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**Topic 1 - Governance and its effect on Education**

Education has been one of the most important elements to create a functional, developed society. However, there are 124 million children out of school, along with 115 million that cannot read and write. One of the reasons for this issue is the incompetence of the governing body, due to corruption, political instability, and financial crises; this creates situations where there is less resources to spend on education. Embezzling government aid in countries like Somalia and Cambodia have become common, and schools had to close in Syria due to the ongoing civil war, as well as the fact that the government spend most of its meager fund on the military sector. Being a fundamental pillar in the advancement of nations, the lack of education creates fewer jobs, which then gives less revenues, more poverty, and a higher rate of mortality: to sum it up, developing countries stay as developing countries, and will continue to be stagnant if this issue is still not resolved.

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is a country in the Middle East, right in the junction between Europe, Asia and Africa. Knowing that 13.5% of the GDP is spent on education, only 9% of the population is illiterate (the third lowest in the Arab countries), education has always been a primordial and important factor in Jordan, and it is not surprising that it ranks No. 1 in the Arab World in education. It was significant in transforming the country from a society based on agriculture to an industrialized one: Jordan now has the highest number of researchers per million people among all the members of IOC, which includes 57 countries. The first education reforms started during the early 20th century. King Abdullah II was a main contributor for this progress. In 2003, supported by the World Bank, the Government of Jordan launched a program lasting 10 years. The goals were to re-orient the education policies with the needs of the country, promote early childhood education, and improve the learning environment. In the second phase, which started in 2009, the aim was to improve the quality of the teachers and align the school curriculum with knowledge based on economy. Another project, called Jordan Education Initiative, focused on using appropriate technology and information to transform the learning environment. This program was praised by the UN and received the UNESCO prize recently.

Despite an educational system that meets international standards, there are still gender and income inequalities: there are three times more students at universities from rich families, and there are gender gaps in the workplace (16% of male unemployed compared to 33.3% of female workers).

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), based in Amman, is an agency that has been active in the region for more than 50 years. It provides free basic education for Palestinian refugees.

One of the main challenges in the education in Jordan is to modify their education system for the needs of a constantly growing youth population. There is currently a mismatch of skills taught versus the skills required at jobs leading to unemployment, and there is not enough educational infrastructure to accommodate the increase of students in the years to come; even now there is wide-scale overcrowding in schools, with excess capacity. Governmental spending on education has also declined in recent years. Also, the sudden arrival of more than 1.3 million Syrians in Jordan due to the Civil War has disrupted the system: more than a third of school-aged children of the Syrians children did not receive a formal education.

Part of the cause of this problem is due to the fact that there are refugee registration policies that require these children to have identification documents. This sudden influx of refugee students had negative consequences on the quality of the education offered to all students. Jordan has ratified a series of UN conventions on education, as well as working with UNICEF and UNESCO to provide teacher training. Other international NGOs have also contributed: Questscope provided a second-chance program since 2000. The initiative was a success: more than 7,000 thousand students participated and 98% passed. Another program, called INJAZ Al-Arab, provided the students with activities like career guidance and job shadowing.

On the topic of corruption, Jordan has been the first Arab Country to ratify the UN anti-corruption convention, and has been making progress since. However, the investigations for corruption are still limited, due to restraints. Increasing the wages of government officials would be a viable solution to this problem. To solve these problems, even if it spends today a large part of its GDP (more than 12%) on education, Jordan needs more financial support from the part of developed countries.

**Topic 2 - Preservation of World Heritage Sites**

According to the Geneva Convention, acts of hostility and mistreat against the World Heritage Sites are condemnable actions. These sites, which connects the past and future, and are not only testaments to the culture of a society, but also, as the name implies, a mark of our universal "heritage". UNESCO's role is to protect these places of great value, so that future generations may enjoy them. However, many of these sites are in danger nowadays, mainly due to climate change and war. At least 31 World Heritage sites had sustained extensive damage in 29 different countries due to climate change. Global warming has contributed to the constant increase of sea levels, which damaged natural and fragile sites that were directly linked to the ecosystem of the environment. Another main challenge nowadays is to strike a balance between the preservation of these sites versus private interests and tourism. In unstable regions, like the civil war in Syria, World Heritage sites are endangered; ISIS pillages and black market sales of artifacts have led to the deterioration of multiple sites, such as the ancient city of Palmyra.

In Jordan, five sites have been added to the World Heritage List. Among them, Petra is a Nabataean caravan-city carved into rock. It has become one of the most prominent tourist sites with hundreds of thousands of visitors per year. However, some vulnerabilities are present: erosion due to the wind and rain, flooding and also the infrastructure for tourists have continuously deteriorated the city. To preserve this site, UNESCO Amman Office initiated several projects to reduce natural and man-made risks, including monitoring potentially unstable areas, and controlling impacts from tourism.

The second site is Quseir Amra, a desert castle, which acted as a fortress and a residence of Umayyad caliphs. With the collaboration of the Institut Francais du Proche Orient, the World Monuments Fund, and the Istituto Centrale del Restauro, they created a project to conserve the mosaic floors, create a visitor centre and limit consequences from touristic activities on the area.

Archaeological sites in Jordan in general have been affected by urban sprawl, community neglect and lack of governmental infrastructure. For example, Wadi Rum, a site located in the deserts of Jordan which includes caverns bearing 45,000 rock carvings and inscriptions dating back 12,000 years, has recently faced a major issue due to climate change: there are warmer and drier conditions and more extreme weather, which could potentially threaten desert animals like falcons and oryx and also make it difficult for the local Bedouin people to get enough water.

Solutions that have been implemented were awareness through television programming and revising school curricula to focus more on historical heritage. While tourism is prominent and considered as being a large source of employment and economic growth with 4.4 billion revenues from 8 million visitors in 2010, it has been severely affected by conflicts: from 2010 to 2015, Jordan had a 70% decrease in the number of tourists caused by the Arab Spring.

**Topic 3 - Supporting and Accomplishing Education 2030**

The goal of this topic is to include equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all. The countries that agreed to the SDG4 had to provide 4% to 6% of their GDP or 15-20% of their public expenditure on education, along with 0.7% GDP of developed countries to the ODA. The main goals of Education 2030 were increased and expanded access, inclusion, equity, and quality of the education, as well as providing a better learning experience. However, some hindrances have obstructed this goal, mainly conflicts and disasters, along with gender inequality. Enrollment is still dependent on socio-economic status. One of the main solutions to these problems is financial support: in fact, countries don't have the means to focus on providing better education due to more pressing issues, like conflict and poverty. Another solution would be accurate and valid monitoring, which would help us in knowing if Education 2030 is being maintained, or, at least, if progress has been made.

In Jordan in particular, the Civil War in Syria has created a mass influx of refugees in Jordan, adding to the already significant population of Palestinian refugees from the Iraq War. This caused overcrowding of children into schools, diminished quality of the provided education, and, along with this problem, fewer available teachers and necessary infrastructure. More efforts should be necessary to attain the goal of the SDG4 to have equitable and quality education: gender inequality is still very present, as well as lack of trained teachers. Solutions would be the support from NGOs and the United Nations to provide education for the refugees and money for the infrastructure. Another big issue is the implementation of segregation, dividing the Syrian children with the others. To resolve this issue, UNICEF advocated to establish additional learning spaces and decrease the number of double-shifted schools, as well as activities to support social cohesion, like parent and student councils, and extracurricular activities.

Committees should be created for frequent inspection and monitoring, and the curriculum revised to teach skills that would be needed and that would respond to the society needs to prevent unemployment. While gender inequality is deeply present and cannot be eradicated due to cultural reasons, a way to bridge that gap would be to give the same program for boys and girls, and implement policies with sanctions to prevent gender discrimination for jobs, as well as raising awareness through tv commercials and school visits and activities, which are methods that worked successfully before.

Another big issue is the implementation of segregation, dividing the Syrian children with the others. To resolve this issue, UNICEF advocated to establish additional learning spaces and decrease the number of double-shifted schools, as well as activities to support social cohesion, like parent and student councils, and extracurricular activities. Establishing a professional teacher development system and policy framework, improving counselling to prepare secondary school students for higher education and future careers, promoting parent and community involvement, building and expanding and renovating schools to alleviate overcrowding are all key points to the future success of the educational system in Jordan.

To sum it up, strengthening the public education system and improving access to education, learning environments, quality to education and learning outcomes are the main challenges for a better education.

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