Lebanon). Similarly, relatively small percentages of students *strongly agree* that their school helps them to take more responsibility for their own health (23 percent Palestine, 20 percent Jordan and 15 percent Lebanon) or educates them to adopt a healthy lifestyle (14 percent Palestine, 11 percent Jordan and 9 percent Lebanon). Boys agree more than girls. However, a larger percentage reports that they *strongly agree* that their school motivates them to take care of their personal hygiene (47 percent Palestine, 49 percent Jordan and 33 percent Lebanon), with girls reporting significantly higher agreement than boys on this item.

Q18: In general, my satisfaction with my school in developing healthy behavior is:

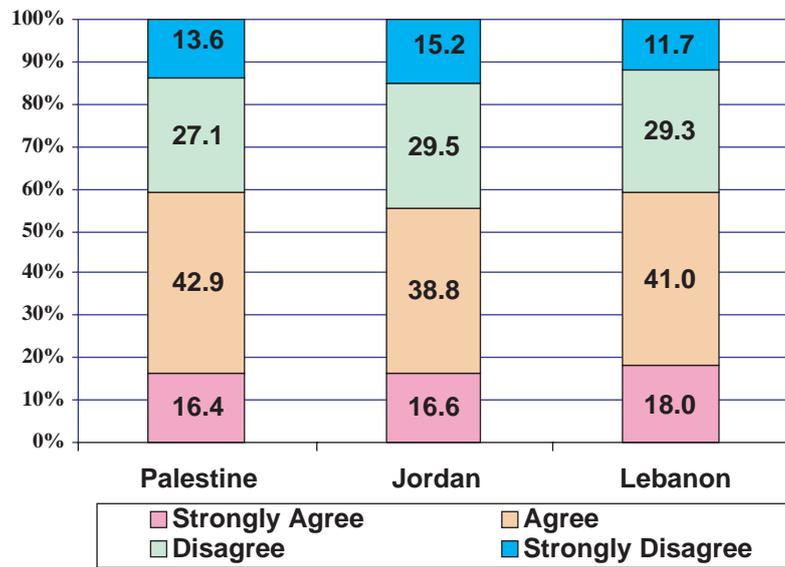


Q17_3: My school motivates me to take care of my personal hygiene.

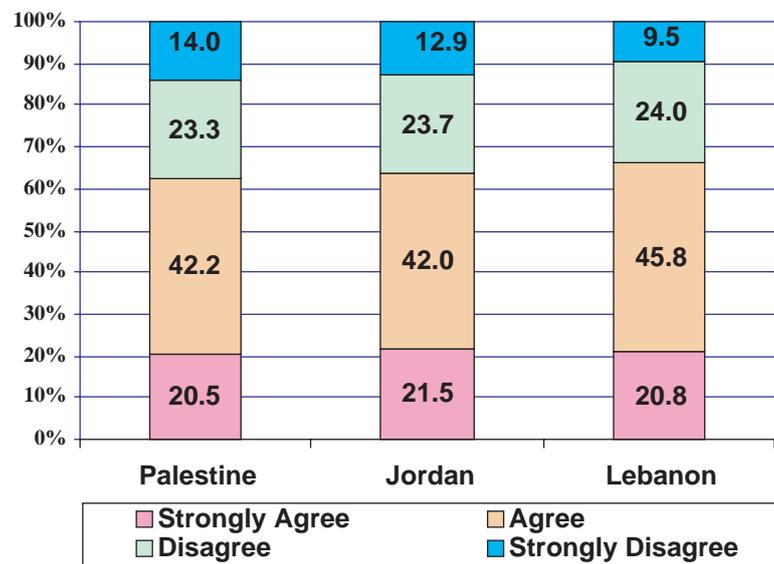


For the psychological dimensions of healthy lifestyles, from 16- to 18 percent of students in the three countries *strongly agree* that school teaches them how to deal with psychological pressures. Just over 70 percent in all three countries either *strongly agree* or *agree* that school teaches them how to express themselves quietly and peacefully in order to develop their communications skills with others and promotes their interests in helping others. But well over a third of students across all three countries disagree or strongly disagree with the statement “my school helps me deal with my life problems.”

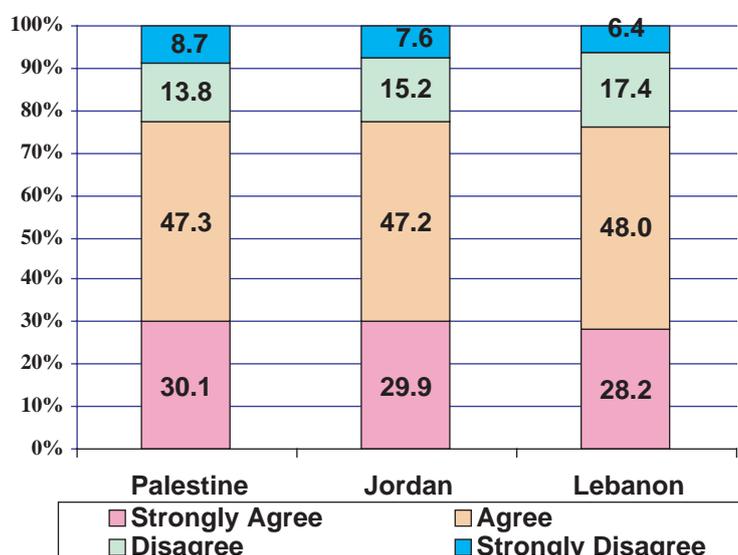
Q17_4: My school teaches me how to deal with psychological pressures.



Q17_5: My school helps me deal with my life problems.



Q17_8: My school promotes my interests in helping others.



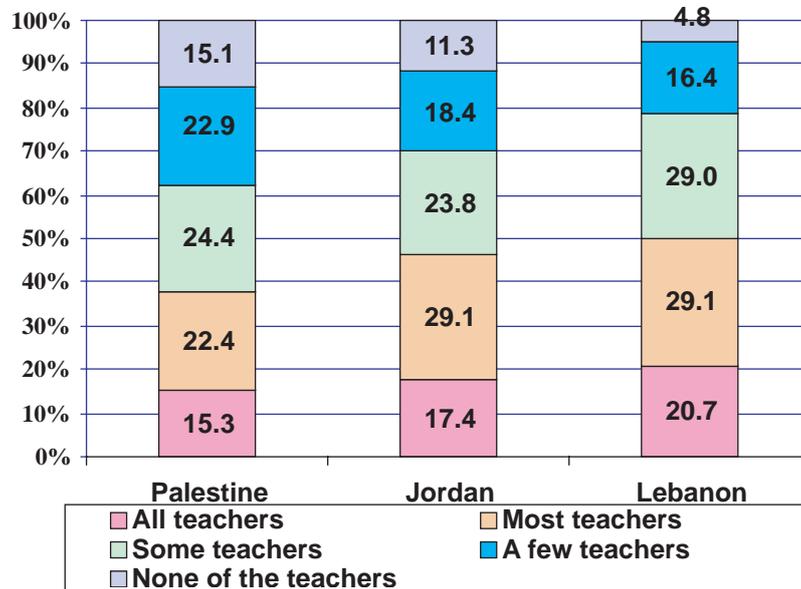
Relationships with Teachers, Peers and Family

Relationships with Teachers

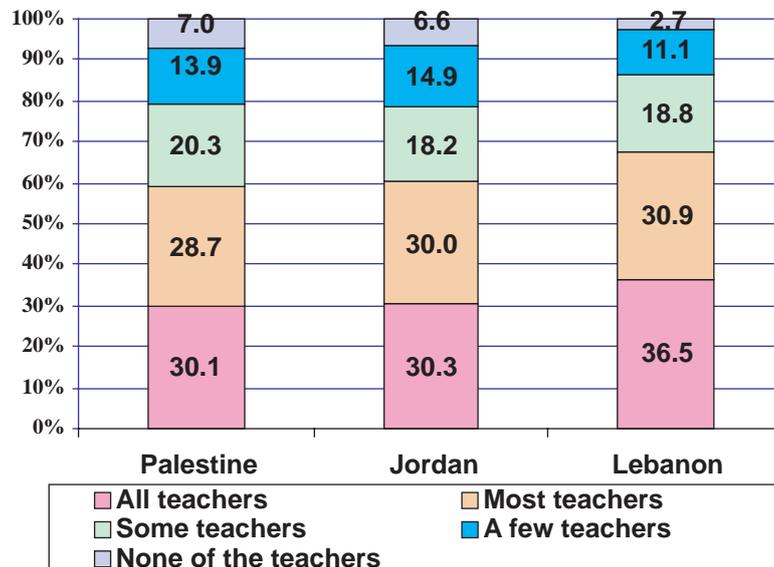
Research points to the importance of relationships that students have with their teachers and peers. One study of 887 Norwegian adolescents, demonstrated that students’ happiness is significantly related to teacher support.⁵⁵ Other important factors in teacher-student relationships include the extent to which teachers are caring toward students and treat them fairly.⁵⁶ Teacher mental health and well-being also affect the quality of teaching and learning and classroom ethos.⁵⁷

In view of these literature findings, it is important to consider students’ relationships with teachers as well their perceptions of their instructors’ job satisfaction. In Palestine, 38 percent of students report that only *a few* or *none* of their teachers are good role models; 30 percent of students in Jordan and 21 percent in Lebanon report *a few* or *none* are good role models. When asked whether their teachers are honest and sincere, a fifth of Palestinian and Jordanian students reported *a few* or *none*, as did 14 percent of Lebanese students. In terms of job satisfaction, half of the students in Palestine and Jordan say that *all* or *most* teachers “love their job,” as do 70 percent of students in Lebanon.

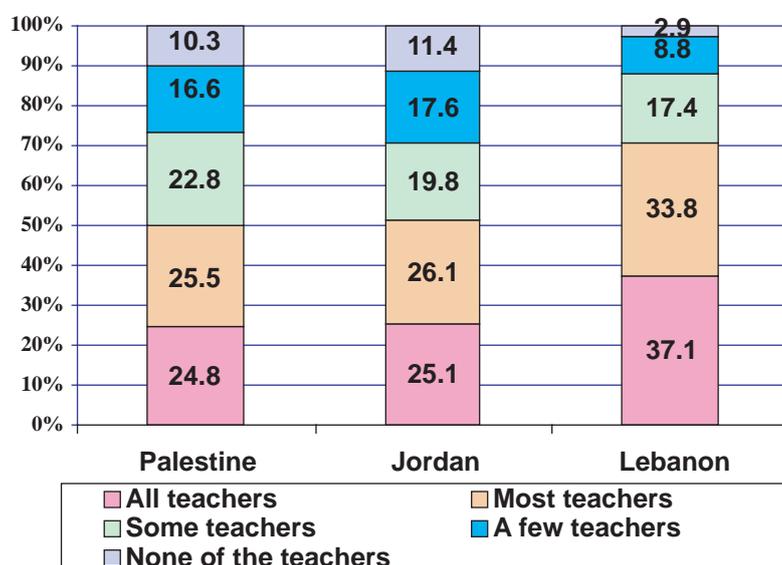
Q12_5: My teachers are good role models.



Q12_11: My teachers are honest and sincere.



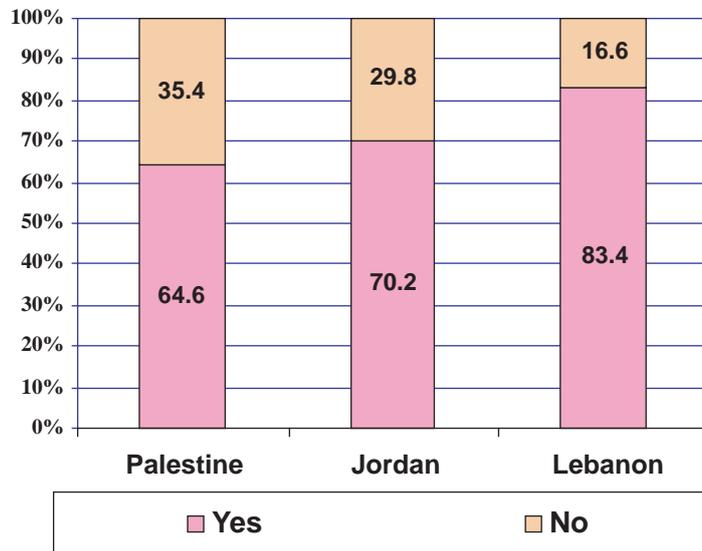
Q12_12: My teachers love their job.



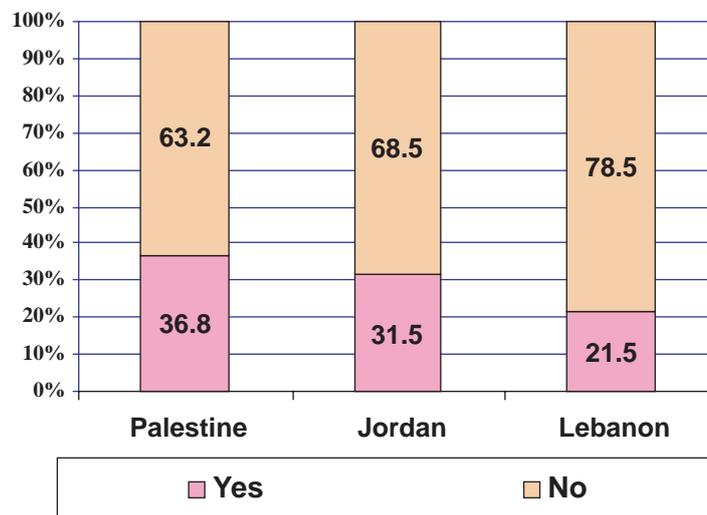
Concerning the image or role of the teacher with students, the primary image students have of teachers is that of a coach, with 65 percent of students in Palestine, 70 percent in Jordan and 83 percent in Lebanon selecting this image. Roughly 40 percent across countries see their teacher in the image of a parent and half as a friend. A higher percentage of boys than girls in Palestine and Jordan see their teacher as a friend. It is striking that 37 percent of students in Palestine see their teacher associated with the image of a policeman.* In Jordan 32 percent of students hold this image and in Lebanon 22 percent. A notable gender difference exists in Lebanon, where 25 percent of boys associate their teacher with a policeman as opposed to 18 percent of girls. In Palestine and Jordan, roughly 65 percent of boys viewed their teacher as a friend, compared with 40 and 46 percent of girls, respectively.

* This is an interesting example of an assumption that was put into question in revising the questionnaire in so far as young people can hold various images of the police, which may be either negative or positive.

Q14_2: In my mind, a teacher is associated with the image of a coach.



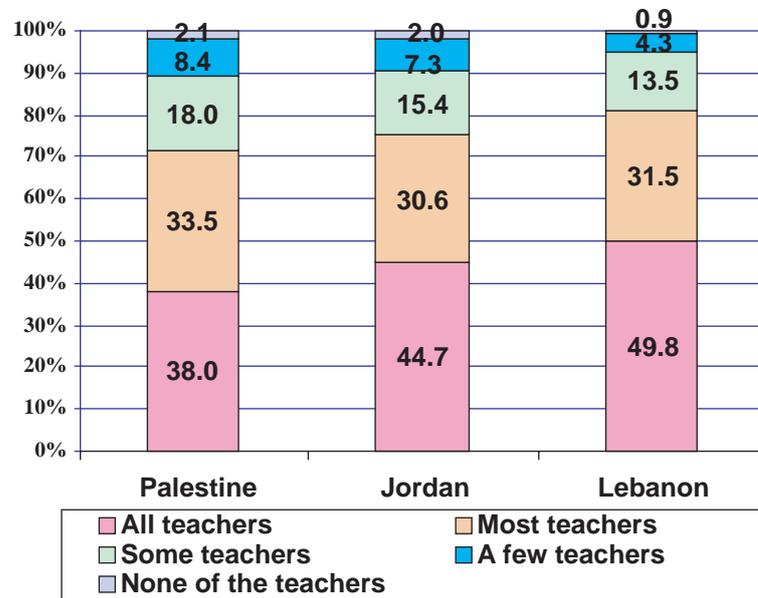
Q14_1: In my mind, a teacher is associated with the image of a policeman:



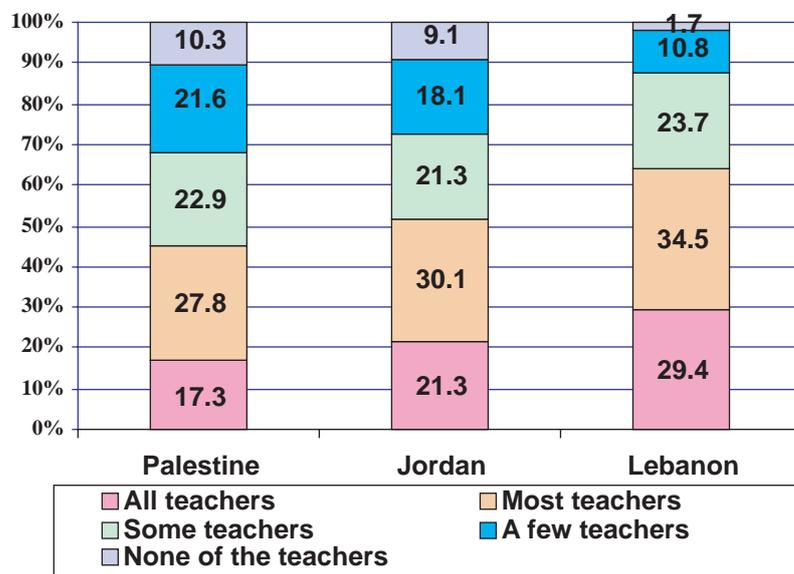
Given the importance of student and teacher relationships to well-being and academic performance, the next section of the questionnaire investigated how students say they are treated by their teachers. Between 19 and 29 percent of students reported that only *some, a few* or *none* of their teachers treat them with respect. In Palestine, 40 percent of students said that *some, a few* or *none* of their teachers treat them gently; in Jordan, 33 percent answered similarly and in Lebanon 29, percent. Nevertheless, students report *very high* or *high* levels of comfort when they talk with their teachers (73 percent Palestine, 79 percent Jordan and 78 percent Lebanon), with significantly more boys in Palestine and Jordan reporting very high or high levels of comfort talking with teachers.

However, students are quite split in their perceptions about the statements “My teachers care about me” and “My teachers support me when I need them.” For example, 45 percent of students in Palestine say that *most* or *all* teachers care about them and another 45 percent say that only *some* or *a few* teachers do. Similarly, 43 percent in Palestine say that *all* or *most* provide support when I need them; an equal percentage says only *some* or *a few* do. Students in Jordan and Lebanon report slightly more favorable perceptions on these items. In Palestine, nearly a quarter of students report that only *a few* or *none* of their teachers make them feel secure. In Jordan and Lebanon, 20 percent and 10 percent report similarly. A large portion of students are also afraid of being humiliated by their teachers: in Palestine, half of the students say they *always* or *sometimes* feel this way; in Jordan 45 percent of students and in Lebanon 43 percent. In all three countries, a higher percentage of girls than boys answer *always* or *sometimes*.

Q12_2: My teachers treat me with respect.



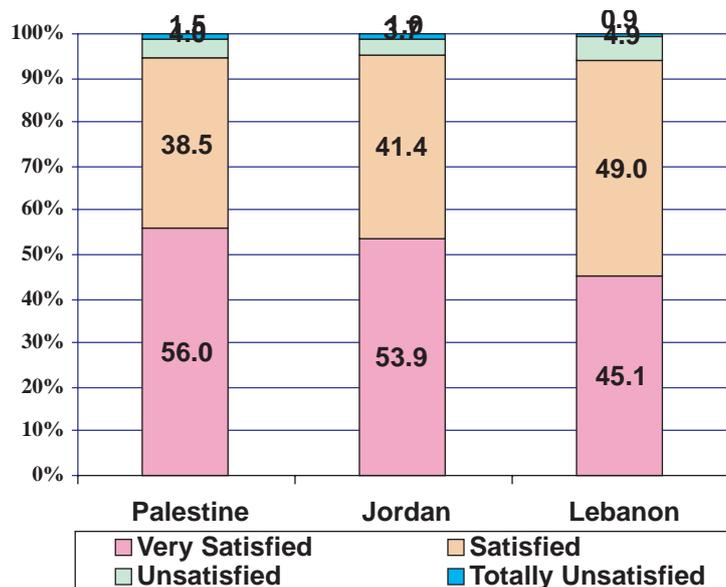
Q12_4: My teachers care about me.



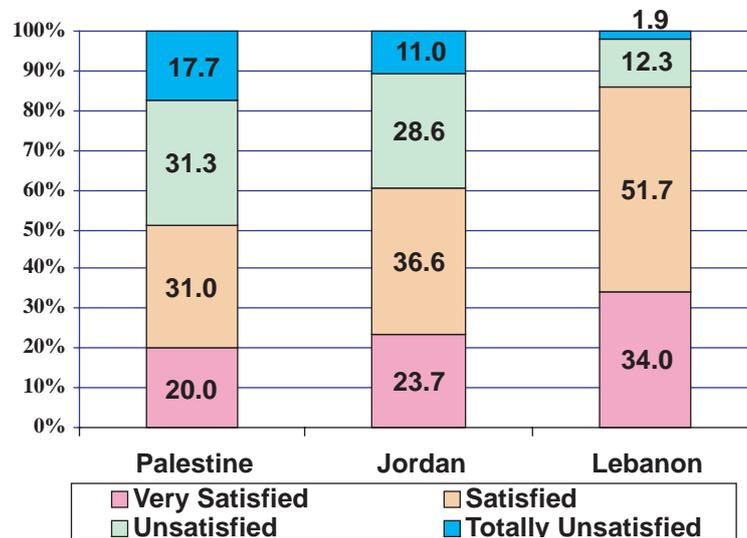
Relationships with Peers

In addition to the influence of teachers, students' relationships with their peers are also a critical factor in well-being. Positive relationships with peers is a protective factor of well-being.⁵⁸ In all three countries, over 90 percent of students view their classmates as friends either *always* or *sometimes*. Over 90 percent of students report that they are *very satisfied* (61 percent Palestine, 62 percent Jordan and 53 percent Lebanon) or *satisfied* with their relations with their friends, but they express higher comfort in their relationships with the same sex than with the opposite sex. About half report that they are *very satisfied* with their relationships with a friend from the same sex (56 percent Palestine, 54 percent Jordan and 45 percent Lebanon); with the opposite sex, the percentage of students reporting that they are *very satisfied* is lower (20 percent Palestine, 24 percent Jordan and 34 percent Lebanon).

Q2_1: How do you rate your comfort when you are with a friend of the same sex?

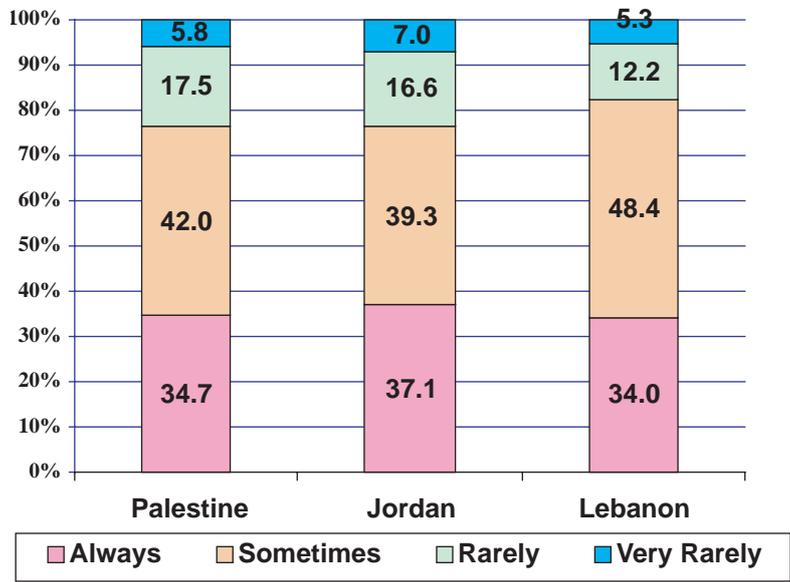


Q2_2: How do you rate your comfort when you are with a friend of the opposite sex?

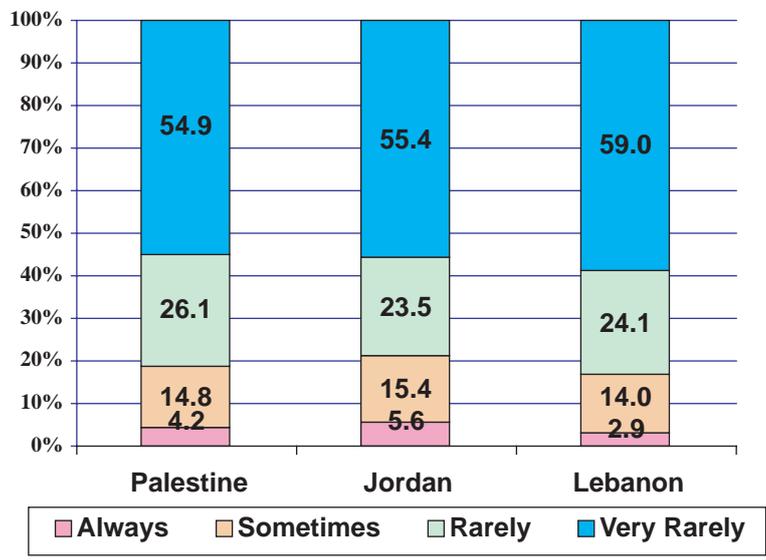


It is interesting to note that despite these levels of satisfaction, on other questions, students did not score their peers so highly. Nearly a quarter of youth in Palestine and Jordan and nearly a fifth in Lebanon *rarely* or *very rarely* see their classmates as trustworthy. Thirty percent in Jordan and Palestine and nearly 20 percent in Lebanon *rarely* or *very rarely* view their classmates as a source of support. Across all three countries, boys generally view their peers more favorably than do girls. Sixty-four percent of students in Palestine and Jordan and 46 percent in Lebanon view their classmates as competitors and about 20 percent see their classmates as *always* or *sometimes* a “source of threat” (19 percent Palestine, 21 percent Jordan and 17 percent Lebanon).

Q10_3: I view my classmates as trustworthy.



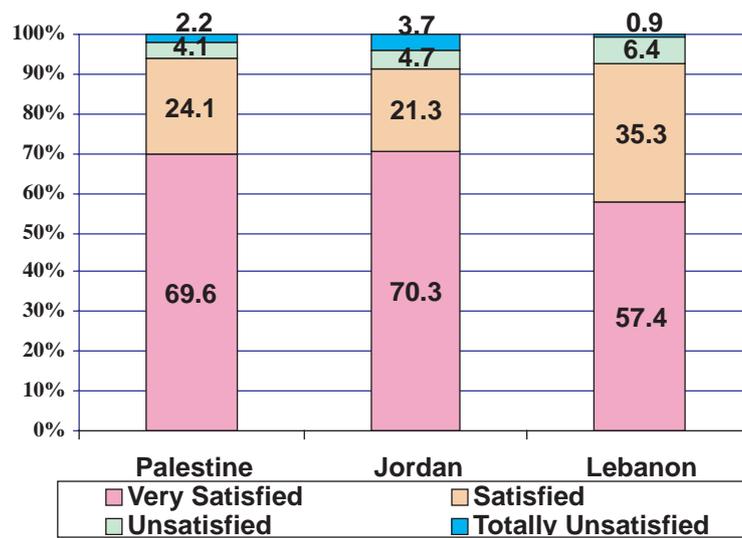
Q10_5: I view my classmates as a source of threat.



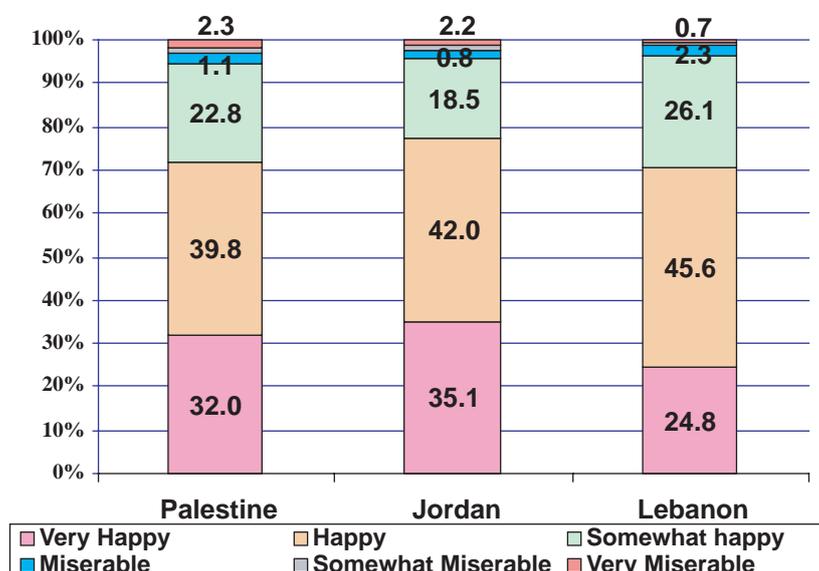
Relationships with Family

Seventy percent of students in Palestine and Jordan report that they are *very satisfied* with their relations with their family, as do 57 percent of students in Lebanon. Correspondingly, students in Palestine, Jordan and Lebanon describe the family with which they live as either *very happy* or *happy*, with 72 percent, 77 percent and 69 percent, respectively. About a third describe their families as *peaceful and harmonious* (29 percent Palestine, 35 percent Jordan and 31 percent Lebanon) and between 53 percent and 60 percent as *somewhat peaceful and harmonious*. Across the board, students report higher rates of comfort in talking with their mothers than their fathers for both boys and girls.

Q1_6: Rate your satisfaction with your relations with your family.



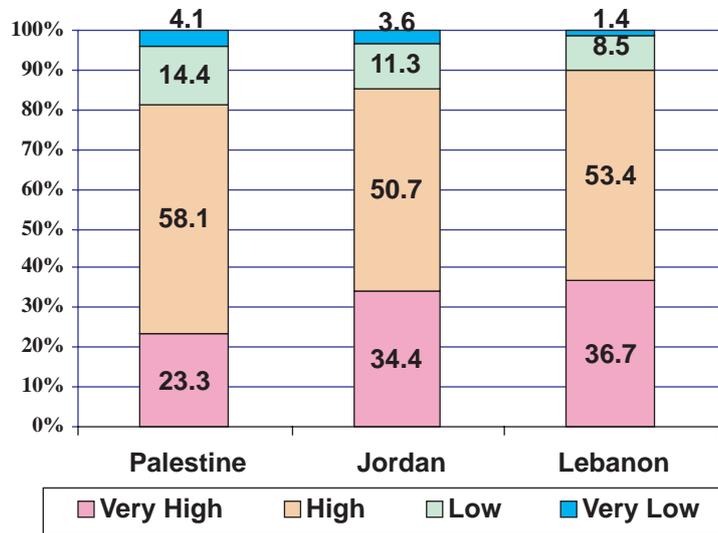
Q3: How do you describe your family (whom you live with)?



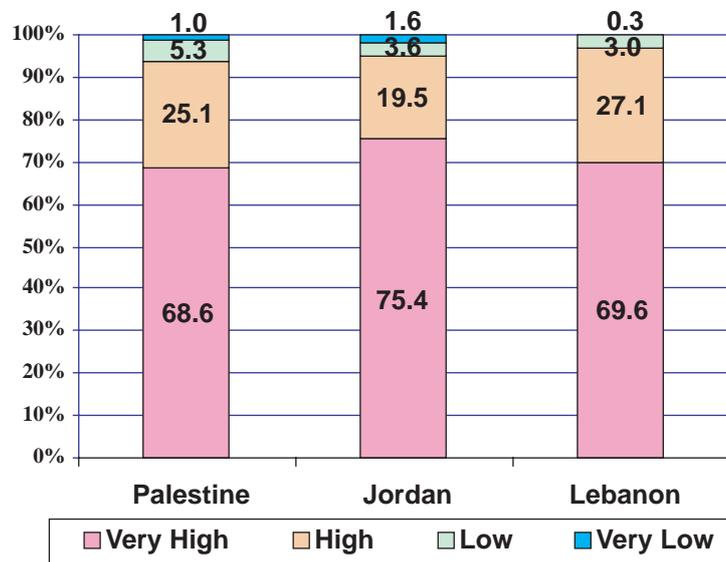
Safety and Security

Feeling safe is a predictor of school satisfaction,⁵⁹ which in turn affects life satisfaction.⁶⁰ When asked about their feelings of safety and security, the majority of students report that they feel *very high* or *high* levels of safety and security (80 percent Palestine, 88 percent Jordan and 90 percent Lebanon). In terms of their current psychological condition and how secure they feel, again, students report that they feel *always* (30 percent Palestine, 47 percent Jordan and 44 percent Lebanon) or *sometimes* (48 percent Palestine, 42 percent Jordan and 45 percent Lebanon) secure. In terms of where students feel safe and secure, most report *very high* feelings of safety and security at home (67 percent Palestine, 75 percent Jordan and 70 percent Lebanon). A large percentage report *very high* (27 percent Palestine, 38 percent Jordan and 37 percent Lebanon) or *high* (53 percent Palestine, 47 percent Jordan and 48 percent Lebanon) levels of safety and security in their neighborhood. In Jordan and Lebanon, a smaller percentage of girls report *very high* or *high* feelings of safety and security in their neighborhoods. Twenty-three percent of students in Palestine, 34 percent in Jordan and 37 percent in Lebanon report *very high* feelings of safety at school. Clearly, more students report feeling safe and secure at home than they do in their neighborhoods and, to an even greater degree, their school.

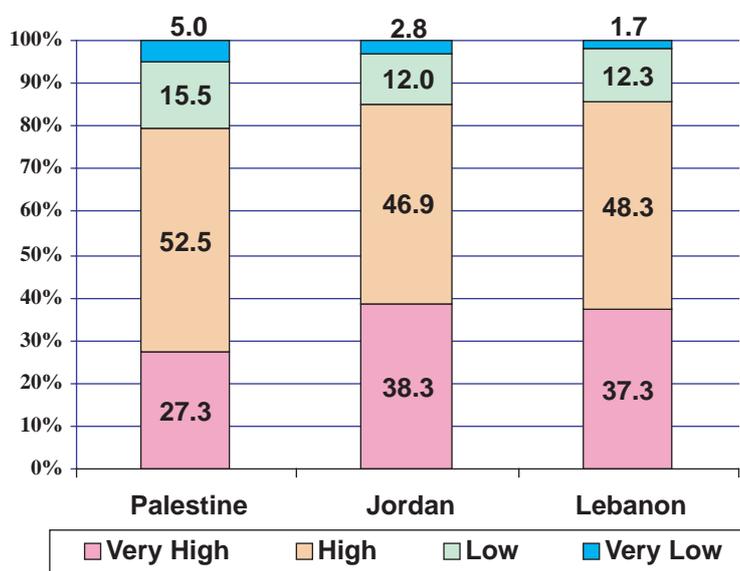
Q5_1: How do you rate your feeling of safety and security at school?



Q5_2: How do you rate your feeling of safety and security at home?



Q5_3: How do you rate your feeling of safety and security in your neighborhood?

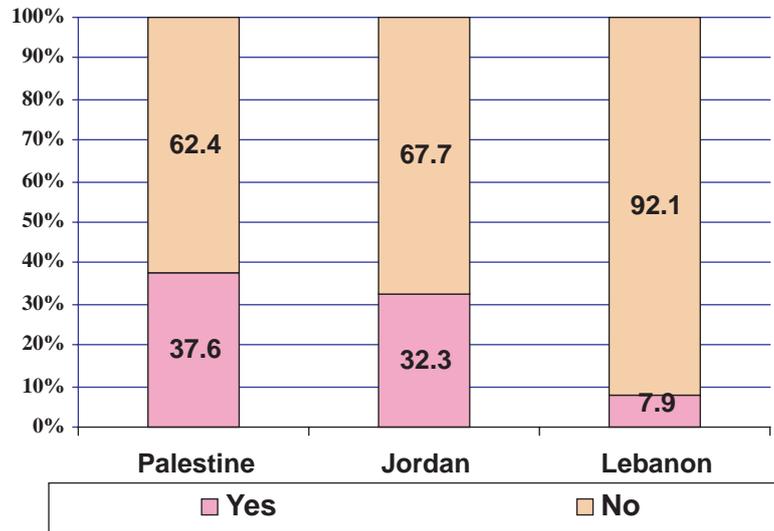


Physical Abuse

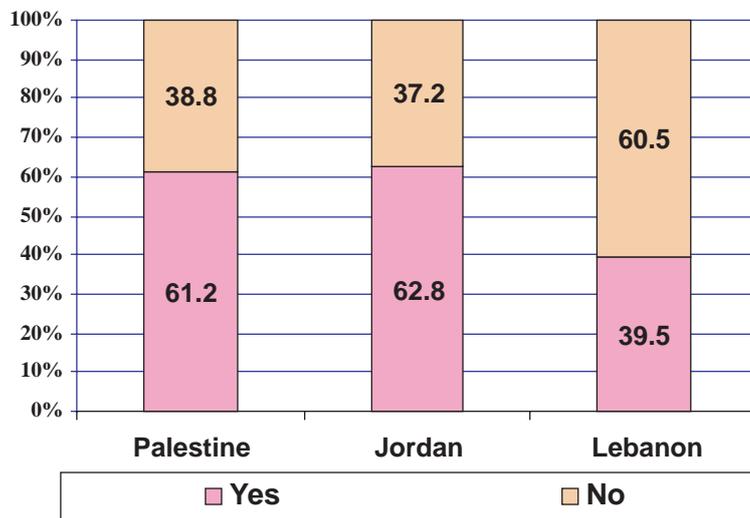
Violence, which can include physical, sexual or psychological harm, affects the well-being and learning potential of children.⁶¹ Students feel less connected to school, for example, when there are harsh or punitive discipline policies.⁶² Through developing procedures and policies that discourage physical punishment and promote nonviolent interaction, schools can enhance learning and student well-being.⁶³

The percentages of students in Palestine and Jordan who report that they have been physically abused (hit, slapped or pushed) during the current school year (38 percent in Palestine, 32 percent in Jordan and 8 percent in Lebanon) are striking. The students who have been physically abused report that the teachers or the school administration commit most of the abuse. This is the case in Palestine for 61 percent of students concerning teachers and 52 percent concerning the school administration. In Jordan, the percentages are 63 percent teachers and 53 percent school administration and in Lebanon, 40 percent teachers and 29 percent school administration. Across all three countries, significantly more boys than girls report that they have been physically abused and it is the same for abuse by teachers and school administration.

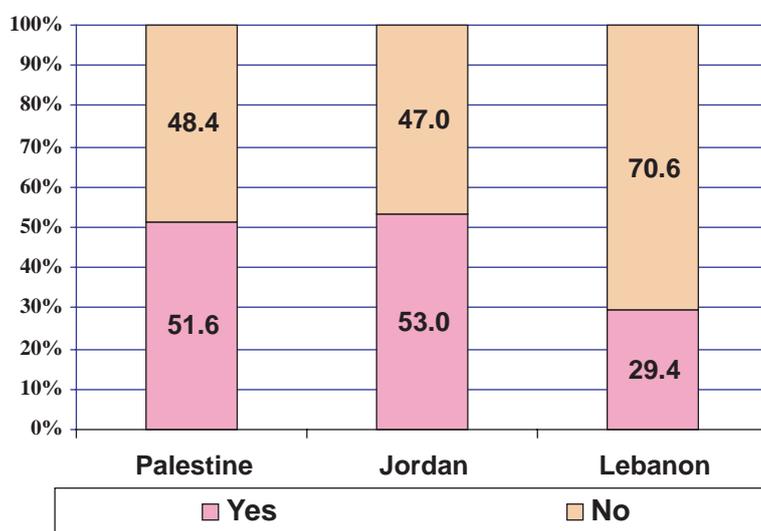
Q22: During the current school year, have you ever been physically abused (hit, slapped, pushed...)?



Q22_0_1: If your answer to the previous question was yes, who physically abused you? Teachers?



Q22_0_2: If your answer to the previous question was yes, who physically abused you? The school administration?



A larger percentage of students report physical abuse from students inside the school than outside the school. For example, in Palestine, 32 percent report physical abuse from students in the school but 25 percent from students outside. Significantly more boys than girls report abuse by other students in both Palestine and Jordan. For Jordan, the numbers are 39 percent in school and 25 percent out of school and for Lebanon, 35 percent in school and 39 percent out of school. Approximately one-third of students in all countries report some physical abuse by parents: 32 percent Palestine, 37 percent Jordan and 30 percent Lebanon.

Psychological Abuse

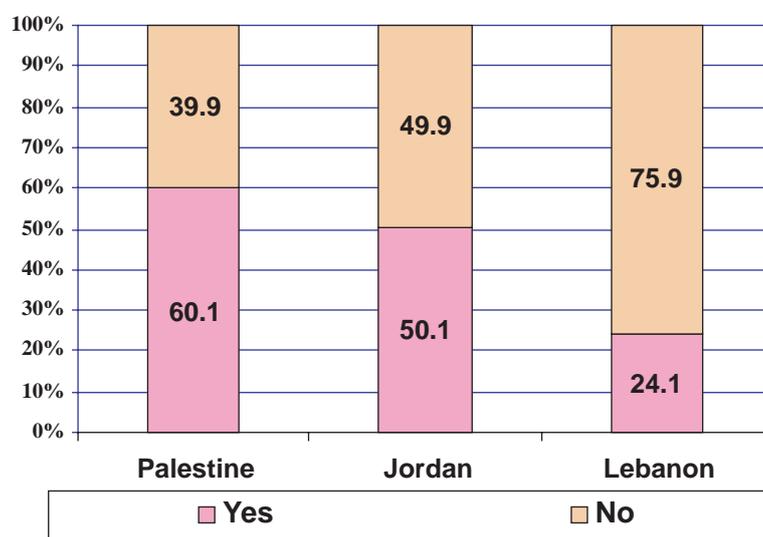
Research has shown that a positive psychosocial environment at school can affect the well-being of young people and improve student learning outcomes.⁶⁴ Overt victimization, on the other hand, negatively affects well-being.⁶⁵ Further, feelings of isolation and exclusion are strong predictors of poor school satisfaction.⁶⁶

High percentages of students report that they have been psychologically, emotionally or verbally abused (yelled at, humiliated, isolated or threatened) during the current school year: two thirds of students in Palestine, half in Jordan, and a quarter in Lebanon. As for physical abuse, a higher percentage

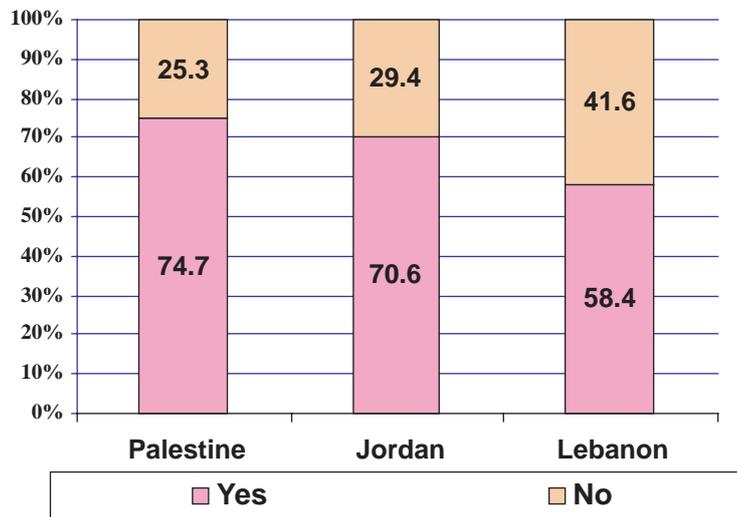
of boys than girls report that they were abused, but the gender gap is much smaller in the case of psychological abuse.

Students often report that the abusers are primarily teachers or the school administration. In Palestine, 75 percent of the students who say they had experienced emotional abuse said it was the teacher and 46 percent the school administration. In Jordan, 71 percent of students reported the teacher and 49 percent the school administration, while in Lebanon the percentages were lower: 24 percent the teacher and 37 percent the school administration. Students also report experiencing more emotional abuse from students in the school than outside the school: in Palestine, it is 36 percent in the school, in Jordan 37 percent and in Lebanon 42 percent. Out of school it is 24 percent in Palestine, 25 percent in Jordan and 22 percent in Lebanon. Across all three countries, the figures for psychological abuse from parents are comparable with physical abuse at about one-third of students: in Palestine 35 percent, Jordan 34 percent and Lebanon 32 percent.

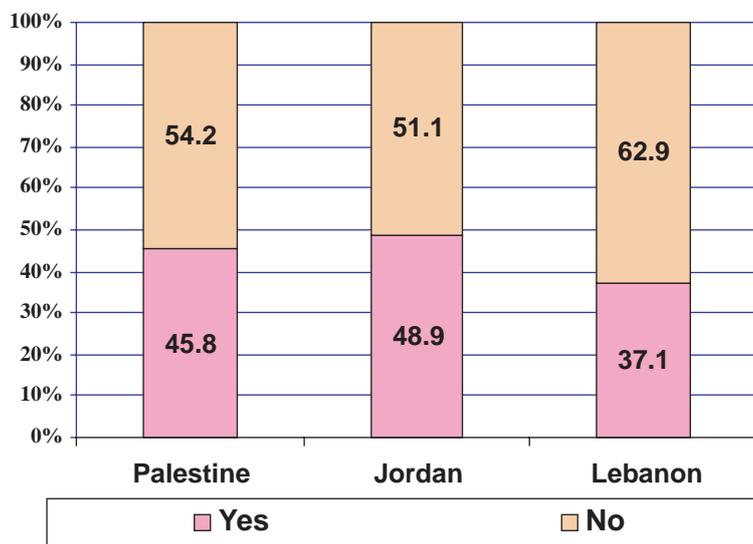
Q23: During the current school year, have you ever been psychologically, emotionally and verbally abused (yelled at, humiliated, isolated, threatened....)?



Q23_0_1: If your answer to the previous question was yes, who abused you? Teachers?



Q23_0_2: If your answer to the previous question was yes, who abused you? The school administration?

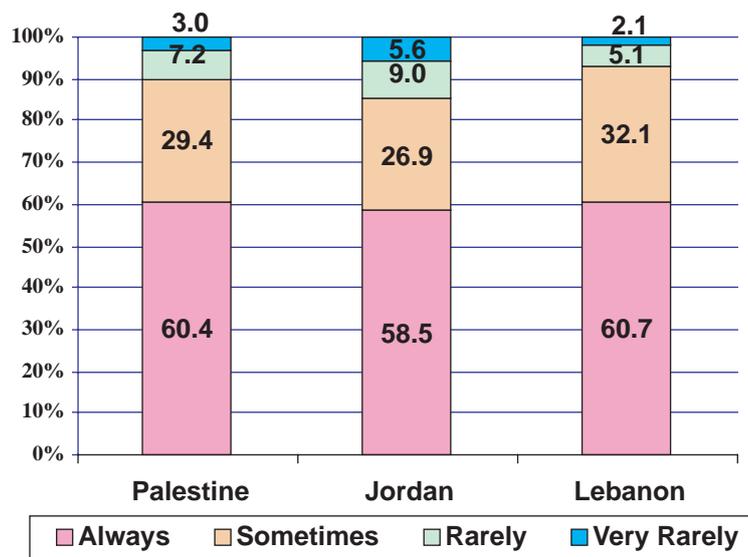


Students' Perceptions of How School Affects Their Feelings

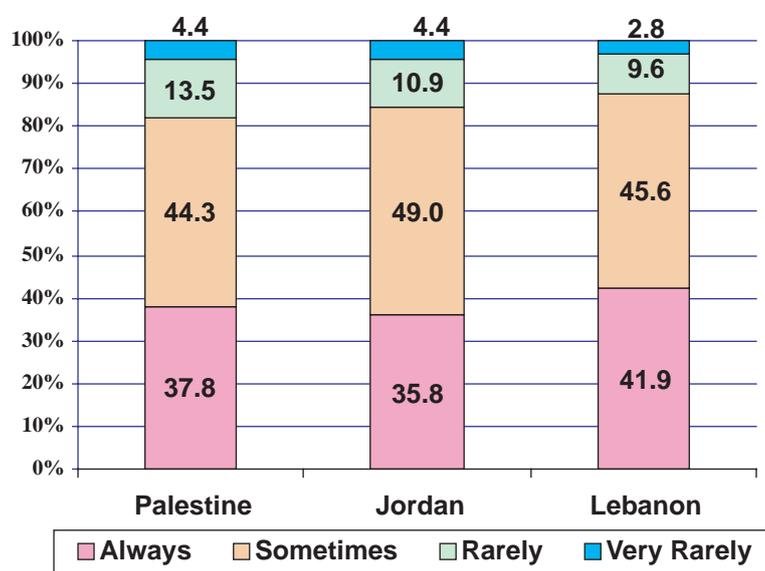
In this context of perceptions of safety and security and reports of physical and emotional abuse, how do students describe their feelings of emotional and social health in the school and classroom environments? One of the most important dimensions is a feeling of belonging. Forty-eight percent of students in Palestine say they *always* feel a sense of belonging at school, 53 percent of students in Jordan and 43 percent in Lebanon. In terms of feeling *always* happy and comfortable at school, however, the percentages are lower. Twenty-one percent of students in Palestine, 28 percent in Jordan and 26 percent in Lebanon report *always* feeling happy, with 19 percent in Palestine, 26 percent in Jordan and 33 percent in Lebanon reporting that they *always* feel comfortable at school.

Very high percentages of students in all three countries report that they *always* feel self-confident and respected at school. (Respected: Palestine 60 percent; Jordan 59 percent and Lebanon 61 percent; self-confident: Palestine 65 percent, Jordan 71 percent and Lebanon 61 percent.) In terms of optimism, 39 percent in Palestine, 43 percent in Jordan and 43 percent in Lebanon report that they *always* feel optimistic. Similar percentages of students report feeling a sense of freedom (Palestine 36 percent, Jordan 43 percent and Lebanon 37 percent).

Q8_3: When I'm at school, I feel respected.



Q9_3: When I'm in the classroom, I feel respected.



While close to half of the students in all three countries *strongly agree* that school respects their religion, values and culture (Palestine 46 percent, Jordan 49 percent and Lebanon 53 percent), many fewer students *strongly agree* that school respects their privacy (Palestine 22 percent, Jordan 29 percent and Lebanon 35 percent).

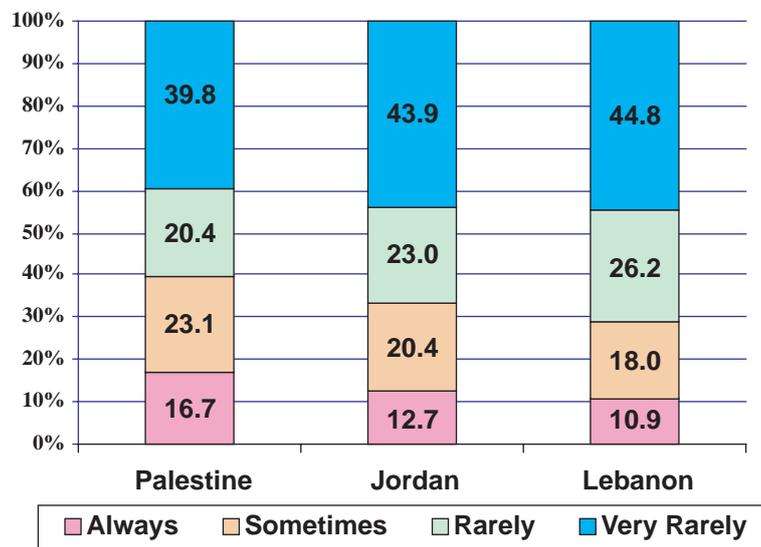
In terms of possible negative feelings at school, by and large high percentages of students report that they *very rarely* or *rarely* feel alienated (Palestine 75 percent, Jordan 70 percent and Lebanon 75 percent) or isolated (Palestine 76 percent, Jordan 75 percent and Lebanon 82 percent). However, the percentage of students who feel rarely or very rarely repressed is lower (Palestine 63 percent, Jordan 60 percent and Lebanon 65 percent), as is the percentage feeling frustrated (Palestine 60 percent, Jordan 76 percent and Lebanon 62 percent).

Students' Perceptions of How the Classroom Affects their Health and Well-Being

Students report that they generally feel physically comfortable (in their seats) at school with 64 percent in Palestine, 68 percent in Jordan and 67 percent in Lebanon saying that they *always* or *sometimes* feel comfortable. Half of students in all three countries report that they *always* feel the desire to learn in the classroom. A smaller percentage reports *always* being happy in the classroom (26 percent Palestine, 56 percent Jordan and 56 percent Lebanon) and slightly

more than half *sometimes* feel happy (58 percent, 56 percent and 56 percent in Palestine, Jordan and Lebanon respectively). This is comparable to the percentages that responded that they feel happy in school. Most students report that they *always* or *sometimes* feel respected, but many students report that they *always* or *sometimes* feel distracted in the classroom (65 percent Palestine, 58 percent Jordan and 58 percent Lebanon) and a good number of students are *always* or *sometimes* fearful of being mocked by their peers, with 40 percent in Palestine, 33 percent in Jordan and 29 percent in Lebanon.

Q9_10: When I'm in the classroom, I feel afraid of being mocked by peers.



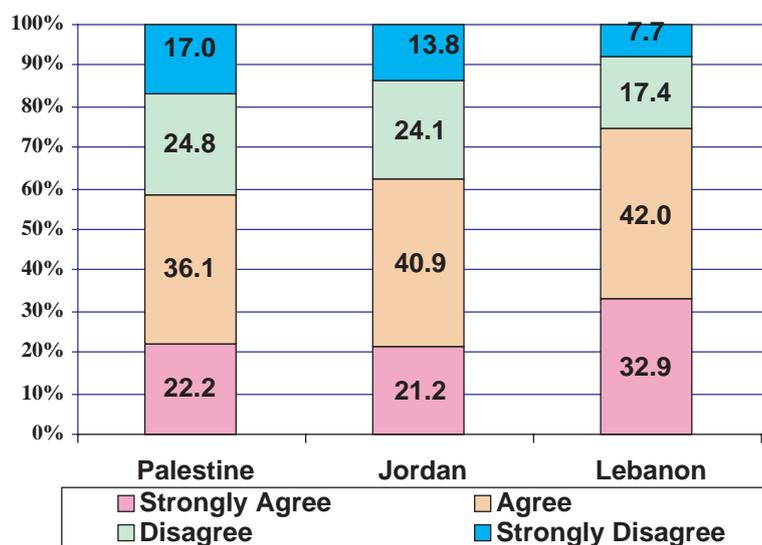
Teaching and Learning Methods

Approaches to Teaching and Learning

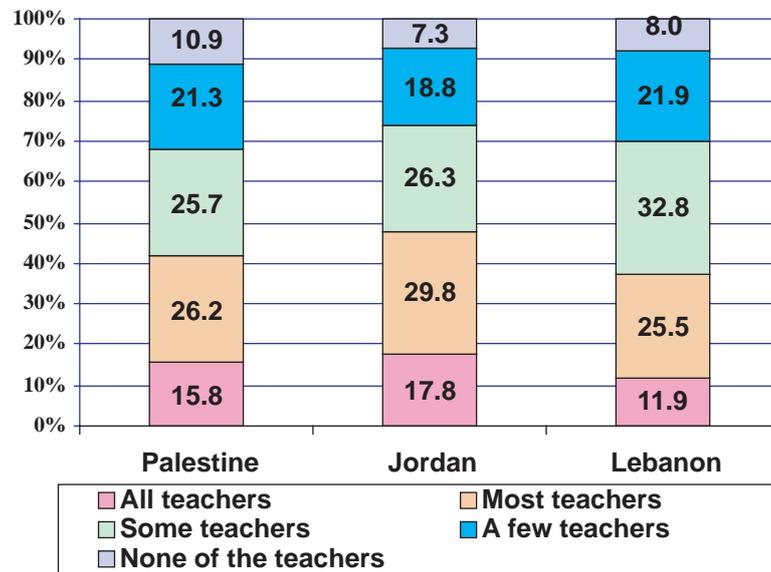
Many research studies have described the importance to student well-being of teaching methods and curricula. The World Health Organization, for example, states that open communication in the classroom and student participation can enhance learning and well-being and reduce risky behaviors.⁶⁷ Students are more likely to be unhappy if they feel their schoolwork is “meaningless and boring”⁶⁸ and their well-being will certainly suffer if they struggle with schoolwork and do not receive support.⁶⁹

In general, a small percentage of students in Palestine report *very high* satisfaction with the overall teaching methods in their school; 11 percent in Jordan report *very high* and 25 percent in Lebanon do so. When asked if their school allows students freedom of expression, roughly 40 percent of Palestinian and Jordanian students disagree, as do 25 percent of Lebanese students. In both Lebanon and Palestine, a higher percentage of girls than boys report that they are not allowed to express their opinion freely at school. Students in all three countries are divided on the question of how many of their teachers are accepting of new and unusual ideas or opinions. For example, in Palestine, the numbers were split as 26 percent most, 26 percent some and 21 percent a few.

Q17_9: My school allows me to express my opinion freely.



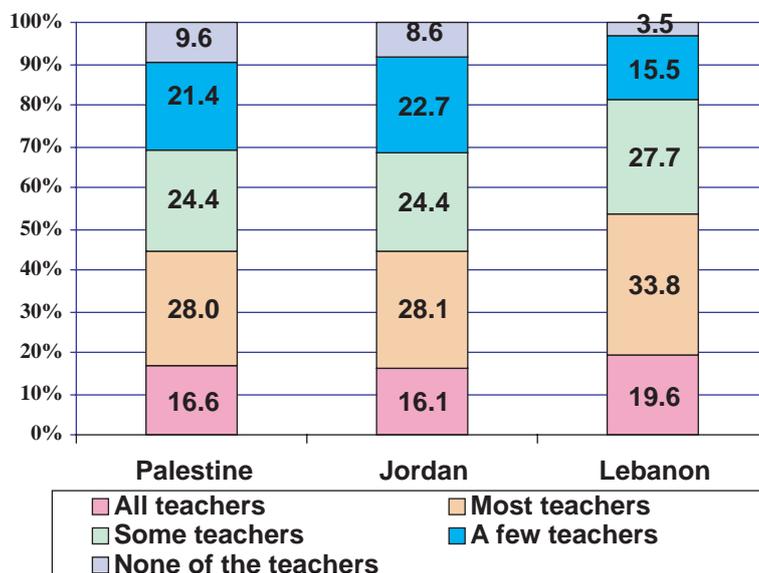
Q12_15: My teachers are accepting of new and unusual ideas or opinions.



There are a number of areas where about a third of students either strongly agree or report high levels of satisfaction. For example, in Palestine 32 percent of students *strongly agree* that teachers support their curiosity and inquiry; 31 percent in Jordan and 31 percent in Lebanon. Similarly, 29 percent of students in Palestine *strongly agree* that teachers nurture their ability to think, with 34 percent in Jordan and 42 percent in Lebanon do so. Slightly higher percentages of students *strongly agree* that teachers nurture their desire to learn. One-quarter to one-third of students report that *all* teachers encourage them to think, encourage students' participation in the classroom and motivate them to learn. Also, in all three countries only 32 percent to 35 percent of students also report that *all* of their teachers welcome their questions.

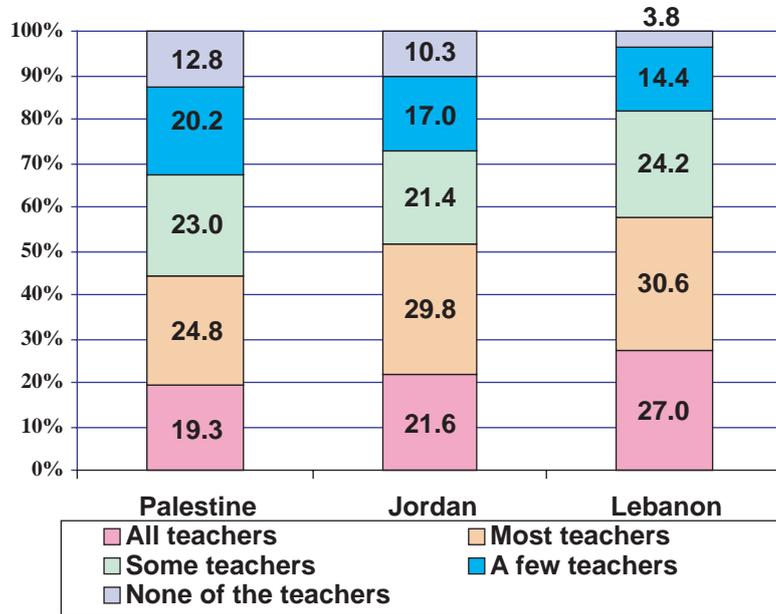
However, in Palestine and Jordan, 41 percent of students report that all or most of their teachers follow a rote learning approach. Forty-four percent of students in Jordan report this to be the teaching method used by *all* or *most* teachers, as do 27 percent in Lebanon. Nonetheless, 46 percent of students in Palestine, 44 percent in Jordan and 53 percent in Lebanon report that they find all or most of their teachers' style of teaching to be fun.

Q12_13: My teachers' style of teaching is fun.



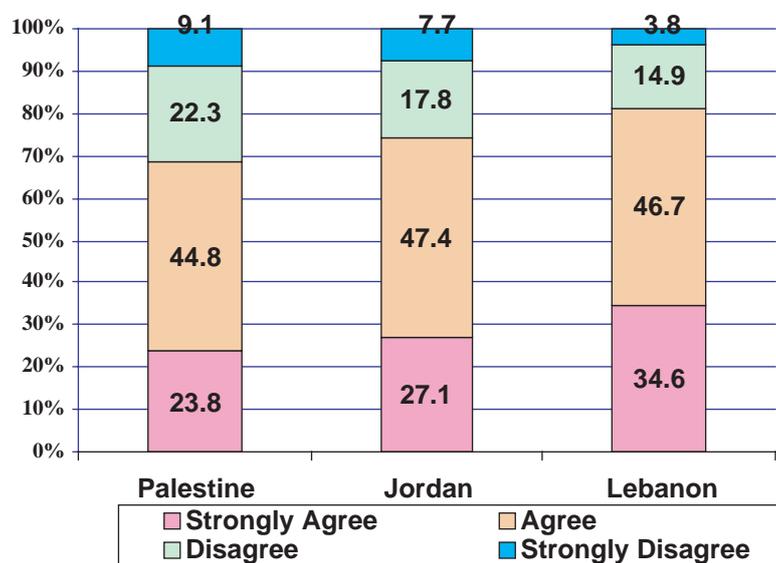
In terms of methods that cater to students' special interests or needs or that individualize the learning approach, approximately 20 percent in Palestine and Jordan believe that *all teachers* cater to their special needs in learning and 27 percent in Lebanon do so. The school overall receives higher ratings, with 39 percent of students in Palestine indicating that they *strongly agree* that the school takes into consideration their special learning needs; 43 percent of students in Jordan and 44 percent in Lebanon *strongly agree*. Again, slightly more than a third of students across the three countries *strongly agree* that the teaching and learning approaches in their school recognize their strengths and weaknesses. Approximately in the range of 27 to 35 percent of students across the three countries *strongly agree* that the teaching and learning approaches develop their perseverance, resilience and communications skills. Slightly higher percentages of students *strongly agree* that the teaching and learning approaches build their self-confidence (39 percent Palestine, 43 percent Jordan and 44 percent Lebanon). A lower percentage of students *strongly agrees* that school recognizes their successes and accomplishments (Palestine 21 percent, Jordan 23 percent and Lebanon 20 percent).

Q12_7: My teachers cater to my special needs in learning.



Students *strongly disagree* or *disagree* that the teaching and learning approaches cause them anxiety and fear (71 percent Palestine, 69 percent Jordan and 81 percent Lebanon). However, high percentages of students either *agree* or *strongly agree* that the teaching and learning approaches increase tension between them and their friends.

Q15_12: The teaching/learning approaches in my school increase tension between me and my friends.



Role of Testing and Student Evaluation

Close to 70 percent, or in some cases a slightly higher percentage, of students in all three countries *strongly agree* or *agree* that school grades are a true reflection of their learning abilities. Eighty percent and higher *strongly agree* or *agree* that school exams measure their ability to think and analyze, to understand and comprehend the subject matter and that current student evaluations motivate them to learn more and to develop their ability to think creatively. In Palestine 59 percent of students strongly agree that school exams measure their ability to memorize; 66 percent of students in Jordan and 46 percent of students in Lebanon *strongly agree* or *agree* with this statement.

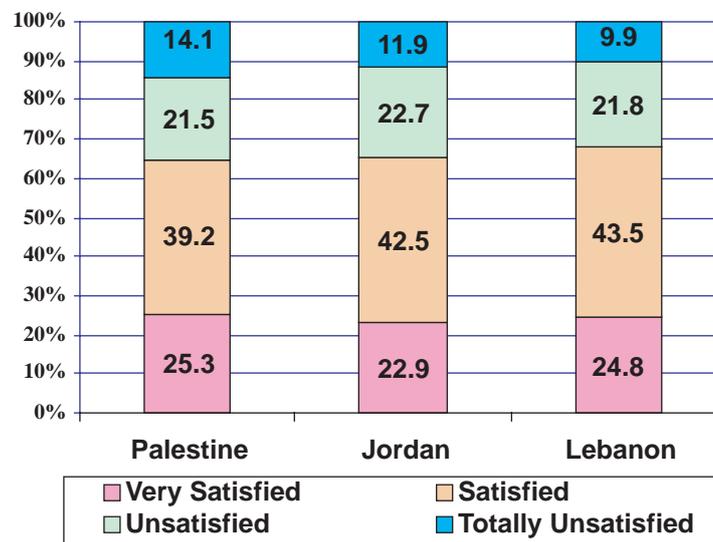
Participation and Agency

In terms of their own participation in the school environment, in school governance, school activities and community, approximately one-quarter of students in all three countries are *very satisfied* and 40 percent are *satisfied*. This leaves at least one third of students who are *totally unsatisfied* or *unsatisfied* with their level of participation and engagement.

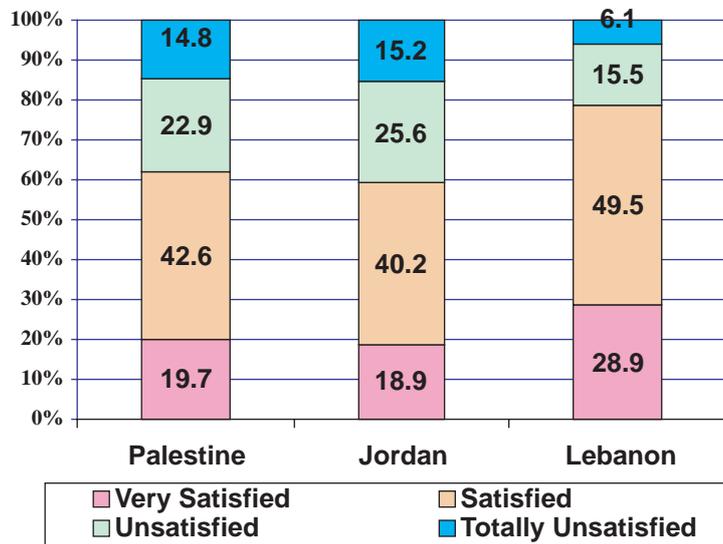
About 20 percent of students in Palestine and Jordan say they are *very satisfied* with the school’s relations with parents. Roughly 40 percent of students in

Palestine and Jordan are *totally unsatisfied* or *unsatisfied* with this aspect of their school. A lower percentage (22 percent) of students in Lebanon reports these levels of dissatisfaction. Similarly, about 40 percent of youth in Palestine and Jordan are *dissatisfied* (15 percent being *totally dissatisfied*) with their school's relationship with the local community. In Lebanon, 7 percent of students are *totally dissatisfied* and 16 percent are *dissatisfied* with this aspect of their school.

Q25_3: How satisfied are you with student participation in the school environment (school governance, school activities, school community relations...)?



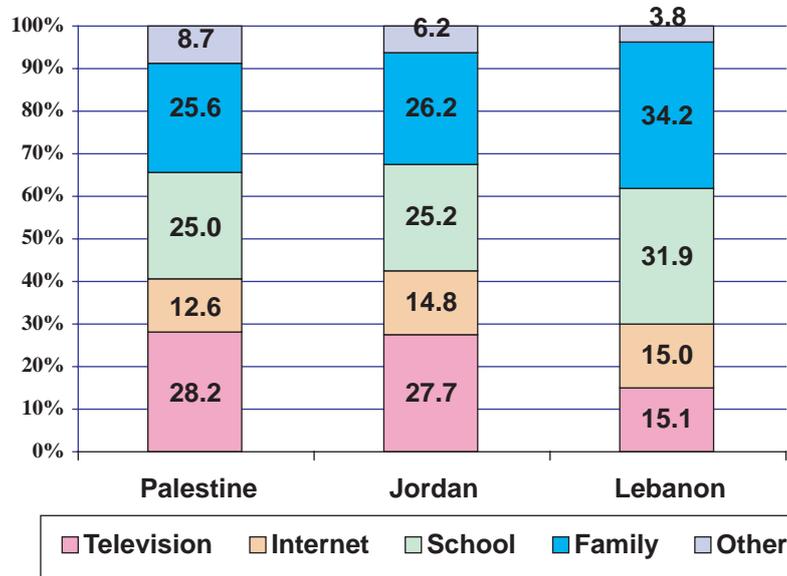
Q25_4: How satisfied are you with your school's relations with students' parents?



Influences on Learning and Values

In all three countries, family ranks as the source of greatest influence on students' ideas and beliefs. Roughly a third of students in Palestine and Jordan listed their family as the most influential, as did nearly half of the sample in Lebanon. Television is the second largest influence in Palestine and Jordan, followed by school and then the Internet. In Lebanon, school ranked second after the family, followed by television and the Internet. In Palestine and Jordan, 24 percent of students rated television as the most influential. In all three countries, a higher percentage of girls than boys reported their family as the most influential. More boys than girls rated television or the Internet as most influential across all three countries.

Q24_2: Which of the following environments have the most influence on your way of thinking?



In terms of the environments that most influence lifestyle, family again ranks a strong first for about half of all students, followed by television, school and the Internet—in that order—in Palestine and Jordan. In Lebanon, the order is family, school, Internet and television. In terms of influence on their way of thinking, 28 percent of students in Palestine and Jordan rank television first, and about a quarter rate family and school first, followed by the Internet. In Lebanon, family is again first (34 percent), followed by school (32 percent) and television and Internet in equal numbers at 15 percent.

VII

Conclusion

The piloting of *VoC1* in Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine has provided valuable information from young people about how they view their well-being—the physical, mental, social, emotional and spiritual dimensions—and whether or not they find school conducive to their well-being. This presentation of findings presents broad trends and descriptive information; more data analysis is required to examine the relationships among variables as well as to understand the psychometric properties of the survey.

At this stage in the analysis, some of these findings may appear contradictory, mostly in the areas of relationships with teachers and peers, but they may not be contradictory in the context of culture. For example, students report rather high levels of physical and verbal abuse from teachers, yet a high percentage also report that their teachers treat them with respect. Students may view such behavior from teachers as sanctioned by society, as it is sanctioned by parents. Therefore, students may see it as acceptable and not a sign of disrespect or not relevant to the notion of disrespect.

In peer relations, while a high percentage of students reports that they feel very satisfied with their relationships with friends, high percentages still do not trust their friends or see them as sources of support. Again, this may be another indication of how perceptions of interpersonal relationship are shaped and modified by context and culture. Friendships in the region have developed historically among families of the same clan; yet with growing urbanization, students are becoming classmates and friends with students from many different backgrounds.

In any case, the findings clearly suggest areas that schools or education systems may want to study further or act upon to make improvements that are more conducive to well-being. Those which stand out are as follows:

- Physical and verbal abuse by teachers and peers.
- The need for schools to do more to foster healthy lifestyles.
- Conditions of class size and the physical learning environment.

- Student dissatisfaction with the development of their mental ability and with the learning and teaching approaches (especially rote learning).
- Differences in class participation and treatment of female students.
- The growing influence of television and Internet on students' way of thinking.

In Palestine, for example, very exciting change is beginning to take place on the ground since *VoC1* was administered. The Universal Education Foundation has actively engaged young people with senior education and health leaders in Palestine, using the results to discuss and begin planning changes. In November 2006, Palestinian youth met with the UEF board, Palestinian government officials and representatives from media and ICT to share their stories, opinions and hopes about their school environment. In November 2007, UEF signed cooperative agreements to advance efforts with the Palestinian Ministry of Health, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency and the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education. Also in the fall of 2007, UEF played a significant role in the two-day international, scientific conference *The Welfare and the Well-being of the Palestinian Children*, held at Al-Quds University in Jerusalem.

Beyond this first pilot, the instrument has undergone significant revision and hypotheses have been developed. Wales is the next country poised to customize and use the survey for a similar purpose. Also in development is a comparable instrument to assess the influence of information and communications technologies and media on the well-being of children and young people.

It is UEF's hope that the *VoC* surveys will offer a unique contribution in providing a credible framework to examine the well-being of children and young people in different learning environments, instruments to assess the conduciveness of those learning environments to well-being, and advocacy strategies that place young people at the table with policy makers as agents of change. The involvement of young people themselves—their direct engagement—includes them as key players in UEF's overall movement of "Education by All for the Well-Being of Children."

VIII

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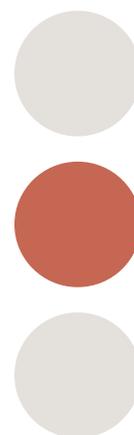
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Appendices

Appendix A: List of Abbreviations	76
Appendix B: Contributors to the Design and Development of <i>Voice of Children 1</i> Survey	77
Appendix C: <i>Voice of Children 1</i> Survey	80
Appendix D: Survey Questions Grouped by Elements of Subjective Well-Being and Conditions of the School Learning Environment	90
Appendix E: Detailed Methodology.....	96
Appendix F: <i>Voice of Children 1</i> Survey Results (electronic version only: www.uef-eba.org/ activities/VOC/background.php)	



Appendix A: List of Abbreviations

CSS	Center for Strategic Studies
EDC	Education Development Center, Inc.
ICT	information and communications technology
NGO	nongovernmental organization
UEF	Universal Education Foundation
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
VoC	<i>Voice of Children</i>
WHO	World Health Organization

Appendix B: Contributors to the Design and Development of *Voice of Children 1* Survey

Hikmat Al Khader, Center for Strategic Studies, Field Operations Manager

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Amal Daoud, Universal Education Foundation, Projects Coordinator

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Shelley Ostroff, Holistic Therapist and Organizational Consultant

Basem Rousan, Fastlink, Deputy CEO

Basri Saleh, Palestine Ministry of Education and Higher Education,
Director General

Mohammad Saqer, Fastlink, President and CEO

Michelle Selinger, Cisco Systems, Inc., Education Strategist

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Youth Empowerment Program

Cheryl Vince Whitman, Education Development Center, Inc., Senior Vice
President; Health and Human Development Programs, Director

Consultative Meeting to Launch the Voice of Children Initiative in the Middle East

On February 2–3, 2006, UEF convened a meeting with nearly two dozen representatives from education, ICT, government, business and nongovernmental agencies for the launch of the *Voice of Children* Initiative in the Middle East. Participants discussed and enriched the *VoC* concept and design proposals, and many would later offer comments during survey development, utilization and dissemination.



Consultative Meeting Participants (in no particular order): Hikmat Al Khader (Center for Strategic Studies); Carmen Aldinger (Education Development Center); Luma Atallah (Jordan Education Initiative); Faisal Awartani (Alpha International); Marwan Awartani (Universal Education Foundation); Fares Braizat (Center for Strategic Studies); Razan Fasheh (Microsoft Corporation, Eastern Mediterranean and Pakistan); Jean Gordon (European Institute of Education and Social Policy); Rabih Haber (Statistics Lebanon Ltd.); Jumana Haj Ahmad (The United Nations Children’s Fund); Mustafa Hamarneh (Center for Strategic Studies); Hala Hoshan (Academy for Educational Development); Suhair Khatib (Ministry of Information and Communications Technology, Jordan); Sami Khasawneh (Center for Strategic Studies); Daniel Kropf (Universal Education Foundation); Basem Rousan (Fastlink); Mohammad Saqer (Fastlink); Basri Saleh (Ministry of Education, Palestine); Michelle Selinger (Cisco Systems, Inc.); Mohammad Shaheen (Child Watch International); Basia Urban (Ruwwad-Palestinian Youth Empowerment Program, EDC)

Appendix C: Voice of Children 1 Survey

THE VOICE OF CHILDREN COMPONENT

School Environment Survey: Middle East Pilot (Palestine version)

Field Work (To be completed by the field researcher)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	School Name:
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	School Location:
<input type="checkbox"/>	School Type: 1. Boys 2. Girls 3. Mixed
<input type="checkbox"/>	Supervising Authority: 1. Government 2. Private 3. UNRWA
<input type="checkbox"/>	Country:
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Name of Field Researcher: Signature:
.../.../2006	Date of Interview .../4/2006
Field Audit (To be completed by the field coordinator)	
.../4/2006	Date of questionnaire review by researcher: .../.../2006
.../4/2006	Date of questionnaire review by field supervisor: .../.../2006
<input type="checkbox"/>	Name of Coordinator: Signature:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Interview Result: 1. Completed 2. Not Completed Reason:
Office Audit (for office use only)	
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Name of Auditor:
.../.../2006	Audit Date .../.../2006
<input type="checkbox"/>	Audit Result: 1. Approved 2. Not Approved Signature:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Name of Supervisor: Signature:

General Health Condition					
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q0: In general, how do you evaluate your general health status? 1. Very Good 2. Good 3. Low 4. Very Low				
Q1: Rate your satisfaction with the following:		1. Very Satisfied	2. Satisfied	3. Unsatisfied	4. Totally Unsatisfied
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q1_1: Your physical health.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q1_2: Your general appearance.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q1_3: Your academic achievement.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q1_4: Your mental ability.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q1_5: Your relationships with your friends.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q1_6: Your relationships with your family.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q1_7: Your sense of inner peace.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q1_8: Your ability to deal with different life challenges.				
Q2: Rate your comfort in each of the following situations:		1. Very High	2. High	3. Low	4. Very Low
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q2_1: When you are with a friend of the same sex.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q2_2: When you are with a friend of the opposite sex.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q2_3: When you talk with your father.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q2_4: When you talk with your mother.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q2_5: When you talk with your teachers.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q3: How do you describe your family (whom you live with)? 1. Very happy 2. Happy 3. Somewhat happy 4. Miserable 5. Very miserable				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q3_1: How do you characterize your family (whom you live with)? 1. Peaceful and harmonious 2. Somewhat peaceful and harmonious 3. Somewhat				

	disturbed and unhappy	4. Disturbed and unhappy			
Q4: How do you describe your current psychological condition?		1. Always	2. Sometimes	3. Rarely	4. Very Rarely
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q4_1: I feel happy.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q4_2: I feel secure.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q4_3: I feel detached from my surroundings.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q4_4: I don't get along with others.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q4_5: I am in control of myself.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q4_6: I feel frustrated.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q4_7: I feel optimistic and hopeful.				
Q5: How do you rate your feeling of safety and security?		1. Very High	2. High	3. Low	4. Very Low
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q5_1: At school.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q5_2: At home.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q5_3: In your neighborhood.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q5_4: In general.				
Q6: How do you feel towards your body?		1. Always	2. Sometimes	3. Rarely	4. Very Rarely
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q6_1: I feel proud.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q6_2: I feel ashamed.				
Q7: How do you rate your comfort in using each of the following means of communication?		1. Very High	2. High	3. Low	4. Very Low
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q7_1: Talking				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q7_2: Writing				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q7_3: Body language				

<input type="checkbox"/>	Q7_4: Music				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q7_5: Drawing				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q7_6: Other:				
Q8: When I'm at school, I feel:		1. Always	2. Sometimes	3. Rarely	4. Very Rarely
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q8_1: Happy				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q8_2: Comfortable				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q8_3: Respected				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q8_4: Self-confident				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q8_5: Alienated (like a stranger)				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q8_6: Isolated				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q8_7: Frustrated				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q8_8: Optimistic				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q8_9: Repressed				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q8_10: A sense of belonging				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q8_11: A sense of freedom				
Q9: When I'm in the classroom, I feel:		1. Always	2. Sometimes	3. Rarely	4. Very Rarely
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q9_1: Happy				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q9_2: Physically comfortable in my seat				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q9_3: Respected				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q9_4: Bored and frustrated				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q9_5: The desire to learn				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q9_6: Active and engaged				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q9_7: Spontaneous and natural				

<input type="checkbox"/>	Q9_8: Distracted					
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q9_9: Afraid of being humiliated by teachers					
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q9_10: Afraid of being mocked by peers					
Q10: I view my classmates:		1. Always	2. Sometimes	3. Rarely	4. Very Rarely	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q10_1: As competitors.					
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q10_2: As friends.					
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q10_3: As trustworthy.					
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q10_4: As a source of support.					
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q10_5: As a source of threat.					
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q11: In my mind, a classroom is associated with the image of: 1. A prison 2. A home 3. A playground 4. A court 5. Other:					
Q12: Choose the most correct option for each of the following:		1. All Teachers	2. Most Teachers	3. Some Teachers	4. A Few Teachers	5. None of the teachers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q12_1: My teachers treat me gently.					
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q12_2: My teachers treat me with respect.					
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q12_3: My teachers make me feel secure.					
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q12_4: My teachers care about me.					
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q12_5: My teachers are good role models.					
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q12_6: My teachers support me when I need them.					
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q12_7: My teachers cater for my special needs in learning.					
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q12_8: My teachers motivate me to learn.					
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q12_9: My teachers encourage me to think.					
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q12_10: My teachers welcome my questions.					
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q12_11: My teachers are honest and sincere					

<input type="checkbox"/>	Q12_12: My teachers love their job.						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q12_13: My teachers' style of teaching is fun.						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q12_14: My teachers encourage students' participation in the classroom.						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q12_15: My teachers are accepting of new and unusual ideas or opinions.						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q12_16: My teachers follow a rote learning approach.						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q13: Teachers at my school favor: 1. Smarter students 2. Richer students 3. Quieter students 4. Higher achievers 5. More beautiful students 6. Students who come from more influential families 7. Other:						
Q14: In my mind, a teacher is associated with the image of a:							
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q14_1: Policeman 1.Yes 2. No						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q14_2: Coach 1.Yes 2. No						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q14_3: Parent 1.Yes 2. No						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q14_4: Friend 1.Yes 2. No						
Q15: How much do you agree with the following statement related to the teaching/learning approaches in your school? My school:		1. Strongly Agree		2. Agree		3. Disagree	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q15_1: Encourages me to actively participate.						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q15_2: Nurtures my ability to think.						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q15_3: Nurtures my desire to learn.						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q15_4: Helps me recognize my strengths and weaknesses.						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q15_5: Supports my curiosity and inquiry.						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q15_6: Helps me develop my communication skills.						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q15_7: Helps me develop my perseverance and resilience.						

<input type="checkbox"/>	Q15_8: Helps me build my self-confidence.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q15_9: Takes into consideration my special learning needs.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q15_10: Takes into consideration my personal interests.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q15_11: Recognizes my successes and accomplishments.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q15_12: Increases tension between me and my friends.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q15_13: Causes me anxiety and fear.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q16: In general, my satisfaction with the teaching methods in my school is: 1. Very High 2. High 3. Low 4. Very Low				
Q17: Rate your agreement with the following statements:		1. Strongly Agree	2. Agree	3. Disagree	4. Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q17_1: My school educates me to adopt a healthy lifestyle.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q17_2: My school helps me take more responsibility towards my own health.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q17_3: My school motivates me to take care of my personal hygiene.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q17_4: My school teaches me how to deal with psychological pressures.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q17_5: My school helps me deal with my life problems.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q17_6: My school teaches me how to express myself quietly and peacefully.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q17_7: My school helps me develop my communication skills with others.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q17_8: My school promotes my interest in helping others.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q17_9: My school allows me express my opinion freely.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q17_10: My school respects my religion, values and culture.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q17_11: My school respects my privacy.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q18: In general, my satisfaction with my school in developing healthy behavior patterns is: 1. Very High 2. High 3. Low 4. Very Low				

Q19: Rate your agreement with the following statements. School exams measure my ability to:		1. Strongly Agree	2. Agree	3. Disagree	4. Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q19_1: Think and analyze.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q19_2: Understand and comprehend the subject matter.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q19_3: Memorize.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q20: My school grades are a true reflection of my learning abilities. 1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly Disagree				
Q21: The current student evaluation:		1. Strongly Agree	2. Agree	3. Disagree	4. Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q21_1: Motivates me to learn more.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q21_2: Helps me develop my ability to think creatively.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q22: During the current school year, have you ever been physically abused (hit, slapped, pushed, etc.)? 1. Yes 2. No (Go to Q23)				
Q22_0: If your answer to the previous question was yes, who physically abused you?					
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q22_0_1: Teachers	1. Yes	2. No		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q22_0_2: The school administration	1. Yes	2. No		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q22_0_3: Students in the school	1. Yes	2. No		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q22_0_4: Students out of the school	1. Yes	2. No		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q22_0_5: Your parents	1. Yes	2. No		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q23: During the current school year, have you ever been psychologically, emotionally or verbally abused (yelled at, humiliated, isolated, threatened, etc.)? 1. Yes 2. No (Go to Q24_1)				
Q23_0: If your answer to the previous question was yes, who abused you?					
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q22_0_1: Teachers	1. Yes	2. No		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q22_0_2: The school administration	1. Yes	2. No		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q22_0_3: Students in the school	1. Yes	2. No		

<input type="checkbox"/>	Q22_0_4: Students out of the school	1. Yes	2. No		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q22_0_5: Your parents	1. Yes	2. No		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q23_0_6: Other:				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q24_1: Which of the following environments impacts you most in forming your ideas and beliefs? 1. Television 2. Internet 3. School 4. Family 5. Other:				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q24_2: Which of the following environments has the most influence on your way of thinking? 1. Television 2. Internet 3. School 4. Family 5. Other:				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q24_3: Which of the following environments has the most influence on your lifestyle? 1. Television 2. Internet 3. School 4. Family 5. Other:				
Q25: How satisfied are you with the following in your school environment?		1. Very Satisfied	2. Satisfied	3. Unsatisfied	4. Totally Unsatisfied
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q25_1: Sport activities				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q25_2: Cultural and art activities				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q25_3: Student participation in the school environment (school governance, school activities, school-community relations, etc.)				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q25_4: The school relation with parents.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q25_5: The school relation with the local community.				

Background Questions

<input type="checkbox"/>	B0: Area 1. West Bank 2. Gaza
<input type="checkbox"/>	B1: Sex 1. Male 2. Female
<input type="checkbox"/>	B2: Place of residence 1. City 2. Village 3. Camp
<input type="checkbox"/>	B3: Date of Birth: .../.../.....
<input type="checkbox"/>	B4: Supervisory authority: 1. Government 2. Private 3. UNRWA
<input type="checkbox"/>	B5: School type: 1. Boys 2. Girls 3. Mixed
<input type="checkbox"/>	B6: Your faith (religion): 1. Muslim 2. Christian 3. Other:

<input type="checkbox"/>	B7: Do you suffer any disabilities? 1. Yes 2. No (Go to B8)
<input type="checkbox"/>	B7_1: What kind of disability?
<input type="checkbox"/>	B8: What was your grade point average in the previous semester?
Socioeconomic Situation	
<input type="checkbox"/>	V0: Are you...? 1. Not a refugee 2. Refugee with an UNRWA card 3. Refugee without an UNRWA card 4. Other:
<input type="checkbox"/>	V1: Was your father working during the last month? 1. Yes 2. No 3. I don't know 4. Father deceased
<input type="checkbox"/>	V2: If the answer for the previous question was yes, please specify your father's work place (e.g., hospital, bank, restaurant).
<input type="checkbox"/>	V3: If the answer was no, since when has your father been unemployed? 1. 1-6 months 2. 7-12 months 3. 1-2 years 4. More than 2 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	V4: Was your mother working during the last month? 1. Yes 2. No 3. I don't know 4. Mother deceased
<input type="checkbox"/>	V5: If the answer for the previous question was yes, please specify your mother's work place (e.g., hospital, bank, restaurant).
<input type="checkbox"/>	V6: If the answer is no, did she work before? 1. Yes 2. No
<input type="checkbox"/>	V7: What is your father's education level? 1. Literal 2. Less than Tawjihi 3. Tawjihi 4. Associate degree 5. Bachelor 6. Masters 7. Ph.D.
<input type="checkbox"/>	V8: What is your mother's education level? 1. Literal 2. Less than Tawjihi 3. Tawjihi 4. Associate degree 5. Bachelor 6. Masters 7. Ph.D.
<input type="checkbox"/>	V9: Are your parents...? 1. Married 2. Divorced 3. Separated

Appendix D: Survey Questions Grouped by Elements of Subjective Well-Being and Conditions of the School Learning Environment

1. Overall Health Status and Well-Being	
<i>a. Physical Health and Appearance</i>	<p>Q0: In general, how do you evaluate your general health status?</p> <p>Q1_1: Rate your satisfaction with your physical health.</p> <p>Q1_2: Rate your satisfaction with your general appearance.</p> <p>Q6_1: How do you feel towards your body? I feel proud.</p> <p>Q6_2: How do you feel towards your body? I feel ashamed.</p> <p>Q25_1: How satisfied are you with sport activities in your school environment?</p>
<i>b. Psychological Health: Social and Emotional Well-Being</i>	<p>Q1_8: Rate your satisfaction with your ability to deal with different life challenges.</p> <p>Q4: How do you describe your current psychological condition?</p> <p>Q4_1: I feel happy.</p> <p>Q4_7: I feel optimistic and hopeful.</p> <p>Q4_5: I am in control of myself.</p> <p>Q4_4: I don't get along with others.</p> <p>Q4_6: I feel frustrated.</p> <p>Q4_3: I feel detached from my surroundings.</p>
<i>c. Spiritual Well-Being</i>	<p>Q1_7: Rate your satisfaction with your sense of inner peace.</p>
<i>d. Comfort with Expression</i>	<p>Q7: How do you rate your comfort in using each of the following means of communication?</p> <p>Q7_1: Talking</p> <p>Q7_2: Writing</p> <p>Q7_3: Body language</p> <p>Q7_4: Music</p> <p>Q7_5: Drawing</p> <p>Q25_2: How satisfied are you with cultural and art activities in your school environment?</p>
2. Mental Ability and Academic Achievement	<p>Q1_3: Rate your satisfaction with your academic achievement.</p> <p>Q1_4: Rate your satisfaction with your mental ability.</p>

<p>3. School's Role in Teaching about and Motivating Healthy Lifestyles</p>	<p>Q18: In general, my satisfaction with my school in developing healthy behavior is: (very high, high, low, very low).</p> <p>Q17: Rate your agreement on the following statements.</p> <p>Q17_2: My school helps me take more responsibility toward my own health.</p> <p>Q17_1: My school educates me to adopt a healthy lifestyle.</p> <p>Q17_3: My school motivates me to take care of my personal hygiene.</p> <p>Q17_4: My school teaches me how to deal with psychological pressures.</p> <p>Q17_6: My school teaches me how to express myself quietly and peacefully.</p> <p>Q17_7: My school helps me develop my communication skills with others.</p> <p>Q17_8: My school promotes my interest in helping others.</p> <p>Q17_5: My school helps me deal with my life problems.</p>
<p>4. Relationships with Teachers, Peers and Family</p>	
<p><i>a. Relations with Teachers</i></p>	<p>Q12: Choose the most correct option for each of the following (all teachers, most teachers, some teachers, a few teachers, none of the teachers).</p> <p>Q12_5: My teachers are good role models.</p> <p>Q12_11: My teachers are honest and sincere.</p> <p>Q12_12: My teachers love their job.</p> <p>Q14: In my mind, a teacher is associated with the image of a:</p> <p>Q14_2: Coach</p> <p>Q14_3: Parent</p> <p>Q14_4: Friend</p> <p>Q14_1: Policeman</p> <p>Q12_2: My teachers treat me with respect.</p> <p>Q12_1: My teachers treat me gently.</p> <p>Q2_5: How do you rate your comfort when you talk with your teachers?</p> <p>Q12_4: My teachers care about me.</p> <p>Q12_6: My teachers support me when I need them.</p> <p>Q12_3: My teachers make me feel secure.</p>

	Q9_9: When I'm in the classroom I feel afraid of being humiliated by teachers.
<i>b. Relations with Peers</i>	Q10_2: I view my classmates as friends. (always, sometimes, rarely, very rarely)
	Q1_5: Rate your satisfaction with your relations with your friends.
	Q2_1: How do you rate your comfort when you are with a friend from the same sex?
	Q2_2: How do you rate your comfort when you are with a friend from the opposite sex?
	Q10_3: I view my classmates as trustworthy.
	Q10_4: I view my classmates as a source of support.
	Q10_1: I view my classmates as competitors.
	Q10_5: I view my classmates as a source of threat.
	Q1_6: Rate your satisfaction with your relations with your family.
	Q3: How do you describe your family (whom you live with)? (Very happy, Happy, Somewhat happy, Miserable, Very miserable)
<i>c. Relations with Family</i>	Q3_1: How do you characterize your family (whom you live with)? (Peaceful and harmonious, Somewhat peaceful and harmonious, Somewhat disturbed and unhappy, Disturbed and unhappy)
	Q2_3: How do you rate your comfort when you talk with your father?
	Q2_4: How do you rate your comfort when you talk with your mother?
5. Safety and Security	Q5_4: How do you rate your feeling of safety and security in general?
	Q4_2: How do you describe your psychological condition? I feel secure.
	Q5_2: How do you rate your feeling of safety and security at home?
	Q5_3: How do you rate your feeling of safety and security in your neighborhood?
	Q5_1: How do you rate your feeling of safety and security at school?
<i>a. Physical Abuse</i>	Q22: During the current school year, have you ever been physically abused (hit, slapped, pushed)?
	Q22_0: If your answer to the previous question was yes, who physically abused you?
	Q22_0_1: Teachers
	Q22_0_2: The school administration
	Q22_0_3: Students in the school
	Q22_0_4: Students out of the school
	Q22_0_5: Your parents

<p>b. <i>Psychological Abuse</i></p>	<p>Q23: During the current school year, have you ever been psychologically, emotionally and verbally abused (yelled at, humiliated, isolated, threatened)?</p> <p>Q23_0: If your answer to the previous question was yes, who abused you?</p> <p>Q23_0_1: Teachers</p> <p>Q23_0_2: The school administration</p> <p>Q23_0_3: Students in the school</p> <p>Q23_0_4: Students out of the school</p> <p>Q23_0_5: Your parents</p>
<p>c. <i>Students' Perceptions of How School Affects Their Feelings</i></p>	<p>Q8: When I'm at school, I feel: (always, sometimes, rarely, very rarely)</p> <p>Q8_10: A sense of belonging</p> <p>Q8_1: Happy</p> <p>Q8_2: Comfortable</p> <p>Q8_4: Self Confident</p> <p>Q8_3: Respected</p> <p>Q8_8: Optimistic</p> <p>Q8_11: A sense of freedom</p> <p>Q17_10: My school respects my religion, values and culture. (rate agreement)</p> <p>Q17_11: My school respects my privacy.</p> <p>Q8_5: When I'm at school, I feel alienated (like a stranger).</p> <p>Q8_6: When I'm at school, I feel isolated.</p> <p>Q8_9: When I'm at school, I feel repressed.</p> <p>Q8_7: When I'm at school, I feel frustrated.</p>
<p>d. <i>Students' Perceptions of How the Classroom Affects their Health and Well-Being</i></p>	<p>Q9: When I'm in the classroom, I feel: (always, sometimes, rarely, very rarely)</p> <p>Q9_2: Physically comfortable (in my seat)</p> <p>Q9_5: The desire to learn.</p> <p>Q9_1: Happy</p> <p>Q9_3: Respected</p> <p>Q9_8: Distracted</p> <p>Q9_10: Afraid of being mocked by peers</p>

	<p>Q9_6: Active and engaged</p> <p>Q9_7: Spontaneous and natural</p> <p>Q9_4: Bored and frustrated</p> <p>Q11: In my mind, a classroom is associated with the image of: Prison? Home? Playground? Court? Other?</p>
<p>6. Teaching and Learning Methods</p> <p><i>a. Approaches to Teaching and Learning</i></p>	<p>Q16: In general, my satisfaction with the teaching methods in my school is: (very high, high, low, very low).</p> <p>Q17_9: My school allows me express my opinion freely. (rate agreement)</p> <p>Q12_15: My teachers are accepting of new and unusual ideas or opinions. (all, most, some, a few, none)</p> <p>Q15_5: My school supports my curiosity and inquiry. (rate agreement)</p> <p>Q15_2: My school nurtures my ability to think.</p> <p>Q15_3: My school nurtures my desire to learn.</p> <p>Q12_9: My teachers encourage me to think.</p> <p>Q12_14: My teachers encourage students' participation in the classroom.</p> <p>Q12_8: My teachers motivate me to learn.</p> <p>Q12_10: My teachers welcome my questions.</p> <p>Q12_16: My teachers follow a rote learning approach.</p> <p>Q12_13: My teachers' style of teaching is fun.</p> <p>Q12_7: My teachers cater for my special needs in learning.</p> <p>Q15_4: My school helps me recognize my strengths and weaknesses.</p> <p>Q15_7: My school helps me develop my perseverance and resilience.</p> <p>Q15_6: My school helps me develop my communication skills.</p> <p>Q15_8: My school helps me build my self confidence.</p> <p>Q15_11: My school recognizes my successes and accomplishments.</p> <p>Q15_13: My school causes me anxiety and fear.</p> <p>Q15_12: My school increases tension between me and my friends.</p> <p>Q15_10: My school takes into consideration my personal interests.</p> <p>Q15_9: My school takes into consideration my special learning needs.</p> <p>Q15_1: My school encourages me to actively participate.</p>

	<p>Q13: Teachers at my school favor: (Smarter students, Richer students, Quieter students, Higher achievers, More beautiful students, Students who come from more influential families, Other)</p>
<i>b. Roll of Testing and Student Evaluation</i>	<p>Q20: My school grades are a true reflection of my learning abilities.</p> <p>Q19_1: School exams measure my ability to think and analyze.</p> <p>Q19_2: School exams measure my ability to understand and comprehend the subject matter.</p> <p>Q21_1: The current student evaluation motivates me to learn more.</p> <p>Q21_2: The current student evaluation helps me develop my ability to think creatively.</p> <p>Q19_3: School exams measure my ability to memorize.</p>
7. Participation and Agency	<p>Q25_3: How satisfied are you with student participation in the school environment (school governance, school activities, school community relations)?</p> <p>Q25_4: How satisfied are you with the school's relations with parents?</p> <p>Q25_5: How satisfied are you with the school's relations with the local community?</p>
8. Influences on Learning and Values	<p>Q24_1: Which of the following environments impacts you most in forming your ideas and beliefs? (Television, Internet, School, Family, Other)</p> <p>Q24_3: Which of the following environments have the most influence on your life style? (Television, Internet, School, Family, Other)</p> <p>Q24_2: Which of the following environments have the most influence on your way of thinking? (Television, Internet, School, Family, Other)</p>

Appendix E: Detailed Methodology

JORDAN

Data Collection

Data collection for the Jordan well-being survey was conducted by the Center for Strategic Studies (CSS). CSS is a specialized center in the area of survey research as well as strategic studies. Moreover, the CSS is affiliated with the University of Jordan.

Sample Population

The sample was selected using single stage cluster sample assuming the 10th grade section as the primary sampling unit. The sample comprised fifty 10th grade sections. All the students in the selected sections were surveyed using a self-administered questionnaire. The total sample size was 1,340 students.

Fieldwork

Fieldwork was carried out on May 28 and 29, 2006, involving 25 field researchers. They had one day of training on the questionnaire. The training covered instructions on how to fill in the questionnaire and how to approach head teachers in the schools and present them with the official letters from the Ministry of Education and CSS.

Each field researcher conducted the survey of the 10th grade of the selected school on a school day. The field researchers went into the schools and, after obtaining permission from the head teacher, went into the 10th grade and explained the aim of the survey. The 10th graders were guided step by step by the field researchers on how to fill in the questionnaire. The field researchers read the questions and the corresponding answer options, one by one, to the students and asked them to circle the applicable answer. After the students had completed the questionnaire, the field researchers reviewed the questionnaires on the spot by reading the questionnaire for a second time and asking students to check whether or not they had answered the questions.

Office Work

Questionnaires were returned to CSS on the same day they were completed. Then the process of data quality control began, which involved the following stages:

1. **Editing:** Eight office workers checked the questionnaires for consistency of responses. The field manager also reviewed a sample of the questionnaires to make sure that they were correct and consistent.
2. **Coding:** Eight office workers coded the closed and open-ended questions. Open-ended questions were coded in lists and entered into the data file.
3. **Data entry:** A data entry program was designed by the data analyst using IMPS 4.1 for data entry and automatic control over skips.

Data Analysis

After the data were collected and entered by the CSS staff, they were sent to Alpha International's headquarters in Ramallah, Palestine, where Alpha staff conducted the data analysis and produced the required statistical tables.

LEBANON

Data Collection

The data collection for the well-being survey in Lebanon was conducted by a specialized firm in the area of survey research called Statistics Lebanon Ltd. This firm has a strong team of data collectors at the national level in Lebanon. Statistics Lebanon has conducted more than 100 national surveys in Lebanon for local as well as for international organizations. Interviewers were supplied with a questionnaire expected to take 40–50 minutes to complete. It was distributed to students in schools who filled in the questionnaire by themselves.

Time and Period of Administration

The survey was carried out between May 18 and July 6, 2006.

Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire used in the survey was of a directive style; it was divided into three parts, as follows:

1. An introductory part about the party conducting the research.
2. Direct questions of the following types:
 - a. Prompted and non-prompted questions.
 - b. Closed-ended questions.
 - c. Five rank scale questions.
 - d. Evaluation and leveling questions.
3. A third part reflecting the profile of the respondent that will be used in the analysis and the data cross-tabulation.

Sample Population

The target population for the study consisted of all 10th grade students in Lebanon, according to the following definitions:

1. Students in schools in the different areas of Lebanon.
2. Interviewees were school students in the 10th grade.
3. Interviews were self-administrated.
4. Interviews were carried out in public, private, subsidized, secular and religious schools.

Distribution of Interviews per Muhafaza (Region)

Table 1. Distribution of Interviews per Muhafaza

Region	Public	Private Secular	Private: Christian	Private: Christian
BEIRUT	1	2	2	1
MOUNT LEBANON - Suburbs	5	9	6	1
NORTH	4	1	2	1
BEKAA	3	1	2	0
SOUTH	2	2	1	0
NABATTIEH	2	1	1	0
Total	17	16	14	3

Fieldwork

Twenty-four trained interviewers, who formed six teams, carried out the fieldwork. A team leader supervised the fieldwork and directed each group of four. An area coordinator controlled the team leaders' fieldwork in their specified geographic zone. Teams used detailed maps for the location of the interviewees.

Fieldwork control was executed on several levels in the following way:

- Team leaders accompanied field interviewers during the execution of the surveys, during about half of the interviews
- At least three interviewers executed the survey in each of the schools. None of the interviewers went alone.
- Interviewers assisted and explained to students the way the questionnaire should to be filled in.
- Interviewers made sure that the questionnaires were filled by each of the respondents themselves and that they are not affected by other students.

Office Work

- During the data entry, whenever something was not understood, or a questionnaire was not properly filled in, the interviewers went back to the respondents and re-interviewed them regarding the same question.
- After the data entry, 15 percent of the responses were re-entered and compared with the same previously entered 15 percent in order to find out if there were any differences.
- After the data entry was completed, the data were cleaned and sent to Alpha International.

Communication with the Field Teams and Coordinators

All the field teams were equipped with radio transceivers. An operations room in Statistics Lebanon's office was always in direct contact with the field teams and their leaders.

Sample Preparation

Statistics Lebanon had developed for other surveys an extensive database of all the schools in the different areas of Lebanon. The steps taken in the preparation of this database made it safe to use in drawing the representative samples for this particular survey.

Schools were divided into two main categories: public schools and private schools. Public schools are government owned and do not charge fees. Private schools are privately owned by individuals, companies, or NGOs. Few of them are free.

Public schools are all secular, while private schools are either secular or religious. Religious schools are either Islamic or Christian.

Catholic schools form the majority among Christian schools in Lebanon, while Hezbollah/Chiaa schools form most of the Islamic ones.

The available database assisted the statistician in choosing the sample for the survey. The numbers were distributed as shown in table 2. The number of schools was defined in each of the Lebanese Muhafaza, showing the percentage of schools allocated in each of these administrative divisions.

Table 2. Number of Schools in each of the Lebanese Muhafaza

Area	N	% of schools allocated in each administrative division
Beirut	205	7.56
Suburbs	449	16.55
Mount Lebanon	415	15.30
North	632	23.30
Becaa	494	18.21
South	276	10.17
Nabatieh	242	8.92
Total	2,713	100.00

The same percentage of the total was assigned for each of the Muhafaza in the sample of schools in the survey.

In other words, 7.56 percent of the sample should be assigned in Beirut. When interviewing a total of fifty schools in the sample, the sampling in Beirut should be four schools in order to reflect the overall proportion.

Choice of schools in each Muhafaza:

Taking Mount Lebanon as an example, respecting the proportionality, nine schools were assigned to this area, and according to the database, the numbers were as follows:

Description	N	%
Private	168	40.48
Public	202	48.67
Subsidized	45	10.84
Total	415	100.00

Hence 40.48 percent of the schools chosen in Mount Lebanon were private, 48.67 percent public, and 10.84 percent subsidized. For the choice of public schools in Mount Lebanon, the same filtering applied as for the proportion between secular and religious schools. After the numbers had been drawn, a skip pattern was assigned in order to choose a systematic sample. In other words, if the aim was to choose four private, secular schools out of seventy-six secular schools in Mount Lebanon, the following applied:

$$76 / 4 = 19, \text{ the skip pattern} = 19$$

The database containing the seventy-six schools was numbered from 1 to 76. Schools chosen were the following: School 19, School 38, School 57, and School 76. The same applied for the other sampling.

Data Entry and Analysis

During and after the fieldwork, a team of office clerks inside Statistics Lebanon's central office carried out the record keeping and data entry procedures; ten employees led by a senior computer programmer did this job and controlled the data entry procedures.

The software used was prepared by Alpha International and was sent by mail to Statistics Lebanon. It was prepared in a way to prohibit the entry of wrong data as it was equipped with a data entry control system. Data analysis was done by the team at Alpha International after the data had been collected and entered by Statistics Lebanon.

PALESTINE

Questionnaire Design

A questionnaire was designed specifically to account for the nature of the target group under study, which consisted of a representative national sample. The study questionnaire included three parts:

1. **The standard control variables** needed for survey management, which includes questionnaire number, district, locality as well as data pertaining to the names of field supervisors and field workers for the administration of the questionnaire so as to limit personal variation errors.
2. **Background variables**, which include questions on place of residence, gender, as well as the social and economic status of the family.
3. **The well-being indicators under study.**

The questionnaire was developed through a consultative, participatory approach consisting of the following steps:

1. **Participatory study:** This questionnaire was designed through a comprehensive participatory approach that included a wide range of experts and organizations that are concerned with well-being and youth issues. Individual consultancy, workshops and focus groups were conducted by Alpha International. Such activities involved not only the civil society organizations but also several ministries, specifically the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.
2. **Focus group discussions:** after completion of discussion with the various stakeholders, focus group discussions were organized with students to discuss the questionnaire and modify it to suit their understanding.
3. **Pilot study:** After the several stages of modifications and adjustments to the questionnaire, two **representative** sample studies were conducted prior to launching the data collection process. The purpose of this was to identify the sections of the questionnaire that might cause conflict in results: either phrasing or word misunderstanding of the questions, as well as clarity. After the pilot results had been analyzed, the questionnaire was subject to a final review and fine-tuning. Some questions were deleted, some reformulated and others were added. Lessons pertaining to training and data collection were also derived.

Sample Population

Target Population: The population of the study consisted of all 10th grade students in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The population included students in both the public and private school sectors across all schools (single sex and mixed).

Sample frame: The sampling frame consisted of an educational data file, which contains a list of all 10th grade sections in both governmental and private schools in the Palestinian territory.

Sample design: The sample was selected using probability proportional to size cluster sampling. This type of sampling ensures obtaining unbiased estimators for both means and percentages. Fifty sections of 10th graders were chosen. After selection of schools, the questionnaire was distributed to the whole class for answering. The total sample included 1,697 students (both male and female). This relatively large sample size was chosen in order to enable the stakeholders to perform subpopulation data analysis and conduct comparisons across the various background variables. The data were weighted according to two variables, which are the locality and sex of the school population. The sampling distribution of various categories is given in table 3.

Table 3. Sample Distribution by Category

Indicator	%
Geographical location	
West Bank	50.3
Gaza Strip	49.7
Total	100.0
Sex of respondent	
Male	43.3
Female	56.7
Total	100.0
Type of school	
Male	40.8
Female	53.9
Mixed	5.2
Total	100.0

Fieldwork

Work team: Alpha International recruited several experienced field supervisors and field workers in the various districts. It is worth noting that Alpha has an advanced database of the names and addresses of its field workers in the different localities that can be called upon when needed.

Training of fieldwork team: Two orientation workshops were held for field researchers, one in the West Bank and one in Gaza. The training included a comprehensive explanation of the aims and objectives of the study. As the trainees went over the questionnaire, an explanation of the different terminology and indicators used were discussed. The Alpha team also presented the criteria for quality and accuracy control that Alpha abides by in all its survey studies, as well as logistical, administrative and financial issues related to field work. The importance of not jeopardizing the quality of data collection under any circumstances was expressed. The need for continual communication and coordination with the area field supervisor for proper feedback was discussed and emphasized in order to solve any possible obstacles, and find solutions in case any field work was halted due to the continual closures and the implications that may occur.

Mobilization: A field coordinator was appointed, in addition to 5 experienced regional supervisors. Three field supervisors were located in the West Bank regions: south, center and north, and two in the Gaza Strip. 35 well-trained and trusted field workers who are able to deal with complicated situations were recruited and teamed up to ensure the coverage of all selected schools despite the harsh commute between the localities.

Data collection: The data were collected between April 26 and May 2, 2006.

Data Management

Editing: Questionnaires were edited in the field by the respective supervisors prior to delivering them to the main office. Questionnaires that had any methodological problems were either refilled or discarded. After all questionnaires had been received by the main office, a special data editing team reviewed all questionnaires and subjected them to the standard quality control procedures.

Examination of data: Questionnaires and collected data went through several stages of examination and checking to ensure that they complied with the quality control criteria that Alpha International has established for this process. This stage includes the following activities:

1. Checking the questionnaires in the field: It is the responsibility of the field supervisors and area coordinators to examine and review a random selection of the collected questionnaires before they are sent to the main office.
2. Checking the questionnaires in the office: At this stage, all questionnaires that arrive to the central office are examined by the research team to ensure the rationality and honesty of the answers.
3. Coding the questionnaires: After the questionnaires are reviewed, they are coded according to a pre-designed code book, in order to be entered into the computers.
4. Examining data upon data entry: Using the special data entry program, the computer sets checks and controls that prevent the data entry personnel from entering wrong codes when possible, as well as enabling them to skip questions automatically when necessary.
5. Data cleaning: After all questionnaires are entered, initial frequency tables are done for the variables and examined to try to detect any data errors or outliers. If an error is detected, the entire questionnaire is re-entered.

Data Entry

The data entry program was designed using Access 2000. It was equipped with a number of characteristics, such as the following:

- Duplication of the questionnaire on the computer screen.
- Rules for logical and consistency check of the data.
- Possibility for internal editing of answers.
- Maintaining a minimum of digital data entry and fieldwork errors.
- User-friendly handling.
- Possibility of transferring data to a data analysis platform such as SPSS or SAS.

The data entry team received hands-on training by the data manager. After completion of the data entry, the data were cleaned using appropriate statistical techniques.

Data Analysis

After the completion of the data entry and cleaning and re-entry, and assurance of its accuracy, data analysis and output results were undertaken. The data were converted from the Access 2000 program into the statistical program SPSS, using the Stat/Transfer program that ensures that the data transformation is complete and accurate as well. Frequency tables and crosstabs are designed to present the statistical results for the indicators under study according to the study sample.